

MEDIA: The All-Pervasive Being / Entity of Our Time

Francis Arackal♦

Abstract: The omnipotence of mass media was already felt in the beginning of the twentieth century and media attained the status of a religion with the arrival of television. By the end of the twentieth century television, 'the big medium', became the surrogate parent, teacher and god and the launching of the internet enabled instant social networking. Technology is integral to media operations as Facebook, Twitter, Whatsapp, Pintrest, Instagram, etc., would be rendered ineffective without the internet. In the early 21st century the world moved beyond the 'global village' ending up as a 'global living room'. No wonder Alexander Bard, the prophet who calls for triumph of the 'netocracy' in his latest book *Syntheism - Creating God in the Internet Age*, speaks of the internet as the new Holy Spirit. Indeed with the New Media a new culture, religion, sanctuary idols and priesthood are emerging.

Keywords: Communication, Cyberspace, Media, New Media, Pervasive Media, Syntheism

1. Introduction

Medium is as old as human existence as one cannot communicate without a medium. Human communication has gone through the stages of mere gestures, signs, symbols, cave paintings, a signal (smoke), a noise (drum beating), petro glyphs,

♦Dr Francis Arackal has a Master's Degree in Philosophy from Nagpur University and Licentiate in Philosophy from St. Thomas University, Rome, PG Diploma in Media studies from Griffith College, Dublin, Ireland, and Licence and Doctorate in Social Sciences, specializing in Media, from Gregorian and St. Thomas Universities in Rome. He taught Media and Philosophy for 18 years at many Institutes and colleges. He has four books to his credit, and numerous scientific papers, articles, press reports in newspapers and periodicals both in India and abroad.

pictograms, ideograms. Words and writing (manuscripts) developed later. Gutenberg's invention of the printing press was the first paradigm shift in communication by which books began to be available everywhere. This was followed by newspapers, the telegraph, telephone, film, radio, television in that order. Marshall McLuhan's vision of the 'Global Village' became a reality.¹ The invention of mobile phone further enhanced the connectivity - richly deserving the term 'the ubiquitous cellphone'. The next paradigm shift was made possible by the launching of the Internet and the World Wide Web (www). The net revolution of the late twentieth century "has given communication a new dimension and meaning."² The ever ongoing technological advances and

available choices in mobile communication devices are responsible for this paradigm shift, converting communication into a passionate necessity today from the luxury it was! ... Communicating through letters that were delivered by ships, homing pigeons and runners is beyond the comprehension of [today's] generation.³

The instantaneous social media - Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+, Instagram, Pinterest, You Tube, Flickr - have been embraced by the whole world. Social Media has spread like wild-fire and emerged as the most effective and economical medium to disseminate information. The world has moved from 'Global Village' to 'Global Living Room' and with that the omnipresence of the media is complete. The omnipresent media is also omnipotent and vice versa, almost acquiring the status of a new religion.

¹McLuhan was a Canadian academic, a literary scholar, whose studies of the effects of advertising and of print media blossomed into a new discipline of media studies. Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore, *The Medium is the Message*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1989.

²Pawan Agrawal, "Social Media and its Impinging Omnipresence!" <<http://www.dsalert.org/dialogue/2014/08/social-media-and-its-impinging-omnipresence>> (22 December 2014).

³Agrawal, "Social Media and its Impinging Omnipresence!"

2. Methodology

There is consensus that the goal of social research is to increase our understanding of society. Media research belongs to the Social Sciences realm. The contemporary generation lives in a media-mediated society. To understand this phenomenon the methodology employed in this paper is descriptive-explanatory, as it attempts to describe media as the all-pervasive entity that it is today and adduce reasons for it.⁴ Explanatory statements vary greatly in scope and complexity, but all explanatory statements contain concepts. Concepts may be observable or non-observable.⁵ In this paper concepts have referents that are readily observable such as the various media, which are the subject of detailed study.

3. Communication and Medium

Communication “is a process through which the exchange and sharing of meaning is made possible, and by which social relationships, and as a result, social institutions are created and maintained.”⁶ The process includes five fundamental factors: sender, receiver, message, medium, and feedback. “Simply expressed, the communication process begins when a message is conceived by the sender. It is then encoded and transmitted via a particular medium or channel to a receiver who then decodes and interprets the message, returning a signal in some way that the message has or has not been understood.”⁷

Medium is the vehicle used for transmitting the message. Television for example is a medium (an audio-visual one). John Fiske in *Introduction to Communication Studies* divides media into three categories: i) The presentational media: the voice, face, body; the spoken word, gesture where the medium is actually

⁴Kenneth D. Bailey, *Methods of Social Research*, New York: The Free Press, 1994, 40.

⁵Bailey, *Methods of Social Research*, 41.

⁶Jacob Srampickal, *Communications Can Renew the Church*, Kochi: Karunikan Books, 2009, 20.

⁷James Watson and Anne Hill, *A Dictionary of Communication and Media Studies*, London: Edward Arnold, 1984, 43.

the communicator. ii) Representational media: books, paintings, photographs, etc., using cultural and aesthetic conventions to create a 'text' of some sort; they become independent of the communicator, being works of communication (whereas presentational media are acts of communication). iii) Mechanical media: Telephone, Radio, Television, Film, (Computer, Internet) and they are transmitters of 1 and 2.⁸

Marshall McLuhan, one of the pioneers of media studies, went on to characterize "medium as [is] the message." Medium is the message is the first chapter of his classic work *Understanding Media: the Extensions of Man*. It meant that the medium - whether human voice or printed page, radio, television - influences the sender, the message, the audience, and the effects of mass communication far more than was previously understood. In other words, the medium is as important as the message, if not more (at times). The way one packages a message, especially in a packaging culture as ours today, is as important as the content itself. Taking into account today's media scenario McLuhan was indeed prophetic. McLuhan later rephrased "the medium is the message" to "the medium is the message". The use of "message" instead of "message" emphasizes the carrier rather than the content. Because the mass media affect the content, sender and the audience of the message, it is evident that if we do not understand mass media, we cannot understand mass communication.

Therefore it is pertinent here to state some of the characteristics of mass media: they normally require complex formal organizations; they transmit to large, heterogeneous, anonymous, geographically dispersed, and socially distance audience; they make possible only low level of interaction with the audience; hence the receiver often has low degree of control over message content; and speed is the distinct character of today's mass media.

⁸Watson and Hill, *A Dictionary of Communication*, 104.

4. Traditional Mass Media

In today’s media context newspapers, magazines, film, radio and television are considered traditional mass media. From inception they were regarded as public sphere where rational-critical debate could take place.⁹

Newspaper could be defined in terms of what it is and what it does. A newspaper is a written publication containing news, information and advertising, usually printed on low-cost paper called newsprint. Newspapers were primarily society’s story-tellers and diffusers of information. They were a medium between subjects and rulers, citizens and legislators, legislators and citizens, citizens and citizens.¹⁰

One can safely say that there isn’t a country without a newspaper. The newspaper since its arrival more than three centuries ago has been continuously evolving in itself and in response to other media. E-newspapers have transformed newspaper reading.

Magazines provide information, usually in print form, that may be more in-depth but less timely than that of, for example, a newspaper. A magazine can typically focus on trends or issues, and it can provide background information for news events. Today magazines are everywhere. They are easily accessible and geared toward all facets of the population.¹¹

Film medium emerged in the 1920s in the U.S. Its historical development falls into three phases: 1) 1930 – 1950, 2) 1951-1969, and 3) 1970 to present. The first period is known as the ‘classical era’. The industry was run by a cartel of eight studios which had a virtually guaranteed market for even the most unpromising films.¹²

⁹Jürgen Habermas, “The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article,” *New German Critique*, No. 3 (Autumn 1974): 49-55.

¹⁰Francis Arackal, *The Indian Media: How Credible?* Bombay: Pauline Publications, 2010, 99, 294-295.

¹¹Jorge Reina Schement, ed., *Encyclopedia of Communication and Information*, Vol. 2, 2002, 568-571.

¹²P. Bart and P. Guber, *Shoot Out: Surviving Fame and (Mis) Fortune in Hollywood*, London: Faber and Faber, 2003.

The second phase is known as the 'New Hollywood' in the U.S. This involved a changing role for studios, a growth in independent production and changes in patterns of media consumption. This period also marked the beginnings of the 'block-buster': expensive, high profile movies.

The third phase dates from the mid-1970s. Over the next three decades the industry would promote the blockbuster model featuring extraordinary special effects.¹³

Radio is the oldest form of electronic communication. At the beginning of the twentieth century, radio was purely an experimental medium, as innovators struggled with ways to transmit Morse code via the new wireless technology. Over time, the transmission of dots and dashes would give way to the broadcasting of voice and music. Advanced technologies have transformed the traditional radio. With the use of internet radio stations have gone online, providing alternative method of listening to music and information beyond a radio receiver. This has enabled the radio to be more ubiquitous.¹⁴

Television broadcasts first started in Germany in 1935, while England's British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) began broadcasting the following year. The 1939 World's Fair in New York gave Americans their first look at the medium that would dominate the second half of the twentieth century. The first U.S. commercial television licences were issued in 1941. In the 1950s, the new medium of television was replacing the old medium of radio. It began to spread far and wide across the globe. By 1965, 94 percent of American homes had television sets; by 1990, more than 98 percent had televisions, and more than one-half of all U.S. homes had more than one set.¹⁵

¹³Lucy Küng, *Strategic Management in the Media: Theory and Practice*, London: Sage, 2008, 65-68.

¹⁴Schement, ed., *Encyclopedia of Communication and Information*, Vol. 3, 2002, 811, 813.

¹⁵Schement, ed., *Encyclopedia of Communication and Information*, Vol. 3, 2002, 1024-1028.

5. The New Media

The New Media stands for computers, the internet, and everything on them: blogs, podcasts, machinima,¹⁶ games, websites and wikis. Computers facilitate the rest of the new media and it can be the platform for the traditional mass media – newspapers, magazines, film, radio and television content can be downloaded on to the computer.

The Internet is a massive group of interconnected computers world-wide that allows users to send/receive various types of information, usually hypertext documents (via HTTP). This technology has revolutionized all forms of media communication, from television and film to picking up your groceries. It’s hard to find a business, industry, or art form that is not reliant on the internet in one form or another. If you have been on the internet for at least a month, you can probably tell that the internet is gigantic, meaning you can get lost on sites such as Wikipedia, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube rather easily.¹⁷

Over a period of time the internet has become a cultural icon, representing a new era of interconnected social media and technological advancement. The concept of Cyber Networking is almost as old as the idea of the computer itself. The first modern computer networks started appearing in the late 1950s and the early 1960s. From there it was only a short conceptual leap for science fiction writers to imagine a computer network on a global scale, and many began working internet-like global computer networks into their fiction long before it became a part of everyday life.

In some stories set in the future, a variation exists in which the Alternet is a fictional successor rather than an alternative to the Internet as we know. This is especially true in stories set *After the End*, in which the Internet has been destroyed and rebuilt, or in space, in which new technologies that alter the internet’s basic functionality are necessary in order to extend its reach beyond

¹⁶The use of real-time computer graphics engines to create a cinematic production.

¹⁷<http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/The_Internet> (09 December 2014).

our planet. With regular space flights being undertaken into Mars (where there seems to be traces of life), it could be the planet for Altnet.¹⁸

Cyberspace is stylized into a simulation that's virtually indistinguishable from real life. Digital natives under 25 now see "the online world as the real world and the real world as a reflection of the online world."¹⁹ One would tend to believe in this trend seeing the youngsters carrying on with life totally oblivious of their physical surroundings and happenings.

6. Theoretical Framework

How media become the all-pervasive entity of our time? To answer this question we shall employ the Media Language Theory. Media use an appealing and absorbing language. Media language consists of visuals, audio, colour, speed, text, style, etc. Media's attractiveness is created by the careful application of this language. This appeal, particularly that of the electronic media, is primarily to the senses (sensorial appeal), especially the senses of sight and hearing. The sensorial activates the emotions and feelings of the audience more than the intellect and reason.

The brain has two hemispheres: the left one controls the rational aspects which include words and language, logical thinking, numbers, linearity, analysis, etc. The right part controls the sensorial: rhythm, spatial awareness, imagination, day dreams, colour dimensions, intuition, etc. The holistic language of the media appeals to the senses, moves the heart, and enters the mind through the right hemisphere of the brain. Media provide audio-visual perceptions, not abstract ideas, such as absorbing sounds, music, colourful images, tactile impressions and symbols. Modern and contemporary media succeed in alluring and captivating every age group by catering to their

¹⁸<<http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/TheAltnet>> (09 December 2014).

¹⁹Mark Piesing, "The Prophet Who Calls for Triumph of the 'Netocracy'," *The Hindu*, 9 October 2014, 12.

wavelength, vibes, tastes, senses, and emotional urges. At times even the intelligentsia is conquered by the media language.

This theory is confirmed by McLuhan’s media dictum: “Medium is the message.” According to the dictum what is said is secondary to *how it is said*. Medium, and not the message, dominates today. The sensorial impact is what really dominates the process of decision making by a mediated audience, society, nation and the world. No wonder media has become the all-pervasive being of our time.

7. Pervasive Media

Media is so pervasive (and intrusive at times) into every aspect of human lives that some media practitioners have come to speak of ‘Pervasive Media’. According to them Pervasive Media is basically any experience that uses sensors and/or mobile/wireless networks to bring you content (film, music, images, a game ...) that is sensitive to your situation – which could be where you are, how you feel, or who you are with. Beyond the laboratories, computing and communication technology has created a world in which people carry small, powerful, wireless computers and phones that are connected to the internet almost all the time, from almost everywhere. Further, pervasive media is Digital Media delivered into the fabric of real life and based on the situational context at the moment of delivery.²⁰

The two defining features of Pervasive Media are: 1) uses technology to understand something about the situation and respond based on that information; 2) uses digital media to augment (bridge) the physical environment. The things that you can sense with media technology (not an exhaustive list) are where you are (location), the time (of day/of the year), how you are feeling, what you are near, what have you done already, who you are with, temperature, light, sound, physical state (direction facing/ whether you are moving), the weather, etc. The tools you can use to detect these things are active and passive RFID,

²⁰<<http://www.pmstudio.co.uk/pmstudio/what-pervasive-media>> (08 December 2014).

Bluetooth, GPS, Facial recognition, Heart rate monitor, Brain wave monitor, Pressure sensor, Mechanical switch, Microphone, Video camera, Galvanic, Wifi, Mobile, Accelerometer, etc.²¹

One of the media contents which makes the pervasive media omnipresent is advertisements. It is said advertisements reach where even sunshine does not reach. They reach even the unreachable places, and this has been proved by Jordan and Bryan. Their newly commenced firm – Star Toilet Paper, which is based in Ann Arbor in the US has managed to post advertisements on the toilet papers with the tag line – “Don’t rush. Look before you flush.”²²

Since most media as we know it today is of US origin, let us note very briefly the media’s pervasiveness in the US society. Every morning millions of Americans wake up to clock radios or the ringing of the mobile alarm. Political candidates spend most of their campaign dollars on television ads to woo voters. The US consumer economy depends on advertising to create mass markets. A study showed that more than 99 percent of American homes have televisions, that 53 percent of American children have televisions in their rooms, and that more homes have five televisions than have just one.²³ In a recent study done among the urban adolescents of Delhi it was found that the mean duration of television viewing was 1.9 hours per day.²⁴ These facts and figures, though limited, confirm the prophetic words of McLuhan: “All media work us over completely. They are so pervasive in their personal, political, economic, aesthetic,

²¹<<http://www.pmstudio.co.uk/pmstudio/what-pervasive-media>> (08 December 2014).

²²<<http://www.sourcewire.com/news/73628/media-and-advertisements-are-omnipresent-omnipotent-advertising-on-toilet#>. VIUvVdKUfjg> (21 December 2014).

²³Alvin Powell, “Omnipresent Media Hurts, Helps Children,” <<http://news.harvard.edu/gazette/2001/10.11/06-kidsmedia.html>> (08 December 2014).

²⁴Rajesh Gupta, et al., “The Influence of Television on Urban Adolescents of Delhi,” *Indian Journal of Community Medicine*, January-March 39 (1), 2014, 47-48.

psychological, moral, ethical and social consequences that they leave no part of us untouched, unaffected, unaltered.”²⁵ Sure, the pervasiveness of the media is still to be profoundly felt in some parts of Africa, Asia and Latin America. This is partly due to the global digital divide.

Prior to the emergence of major Social Media sites – Orkut, Myspace, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc. – society enjoyed engaging socially with other people through the means of traditional media, which we have detailed above. When Social Media sites such as Xanga and Friendster started gaining more popularity people argued that Social Media sites such as these were fads that would fade away²⁶ with time and people’s short attention spans. The fact is Social Media has proved to be quite the resilient fad (an understatement for today), however, and held onto its space in society fiercely. What started as a fad²⁷ is now a social and cultural norm and have integrated into our everyday lives. Social Media and its impact no longer remain with its users. Social Media has created a sort of revolution in our society.²⁸ And it is giving rise to many other revolutions²⁹ in many parts of the world. Social Media has an impact greater than anyone could have ever imagined.

Now, anywhere you go there is some sort of social medium. It’s all around us in the community. Researches abound on the impacts of Social Media networks on social cohesion,

²⁵Cited in Srampickal, *Communications Can Renew the Church*, 206.

²⁶Orkut and Myspace have faded away.

²⁷Mark Zuckerberg, a Harvard sophomore, is reported to have founded the Facebook along with Eduardo Saverin for the use of the students of their college and subsequently the others in the Boston area. Initially its aim was to create a universal website that can contact people around the university.

²⁸The YouTube video ‘Social Media Revolution 2014’ illustrates this Social Revolution.

²⁹For instance Arab Spring, a revolutionary wave of demonstrations and protests, riots and civil wars in the Arab world that began on 18 December 2010. There has been much discussion about the role of Social Media in the spread of Arab Spring.

fragmentation and continuity. Social Media is much more multidimensional than most people thought when it first came to be. It has its place in the past and the present, and with the way it is now, almost has a guaranteed place in society in the future. The presence of Social Media has invoked a social revolution in society and at present it is difficult to think of a society without it.³⁰

8. Effects of the Omnipresent Media

While there is a general agreement on the impact of media, communication research scholars have not reached a full understanding of the extent of the impact that media are having upon the psychological, emotional, moral, spiritual, economic, political, creative, cultural, and educational aspects of the ordinary individual's life. What's the extent of the effects media have on individuals and society? Answer has swung from great effects to minimal effects. Effect processes can be direct and indirect: Direct effects are mainly those intended by the senders; they are short term; they have to do with attitudinal, informational or behavioural changes in individuals. Indirect effects are those unplanned; long term, collective.

It is through the mass media we learn almost everything we know about the world beyond our immediate environment. More specifically they can be a positive tool educating and inoculating children against the evils such as drunk driving and gang violence. Newspapers are known as the university of common people. An informed and involved citizenry is possible in modern democracy only when the mass media work well. People need the mass media to express their ideas widely, acting as guardians of precious free speech. Without mass media, your expression would be limited to people within earshot and those to whom you write letters. Media are the faithful servants and saviours in that they expose sin and corruption. They bring at least some culture to millions and help to raise the standard of living. The mass media are the main tools of propagandists,

³⁰<<http://whatjathinkers.wordpress.com/2012/02/15/the-omnipresence-of-social-media>> (22 December 2014).

advertisers and other persuaders. Mass media then are the information source, entertainment source, persuasive forum and a binding/uniting force creating a basis for community.

Negatively, movies, music, television, video games, and the Internet can warp the way children view sex, drugs, their bodies, and themselves contributing to general moral deterioration. The immediate consequence is increasing rate of delinquency. Media have the effect of lulling the masses into political superficiality by diluting and trivializing serious political issues. Media are also accused of lowering the public's cultural tastes by not attempting to rise above mediocrity, sensationalism, and vulgarity. Powerful forces use the mass media to influence audience with their ideologies and for their commercial purposes.

9. Media Omnipotence

God is omnipresent and therefore omnipotent and vice versa. Applying this analogy to an omnipresent media one can easily conclude that media is omnipotent too. For, what media treat as important (persons, issues) the public too considers important; what media ignores, the public too tend to ignore; events made memorable by the media, the public remembers. In other words, there is a direct co-relation between the amount of media exposure of an issue (X) and the degree to which the public see (x) as important through the filters - Selection, Interpretation, Distortion and Emphasis (SIDE) - given by the media. It shows the power of the media to influence the perceptions and lives of the masses. Hence media can make or break the lives of even the most powerful persons - the US President, or the Pope for instance - in the world. Former British Labour Prime Minister Tony Blair's slavish dependence on Media Corporation owned by the media mughal Rupert Murdoch is well documented. In 1997 when Blair was elected Prime Minister first time, the *Sun* tabloid, owned by Media Corporation, had famously run the front page headline: "It's the *Sun*wot won it." John Theobald, in *Media and the Making of History*, illustrates with numerous examples and anecdotes how media discourse has been a critical factor in recent

European history, and indeed one that distinguishes the twentieth century from all previous ones.³¹ Theobald looks back to the First World War, analyzing the use and abuse of journalistic discourse in the portrayal of events to the public and to decision-makers. He goes on to present a series of case studies demonstrating the active mass media role in a selection of key events from the twentieth century including the Cold War, the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the subsequent collapse of Communism in East Germany and German unification, debates over the European Union and the impact of September 11, 2001. He pulls no punches in his insistence on the baleful role of the mass media in the shaping of the modern world.

10. Media: The New Religion

From its inception media (beginning with the traditional one) have been powerful so much so some media practitioners termed it 'Mediacracy' (the rule of the media). Now with the arrival of the New Media there is 'Netocracy' (the rule of the Internet). According to Alexander Bard, who founded a new religion called Syntheism, "the Internet is God."³² His latest book *Syntheism - Creating God in the Internet Age* spells out the new religion. "Religion is first practiced then formulated. Saint Paul wrote his letters after Christianity was being practiced across the Roman Empire. I firmly believe that Syntheism is already being practiced and we are just formulating it," says Bard.³³ He goes on to say,

³¹John Theobald, *The Media and the Making of History*, Hants, London: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2004.

³²Bard helped to found Syntheism in 2012. It is based on the idea that if man creates God, then it's time we created a religion relevant to the 21st century. "Syntheism" comes from Greek *syntheos*, meaning humanity creates God - as opposed to the "God creates humanity" basis of the traditional monotheistic religions. It is inspired by the writing of the French surrealist philosopher Georges Bataille in the 1950s.

³³Mark Piesing, "The Prophet Who Calls for Triumph of the 'Netocracy'," *The Hindu*, 9 October, 2014, 12.

In Christianity, one of the last things Jesus said to his disciples was ‘I will always be with you’, meaning that the Holy Spirit is the manifestation of God when the believers are together,...the Internet is seven billion people connected together in real time, and if that isn’t the Holy Spirit then I don’t know what it is.³⁴

WikiLeaks and other radical groups such as the Pirate Party³⁵ movement that fights for digital freedom, and the Internet Party³⁶ in New Zealand have similar views as Syntheism: That the internet is actually going to overturn our sense of ourselves as individuals. It teaches us, rather, that our value is as social nodes in the networks created online.³⁷

And just as the Holy Spirit enters into every aspect of our lives, the Internet through thousands of apps that are being created every day is beginning to influence every walk of life – to get people talking, helping to work from home, preventing corruption, etc. Apps are becoming a must even to shop online. Individuals have progressed from the need to have pager, mobile phones, e-mail IDs to apps. The day may not be far off when individuals will have their custom made app to structure the flow of daily life, determining when they eat, sleep, socialize, even procreate. However, these are said to be the clear and taken-for-granted roles and functions of ‘traditional’ religions.³⁸ Such is the pervasiveness of the media in the contemporary world.

11. Conclusion

At the end of this paper we might do well to remember the prophetic thoughts of the pioneers of communication from the 1940s and 1960s: Harold Lasswell and Marshal McLuhan. Lasswell had said media is pervasive, and seems to be present

³⁴Piesing, “The Prophet Who Calls for Triumph of the ‘Netocracy’.”

³⁵Pirate Party is said to have now spread to 70 countries across the world.

³⁶Campaigns for an end to mass surveillance and for net neutrality.

³⁷Piesing, “The Prophet who Calls for Triumph of the ‘Netocracy’.”

³⁸Stewart M. Hoover, *Religion in the Media Age*, London: Routledge, 2006, 9-10.

everywhere though the media present at his time were only newspapers, magazines, radio and television was just coming in. McLuhan had said, "The medium of our time - electronic technology - is reshaping and restructuring patterns of social interdependence and every aspect of our personal life."³⁹ He went on to suggest that "the media have radically reoriented the way we perceive and know things."⁴⁰ Both of them thus clearly understood the nature and impact of the media even at that stage. The contemporary generation is the eye-witness of it today. What better way is there than to end this paper also by reflecting on the words of Theologian William Fore:

Media today appeal more than the traditional institutions like family, religion and school. Politics, business, and media hold more sway than any other areas of interest today. Power, money, fame and glory are shared mostly by these. A new culture, religion, sanctuary idols and priesthood are emerging.⁴¹

³⁹McLuhan and Fiore, *The Medium is the Message*, 8.

⁴⁰Hoover, *Religion in the Media Age*, 2006, 8.

⁴¹Cited in Srampickal, *Communications Can Renew the Church*, 206.