A debate between Paul Soukup, SJ and Paul Glader on how digital culture is affecting media education on religion

Paul Soukupa and Paul Gladerb

aCommunication Department, Santa Clara University, Santa Clara, CA, USA; bThe King’s College, New York, NY, USA

ABSTRACT

The debate feature of the journal is one in which two scholars offer their contrasting reflections on a topic of interest. This year, Church Communication and Culture posed the question ‘How is digital culture affecting media education on religion?’ First, Paul Soukup, Jesuit priest and Communications professor at Santa Clara University in California, presents strategical suggestions for religious education within the digital culture; then, Paul Glader, associate professor of Journalism, Media and Entrepreneurship at The King’s College New York, weighs in with perspective about the need for influencing the new communications technologies to develop in a way that is not hostile to religion. Soukup replies with some additional thoughts and clarifications. The debate is concluded by remarks from the Editor.

Abbreviations: BBC: British Broadcasting Corporation; CNN: Cable News Network

ESSAY 1: Digital culture and religious education

Paul A. Soukup, S.J.

The last 15 years have witnessed a massive change in society and in culture, a digital culture spurred on by a change in communication infrastructure and technology. From its beginnings 15 years before the full-blown digital culture, the Internet spread both geographically and technologically, making access more universal and more easily available on portable wireless devices. At the same time, people devised new uses – particularly social media – that embedded the Internet into people’s lives. Those changes in availability and use correlated with changes in increased content of all kinds and with increasing hours of usage. Similarly, the development of social media in the last 15 years has also led to greater hours online and to an increase of the influence of
online media. In some ways, this should not seem completely new: Changes of this magnitude and impact have accompanied the rise of other communication technologies, the television most notably and recently but also, some centuries before, the printing press. In each instance, religious practices and the Church have had to adjust to the new cultures.

The digital world provides not just a number of platforms or apps (Facebook, Instagram, Google search, WhatsApp, Twitter, Amazon, etc.), not just a source of newsfeeds (BBC, CNN, Fox, etc.), not just a connection with entertainment (YouTube, Vimeo, etc.), but ‘an entire environment in which we function’ (Rushkoff 2019, para. 7). Rushkoff continues:

We don’t “go online” by turning on a computer and dialing up through a modem; we live online 24/7, creating data as we move through our lives, accessible to everyone and everything. Our smartphones are not devices that sit in our pockets; they create new worlds with new rules about our availability, intimacies, appearance, and privacy. Apple, Twitter, and Google are not just technology services we use, but staples in our retirement portfolios, on whose continued success our financial futures depend.

This digital environment creates and recreates itself and catches us up into it, even leading to our choices of what’s real and what’s ‘fake’, what matters and what doesn’t. We cannot escape it. Even if we try to avoid the digital world, its impact still touches us indirectly.

The digital environment works seamlessly with the biases of cultural transmission (Acerbi 2016). Such ‘cultural transmission biases, that is, simple heuristics such as “copy prestigious individuals” or “copy the majority”, operate in the novel context of digital media’ (636), even when the ‘prestigious individuals’ achieve notoriety in non-relevant areas like entertainment or sports. And eventually this has a profound importance to religion. Indirectly, at least, the digital world, much like the television world before it (Fore 1987), replaces the world-defining role of religion with its own ‘religious’ values, assumptions, and worldview. It provides the common touchstone that supplies information, attests to the value of that information, offers role models, and gives a narrative of ultimate value. What the Church was to medieval Christendom, the digital world is to us.

All of this affects religious education. To see this more clearly, let us consider more about the digital environment and more about religious education.

The new environment in which and through which we experience the world has changed how people think, something that may be more noticeable in students. In a chapter about the impact of the much earlier technology of writing, Ong (1982) documented his claim that ‘writing restructures consciousness’ (78). Something similar seems to occur with digital technologies. Without attending to the environment that Rushkoff identifies (though that surely matters), Carr (2011), acknowledging McLuhan, notes that paying attention to online content distracts us from noticing the larger changes that take place in the background – that is, the focus and the structuring of consciousness change. He cites studies that track how the use of digital tools leads to changes in brain development, reading practices, attention span, and the use of memory. Screen time and game playing, for example, affects eye-hand coordination and the brain structures affecting reading and writing skills. The abundance of online
information leads people to skim through things rather than reading them carefully, and (successfully) tempts people to shift attention among many objects (‘multi-tasking’) rather than focus on a single object. People have less need to remember since they have a massive and virtually instantaneous digital library at their fingertips. Emotion and quick reaction outrun empathy and compassion.

In addition to a greater visual development in brains, the digital environment leads to other physical changes (such as those stemming from a lack of physical exercise or those eye injuries arising with staring at tablets and screens too long) and psychological changes as ‘reward loops’ shift due to the stimulus-response-reward patterns built into social media and games (Bruce-Lockhart 2018). Winning online games, scrolling through shopping sites, gazing at photos of attractive individuals, watching engrossing content (from sports to entertainment) all provide psychological rewards, on which we can become dependent. And like other kinds of dependencies, we need ever increasing doses to achieve the same reward results.

Digital culture affects how people focus attention (scanning more than a tight focus), how people read, and how people have trouble staying in a moment (Alton 2016). Such a wide-ranging focus connects to what some have labeled the ‘fear of missing out’ – the increased social comparison facilitated by social media, leading to an increased desire for what others have or do. People fear that looking away from such online content will put them at an informational or emotional disadvantage. Even an understanding of childhood changes, with children exposed to a wider range of ideas and content than their parents in an earlier era. And often people expect more from children – more creativity, more talent, more skill, more commitment. The digital world has also led to ‘crowd-sourcing mental health’, as people go online to self-diagnose or self-treat (Bruce-Lockhart 2018). These changes are not necessarily good or bad, but they do create a different experience and expectation. These changes affect education, particularly education based on other or older ways of thinking about how people think and behave.

The changes in how people think also lead to an increased disconnect between generations – whether parents and children or teachers and students. This results from changing thinking patterns, a changing information environment, and changing content, all of which combine in ways that widen the natural gap between how a younger (and in this case, digital) generation sees the world and how their elders see it. As ever, the youth think differently from how their elders think, but the digital gap has widened. This manifests itself in things such as how the different groups evaluate materials: the digital natives seem more adept at sorting what they encounter; they tend to show more suspicion about online messages while their elders tend to believe what they read – perhaps a consequence of applying the more trusting standards of print (with its gatekeepers and fact checkers) to an online world (Hern 2019). The generations also choose their sources of information differently.

The different thought patterns carry over into religious thinking in various ways. Because the hierarchies of the digital world typically remain hidden, most digital users do not think in terms of hierarchies nor in the authority structures represented in traditional hierarchical arrangements. In subtle ways, that has shifted religious thinking from a hierarchical model of church to a flatter one. Dulles (1974, 1989) recognized
this in his classic models of the church, noting that the hierarchical view constituted only one way of seeing the church and that the various models correlated rather well with differing communication patterns. The loss of a hierarchical perspective in the digital world not only makes it more difficult to understand (and perhaps accept) the church but it also makes it more difficult for people to evaluate online religious material: every opinion appears equally valid in a flattened world.

This flattening of a sense of the Church combines with a digitally reinforced mixing of religious traditions. Online searches (as well as many people who post online content) make no distinction among different Christian theological interpretations. Students, for example, find all faith traditions presented equally online. Those who do explore faith tend to come away with a kind of generic Christian theology or Biblical interpretation. From what they see online, they would be hard pressed to state the difference between one Christian denomination and another. This can further dilute any sense of the Church beyond the most basic; it can lead to the ease with which people move from church to church or pick and choose what they wish to believe.

The digital world and its thought patterns have replaced a sense of religious tradition that provided a commonly shared set of assumptions about faith and religious practice with a different body of materials for people to use in understanding the world. Sociologists have long identified various functions of religion: giving experiences of community; providing ‘people with a set of resources (e.g. myths, rituals, symbols, beliefs, values, narratives) that may help people to live with a sense of identity, meaning, and purpose’; and providing a way for people to experience God or the transcendent (Lynch 2005, 28). The digital world, with its vast quantity of material of every kind, has not only offered ways of thinking, but material to think about and to think with, challenging traditional religious venues in both providing community and providing resources.

And, more often than not, the online world appears much more entertaining and engaging than traditional religious sites or materials, most of which originated in formats better suited to books, journals, and newspapers. One has only to look at the Vatican’s website to see an overwhelming number of printed pages uninterrupted with images, movement, or people. Given the patterns of thought shaped by the digital world, it is no wonder that people seek the functions of religion from the seemingly richer experiences of the online world.

The overall background of the digital world, then, poses a challenge for religious education. Religious educators cannot take for granted the fact that the students come from a theologically consistent tradition, or even understand what a tradition might be. If one of the goals of religious education is to help the students understand their faith, another is to help them to reflect upon what they believe. In this, educators might follow Anselm’s definition of theology as ‘faith seeking understanding’. But to help students do that, religious educators need to first to teach something of the tradition, the process of reflection, the need to think, and the need to evaluate materials available to them. In some ways, of course, everyone does reflect spontaneously on what they believe to a certain extent, if only to make some sense of the world. But that can present a problem for religious education when the materials for reflection get tangled up
from a variety of sources, as appears for example in the case studies explored by Clark (2003) who traced how young people before the digital age drew from television programs to create a religious world of angels, aliens, and other supernatural beings.

Religious educators have long wrestled with how to teach the tradition and how to reflect on it. For example, medieval and Reformation Europe witnessed a confusion of beliefs, religious understandings, and practices. The widespread religious ignorance spurred the reformers who learned to take advantage of the advent of the printing press and the increase of literacy in the 15th and 16th centuries. With the western churches facing the need to inculcate the faith in ways beyond the existing communication channels of sermons, sacraments, and religious art, the churches turned to print. The Lutheran, the Anglican, and the Roman churches (and some other groups) all chose a newly revised communication form – the catechism. These concise summaries of beliefs offered an authoritative and well-ordered source. Interestingly, the churches used the catechisms differently, in ways aligned with their implicit ecclesiologies: Luther intended his catechism for the people, who could learn directly without mediators; the Roman church intended its larger catechism for the clergy, who would teach from it (though Peter Canisius did produce a catechism for children as well as the large catechism); the Anglican communion combined its catechism with the Book of Common Prayer (Haemig 2014). The story of the catechism highlights how religious educators can adapt to new technologies, but in ways consistent with their own traditions.

Religious educators today have begun to explore religious learning in the context of a digital culture. Joining theologians to take advantage of the digital environment for rethinking how to present the faith, religious educators can learn from Hess (2013), who suggests that the ‘limitless nature of the current information environment’ could support learning if the educators can design both the spaces and techniques to take advantage of it. Following Thomas and Seely Brown (2011), she argues for a ‘learning based approach … focused on learning “through” engagement with the world’ (14). Hess advocates a shift from ‘teaching-based’ to ‘learning-based’ approaches, that is, approaches that begin with the student’s world rather than the content. She recognizes the importance of what she calls the ‘implicit curriculum’ in the digital world – the things that Rushkoff describes as the environment people become accustomed to. He has in mind the entirety of that environment, the things people simply take for granted and assume as an accurate description of all they need to know. Again, following Thomas and Brown, Hess (2013) identifies a shift in education which moves ‘away from asking “what do we know?” to “what are the things we don’t know, and what can we ask about them?”’ (14).

**How might religious education proceed in such a world?**

Teachers can take advantage of the qualities outlined by Hess, by helping students to understand the artificial nature of their online environment and giving them tools to help them to reflect on their faith through it. As noted before, religious educators can teach the tradition, the process of reflection, the need to think, and the need to evaluate materials by shifting their approach from the text to the context. Here, the students
learn theology by doing theology. In a Montessori-like process, religious educators can guide young people in a process of faith seeking understanding, not only by study but by finding ways to express what they believe in all the new media available to them (Soukup 2018). Making a video about the Creed or curating an online exhibit on reconciliation, for example, requires that the students learn their tradition and express it in their own idiom. The very process reinforces one kind of implicit learning while making another kind explicit.

In order for such an attempt to bear fruit, religious education teachers need to guide the process for their students; without such guidance, young people will most likely create a non-coherent world of religious questioning and popular culture responses. The educator’s role should become one of encouragement and of questioning: ‘What does this say about faith?’ ‘Where does it come from?’ ‘How does it reveal something of God?’ ‘How does it reinforce our community?’

Religious educators can accompany the students on the path to this new culture of learning only if they themselves can walk it. And so, they themselves need to explore the digital culture – even perhaps asking their students to guide them – and they need to continually engage in their own ‘faith seeking understanding’ though hands-on expressions of belief.

ESSAY 2: Faithful presence & big tech

Paul D. Glader

The evolution of media ecology and media technology has been more dramatic in the last 50 years than perhaps the previous 500 years. And, therefore, the response to the technological shift and its impact on human beings, particularly on people of faith, may require a response of similar dramatic scope and scale.

In the opening essay, Paul Soukup provides a meaningful tour de force of the dangers of new technology in our changing media ecology. We are reminded of digital tools adjusting our psychology, tempting us away from physical exercise and potentially ruining our eyesight from staring at tablets too long. He argues that digital thought patterns carry over into religious thinking. He suggests digital users ‘do not think in terms of hierarchies nor in the authority structures represented in traditional hierarchy arrangements’. The digital realm and our addiction to it causes us to think about everything, including religion, in a flat way rather than a hierarchical way. He gives us an important thought to wrestle with: ‘What the Church was to medieval Christendom, the digital world is to us’. And, ultimately, he argues that the digital world poses big challenges for religious people and religious education.

It’s true that religious education teachers need to use new methods to reach and teach students in a digital era. It’s true that religious people must learn to translate historic truths of their faith into new formats and via new mediums. But perhaps the answer is not just more clever use of the new platforms and tools to produce content? Perhaps the key for religious communities is to make sure the platforms themselves – and the billionaires owning the platforms, the governments regulating the platforms
and the algorithms running the content on the platforms - are not tilted against reli-
gion and religious people?

First of all, the challenge to hierarchy and authority may not be a bad starting place for people to learn about religion and faith. Although the Internet, in many ways, is not hierarchical, it is not necessarily antithetical to the gospel. The gospel itself seems to parallel content from the Internet. The gospel is a story that starts with a child ‘born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth’ (John 1:13-14 [New International Version]). In other words the story of Jesus resonates today arguably better than any Instagram influencer and transcends all generational and technological boundaries.

Meanwhile, we already do see Christian people using the platforms of social media as a means to share religious messages and teaching. One could point to rap artist Kanye West and his turn, in 2019, toward Christian messages in his life and music as a case in point for the power of messaging in the social media age. In addition to performing at concerts and putting out albums, more than 29 million people follow Kanye on Twitter and potentially see the Biblical passages he tweets out. Another example is the personal witness of hundreds of elite athletes such as Philadelphia Eagles NFL (American Football) quarterback Carson Wentz or Golden State Warriors NBA basketball player ‘Steph’ Curry, who live their faith publicly on Instagram and Twitter in a way they never could have 20 years ago. What about comedian Stephen Colbert, host of The Late Show on CBS? He is a devout Catholic who has spoken so compellingly about his faith and how it helped him deal with personal loss, grief and suffering that video clips of his comments are viewed by millions. What about Hillsong Church, a protestant church that emerged from Australia and specializes in songwriting and worship music. It has hundreds of millions of YouTube views on its songs, churches in 23 countries and a cable TV channel it launched in 2016. What about Catholic media out-
lets that reach church members in new and expansive ways, by the millions, crossing local, national and international boundaries.

So in some ways the Internet or ‘new media’ era scrambles previous hierarchies. At the same time, it also creates new hierarchies through which influential people have power to communicate with the masses more directly rather than through the traditional filters of news media journalists deciding what people can or can’t say in public. So this creates questions for how non-celebrities can communicate religious ideas and knowledge to people via the same technologies, particularly knowledge that involves more theological depth and nuance. It also creates questions about how long people want to be ‘followers’, whose data are harvested and eyeballs monetized for viewing endless streams of tweets, snaps and posts. At some point, do we see more traction around people unplugging, getting off-line and reading physical books, seeking spiritual peace and looking for in-person community? Will technology fasts become more popular and pronounced? This thread of human experience – fasting, monasticism, asceticism – has remained alive for as long as we have had monks and tech skeptics.

The disruption or challenge to the hierarchy of religious authority, high culture and elite institutions has certainly scrambled our ideas of influence. Sociologists who study
power and influence often point to center institutions having more weight than peripheral institutions. They respect the natural function of hierarchy in a society. James D. Hunter, a sociologist at The University of Virginia writes, ‘The deepest and most enduring forms of cultural change nearly always occur from the “top down”. In other words, the work of world-making and world-changing are, by and large, the work of elites; gatekeepers who provide creative direction and management within spheres of social life’ (Hunter 2010).

It would seem the Internet has turned his theory upside down in some ways. He notes the capacity for cultural change ‘is concentrated in certain institutions and among certain leadership groups who have a lopsided access to the means of cultural production. These elites operate in well-developed networks and powerful institutions’ (Hunter 2010). So if we take that theory seriously, perhaps we think differently about hierarchy. Perhaps we start to think of locations such as Silicon Valley, Seattle, Portland, Los Angeles and New York City and of the major tech companies housed there such as Facebook, Google and Twitter.

Perhaps the more dangerous notion for religious education and the hearts and minds of free-thinking people is indeed about authority and the emerging class war between elites and the masses. In past centuries we saw tension between the ruling elite, the kings, and their relationship to religious leaders and religious pontiffs. Perhaps in our new era the worry is the secularism of computer programmers’ and engineers’ aims to eradicate religious thought from public discourse? Or perhaps the ego of tech company founders and chiefs desires religious-style adoration in addition to larger shares of the world’s attention spans and hard-earned money?

As Michael Lind wrote in The Wall Street Journal, class war has arrived and the clash over religion and religious education is part of that war. ‘In a modern economy that is naturally dominated by large firms, it is absurd to pretend that working-class employees have any bargaining power as individuals. It is just as absurd to pretend that devout Christians, Jews and Muslims can find alternatives to social media platforms and public school monopolies that stigmatize their creeds and mock their values’ (Lind 2020).

As an antidote to the new hierarchies and class wars in our digital age, perhaps people of faith and religious institutions need to become more part of the discussion about regulating technology, questioning technology and limiting technology effects on humanity. And beyond considering how to communicate religious information and instruction using technologies and platforms, perhaps religious people and institutions need to more deeply consider how to interact with or train the people who build, own or regulate the platforms.

ESSAY 3: Addressing digital and other cultures

Paul A. Soukup, S.J.

How best should the Church and religious educators respond to the massive change brought about by digital culture? The question, minus the word, ‘digital’, echoes through Christian history. The Church proclaims the Gospel incarnately, that is, rooted
in human life and history and thus in human cultures. And those cultures welcome or resist the Gospel to varying extents. Should the Church as a whole embrace the example of the Fathers and Mothers of the desert and withdraw from culture? Should the Church borrow what good it can from culture? Should the Church create its own (redeemed) culture? Should the Church selectively choose those parts of culture for which it feels an affinity?

If those questions sound familiar, H. Richard Niebuhr (1951) first gathered them in his masterful book, *Christ and Culture*. Niebuhr suggests five general Christian patterns for thinking about culture; he labels them ‘Christ against culture’, ‘the Christ of culture’, ‘Christ above culture’ (in turn divided into three subgroups: a synthesis of Christ and culture, Christ and culture in tension or paradox, and Christ as the transformer of culture). Niebuhr offers examples of thinkers, teachers, and artists throughout the centuries of Christian history that made each of those options real, from Tertullian and Jerome, Abelard and Ritschel, Justin Martyr and Thomas Aquinas, Leonardo DaVinci and Dante, Paul and Martin Luther, to Augustine and Calvin. If we wonder what to do with our culture, we’re in good company.

Faced with this challenge, Professor Glader proposes a very Jesuit approach for today’s Church. St. Ignatius Loyola (1996, no. 622.8, 9) writes in the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus that Jesuits should choose their ministries on the basis of the principle of seeking to have the greater influence on society. He thus includes educational work because through schools the Church helps shape the outlook of the next generation of leaders. Ignatius also includes working with civil society because these institutions also shape the world. In our day of course, as Professor Glader notes, the whole structure of influence of society has been turned upside down. All the more reason, then, to take his advice, ‘perhaps religious people and institutions need to more deeply consider how to interact with or train the people who build, own, or regulate the platforms’ of digital culture.

Another way of considering appropriate responses to the contemporary (digital) cultural situation comes from an analysis of how religion and culture influence each other. If Niebuhr traces the theological possibilities, then Gordon Lynch (2005) offers a look drawn from the sociology of religion. In a chapter on how theology interacts with popular culture, he points out four general approaches ‘that those working in theology and religious studies have taken to attempt to answer these larger questions’ (21). In my initial essay, I quoted from one of those approaches, but as we consider the interaction between church and culture that Professor Glader proposes, looking at the entire set offers a wider range of things religious educators might do.

Lynch describes them in this way:

1. the study of religion in relation to the environment, resources and practices of everyday life (in particular about how popular culture shapes religious belief and activities ... how religion is represented in popular culture, and how religious groups interact with popular culture);
2. the study of the ways in which popular culture may serve religious functions in contemporary society;
3. a missiological response to popular culture; and
4. the use of popular cultural texts and practices as a medium for theological reflection. (21)

Like Niebuhr, Lynch identifies various practitioners and Christian theologians who follow these approaches. This mapping suggests an avenue for religious thinkers to engage the popular culture in which the church finds itself today. The first invites religious thinkers to more deeply understand how culture works, particularly the rapidly changing digital culture. The second asks those involved in religious education to understand the (sociological) functions of religion vis-à-vis popular culture in order to avoid those things less central to religious belief, even if they have an historical connection. The third, as Professor Glader along with Pope St. John Paul II (1990, no. 37c) points out, proposes that the Church launch a missiological enterprise – that it evangelize the digital culture – finding ways to influence the influencers. The fourth invites religious thinkers and teachers to bring their (and their students’) theological reflection to bear on those areas that prove particularly relevant to the larger culture: films, songs, television programs, blogs, podcasts, and so on.

The ultimate goal, in any of these theological or sociological approaches, is not for the Church, its theologians, or religious educators to ‘win an argument’ but to keep the discussion going, to think about the culture and the Church’s interaction with the culture, bringing that habit of ‘faith seeking understanding’ to bear in the context of our lives.

Editor’s final comments

The debate between Paul Soukup, SJ and Paul Glader on how digital culture is affecting media education on religion is of eminent topicality and reflects an urgent concern not only in religious education studies, but also in a large part of today’s cultural debates.

Both professors share the common concern: The digital world in all its facets, not least due to the massive presence of social media, is bringing about remarkable changes. It starts with the mental processing of information and ends with the de-hierarchization of communication. As far as proclamation and religious education are concerned, these are real challenges, if the Church still wants to address young people in particular. Both authors take up the challenge.

While Soukup focuses heavily in his first essay on religious education itself, Glader is more concerned with influencing the new communication technologies. The first can give the impression of reacting, while the latter pleads for action. However, Soukup’s answer to Glader’s statement shows that the professor from Santa Clara University has probably also thought through the penetration of the new popular culture and is making suggestions.

However, one thing should be underlined: In Soukup’s contribution, an effort of modern religious education studies is addressed that is gaining more and more importance: the pedagogy of performance, i.e. the making of religion tangible. Soukup proposes ‘a video about the Creed or curating an online exhibit on reconciliation’. It is basically about ‘learning theology by doing theology’. Certainly, a good method to get the religious experience or to create an introduction to religious questions.
In summary, the essays of both professors provide a rich field for further questions and deeper thought from a variety of angles. It remains interesting to see how religious education continues to adapt to the challenges of the digital age which they have pointed out.

As a final note, at the moment of editing this debate we are in the middle of the worldwide pandemic of Covid-19. This disruptive event will have an influence in many things. Certainly, it will also affect the debate on online education at all levels. We hope to be able to talk about that in the future.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Notes on contributors

Paul A. Soukup, S.J., has explored the connections between communication and theology since 1982. His publications include Communication and Theology (1983); Christian Communication: A Bibliographical Survey (1989), and Media, Culture, and Catholicism (1996). In addition, he and Thomas J. Farrell have edited four volumes of the collected works of Walter J. Ong, S.J., Faith and Contexts (1992–1999), as well as An Ong Reader (2002) and Of Ong and Media Ecology: Essays in Communication, Composition, and Literary Studies (2012). A graduate of the University of Texas at Austin (Ph.D., 1985), Soukup teaches in the Communications Department at Santa Clara University. He has also served as convener of the annual Theocom conferences, which bring theologians and communication scholars together to reflect on the challenges and opportunities presented by new media to the Church.

Paul Glader is an associate professor of journalism, media and entrepreneurship at The King’s College in New York City. He directs the McCandlish Phillips Journalism Institute and is founder and co-director of the NYC Semester in Journalism (NYCJ). He serves as executive director of The Media Project, a non-profit news platform and training program for international journalists and executive editor of its ReligionUnplugged.com site. An award-winning journalist as well, he spent 10 years as a staff writer at The Wall Street Journal covering a variety of topics. He served as a media scholar at The Berlin School of Creative Leadership at Steinbeis University in Germany and lived in Germany from 2011-2013 as a Robert Bosch Foundation Fellow and as a European Journalism Fellow at Freie Universität in Berlin.

References

Acerbi, A. 2016. “A Cultural Evolution Approach to Digital Media.” Frontiers in Human Neuroscience 10: 636. doi:10.3389/fnhum.2016.00636.

Alton, L. 2016. “4 Ways Technology Impacts the Way We Think.” Social Media Week. Accessed 31 December 2019. https://socialmediaweek.org/blog/2016/01/ways-technology-impacts-way-we-think/

Bruce-Lockhart, A. 2018. “Here Are 5 Ways Digital Technology Is Changing Childhood.” World Economic Forum. Accessed 31 December 2019. https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/07/digital-technology-changing-childhood-smartphone/

Carr, N. 2011. The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains. New York: W. W. Norton.

Clark, L. S. 2003. From Angels to Aliens: Teenagers, the Media, and the Supernatural. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dulles, A. 1974. Models of the Church. New York: Doubleday.
Dulles, A. 1989. “Vatican II and Communications.” In Vatican II: Assessment and Perspectives, Twenty-Five Years after (1962-1987), edited by R. Latourelle, 523–547. Vol. 3. New York: Paulist Press.

Fore, W. F. 1987. Television and Religion: The Shaping of Faith, Values and Culture. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress. (Currently reprinted by SBS Press, 409 Prospect St., New Haven, CT 06511).

Haemig, M. J. 2014. Catechisms. European History Online (EGO). Mainz: Leibniz Institute of European History (IEG). URN: urn:nbn:de:0159-2014051909. Accessed 5 January 2020. http://www.ieg-ego.eu/haemigm-2014-en

Hern, A. 2019. “Older People More Likely to Share Fake News on Facebook, Study Finds.” The Guardian. Accessed 1 January 2020. https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2019/jan/10/older-people-more-likely-to-share-fake-news-on-facebook

Hess, M. 2013. “A New Culture of Learning: Implications of Digital Culture for Communities of Faith.” Communication Research Trends 32 (3): 13–12.

Hunter, J. 2010. To Change the World: The Irony, Tragedy and Possibility of Christianity in the Late Modern World. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Lind, M. 2020. Saving Democracy from the Managerial Elite. The Wall Street Journal.

Loyola, Ignatius. 1996. Constitutions of the Society of Jesus and Their Contemporary Norms (J. W. Padberg, S.J , Ed.). St. Louis, MO: Institute of Jesuit Sources. Accessed 26 February 2020. https://jesuitas.lat/uploads/the-constitutions-of-the-society-of-jesus-and-their-complementary-norms/Constitutions%20and%20Norms%20SJ%20ingles.pdf

Lynch, G. 2005. Understanding Theology and Popular Culture. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Niebuhr, H. R. 1951. Christ and Culture. New York: Harper & Row.

Ong, W. J. 1982. Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word. London: Methuen.

Pope John Paul II. 1990. Redemptoris Missio. Accessed 26 February 2020. http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_07121990_redemptoris-missio.html

Rushkoff, D. 2019. “We’ve spent the decade letting our tech define us. It’s out of control.” The Guardian. December 29. Accessed 30 December 2019. https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/dec/29/decade-technology-privacy-tech-backlash

Soukup, P. A. 2018. “Ideas and Built Environments.” EME: Explorations in Media Ecology 17 (3): 247–253.

Thomas, D., and J. Seely Brown. 2011. A New Culture of Learning: Cultivating the Imagination for a World of Constant Change. Lexington, KY: CreateSpace.