

## RELIGIOUS CONTENT IN INFORMATION FLOW AND TECHNOLOGICAL REVOLUTION

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### INTRODUCTION

The age of worldwide information started nearly 30 years ago. It is a fact of each and every society that news, photos, films, videos, blogs, Facebook, sites on the web, are displayed worldwide, whether the author of the information likes it or not.

In less than 500 years, humanity has jumped from a very long and tedious copying of a whole set of books, selected by monks, prophets, to a global circulation of documents.

Today, we can recognize that religious questions are in front line of the international scene, with repercussions to the "shared security" of human beings. In the actual time of uncertainty and worry, religions are still a very important point of reference in our modern world.

Communication and information methods are increasingly sophisticated and convey all sorts of news relative to the governance of society, and the living together in harmony.

It is a fact that Religions, all Religions and especially the Three Revealed Religions are concerned by this technological change. The Divine Message is no longer the property of those who can, or think they can, interpret it. It is an accessible message to each and everyone that wants to read it. We can say "Goodbye Gutenberg".

If the religious books and confessional teachings are still more reliable sources, the actual media of communication have created a new "Agora" often with special unfortunate characteristics: Stereotypes, short phrases, sites encouraging hatred and satirical programs. Furthermore, it is possible to witness the ignorance and/or ill will on the side of people who demand or supply information flow about religions, adding danger to this complexity.



So, the emergence of the web generation changing the ways we perceive space and time has consequences on the religious contents.

The new media world opens into channels to everyone, the worst and the best. A twofold point of view.

Allow me to make a few comments on each of these:

\_\_\_\_\_ Populism, fanaticism, hatred messages, distorted consideration of the Divine word, sectarianism, are the upcoming plagues of our world. The television broadcasters are not always knowledgeable about the issue, but sometimes they tend to play into the audience's prejudices, which they often share.

Furthermore, there is no barrier to this development, no credible exclusion of false Prophets, no "autodafe." The web too is handless for good and evil. The new generation has free access on such terrified sites.

Even in societies said to have drifted away from religion, secular radio and Television stations often include religious items in their information programs. In non-sectarian broadcasting systems it is usually referred to striking events rather than fundamentals.

The media must obey to needs of the staging and exaggeration to attract the public. The show business can often be more attractive than religious meditation.

Furthermore, unlike readers of books or newspapers, radio listeners and Television viewers are passive recipients of what comes to them on this fashion. So through the non sectarian broadcasting system religion's ignorance, sometimes including their own, is not dispelled. At the same time, the shocking nature of many events reported, often increase their ingrained opposition to other religions if not religion as a whole.

By the way, people in charge of the station of sectarian broadcasting system can expect to be better informed, but their stations have a difficult task if they wish to preserve their audience. They need a fair view of the religions of others, too.

Some religious broadcasters abuse their influence over a passive audience by spreading intolerance and fanatic hostility towards other religions. It may also develop intolerance, hatred, within the religious communities, exacerbating differences and conflict between religions.



Let me suggest that encouraging correct attitude among broadcasters could be an important purpose of interreligious cooperation. Listeners and viewers could also be taught a mature, critical approach, as they must be when it comes to the Internet.

As well, creating electronic forums for discussion, it may on the contrary impulse dialogue, understanding, mutual exchange, comparison, and therefore tolerance and mutual respect.

\_\_\_\_\_ On the positive way, information systems offer to the Divine Message or to the religions - ethic messages- a strong support from which it never benefited from before.

Broadcasting, Television, Facebook, World Wide Web now are the media through which the young generations perceive the world and the religious message, whatever it is. This media shows a very strong capacity of impact on young minds. Listening to preachers on discussing religion on blogs is far more efficient for the Divine Message diffusion, than the long pulpit speeches in cold churches. Prayers will be shared on the web in the future far better than in many churches. Audience can be increasing and fast developed and those who promote it are recognized on this media.

On another side, religious authorities should take an open position towards new technologies developments, especially oriented towards the youngest.

There is an opportunity to promote the Divine Message or any type of religious message towards new generations, who appear to have difficulties with their faith.

Through the media, the promotion of message, obviously, impact the quality of reception of it. Religious authorities clearly face a challenge of broadcasting this message to the young mass through the electronic media. Some religious leaders of their community, remember late John Paul the 2nd, have succeeded in using new media to share their message with people of their faith or not.

Let me remind you that the web is handless for good and evil. Now comes the time when Reason becomes the support of Religious thought, and Ethics the judgment on the information collected on the web. This is especially necessary for the young who may be tempted to believe anything they find on the web. It is very difficult for young people to make a qualified selection. So, it will be for each and every believer to make his or her own mind on what is displayed on the web. If this is not realized we will face an increasing concern on the capacity of the



Message to structure a coherent and friendly society, as it may fall apart into sects. So here comes the opportunity to ensure the quality of the message.

If religious authorities take the head on managing new media and broadcasting their message they will probably appear as the legitimate owners of the message. They have to provide a true picture of their respective religions and to present their differences from with each other objectively, not as a ground for violent opposition. They have to find a way to warn against violent, fundamentalist sites or distort the peace full message of their site.

Therefore fanaticism, marginal extremist view will be then clearly identified as false and dangerous position.

## **CONCLUSION**

New media are what they are used for. They are tools handy for those who want to use them. As tools they are the worst and the best. The extraordinary beverage of the Divine Message diffusion opening of worldwide discussion on religious matters, dramatic media of fanaticism, intolerance, sectarianism, development on the other hand.

The web is the new support of religious information and religious content of the different Messages.

There is such a large diffusion of ideas that the control authorities are not able to successfully control the continuous information flow.

Allow me to remind nevertheless that information diffusion is useful but it will never take the place of Faith and Prayer, which remain personal and within each of our selves.