

# Faith and Media

Analysis of Faith and Media:  
Representation and Communication

Hans Geybels, Sara Mels  
& Michel Walrave (eds.)



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**P.I.E. Peter Lang**

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## VI. To Be Seen Is to Exist

Now, does it surprise us that Church officials still have much anger and many fears when confronted with the media? Those fears can be easily explained if one takes into account how the Church is represented in the general media. Nevertheless, it is of no great help when the Church does not come out of its shell. Visibility is of an utmost importance. To be seen is to exist. The Church must show its relevance for society. This visibility may not fear openness and justification, which is not always very simple. Nevertheless, contemporary society expects transparency. In the past, the Church – like any other institution – used to solve its problems indoors, but that time has past. Openness and transparency must become clear through well adapted communication.

The relation between faith and media evokes many questions. In the past, ideologies and religions manipulated or shunned the “social media of communication”. In the current era of mass media and communication strategies, perception takes priority over reality and a new series of questions arise: how do we create a reasonable balance between identity and perception? How do we introduce faith and religion in a pluralising and detraditionalising world? How do we cope with a decaying deontology on behalf of general journalism? What kinds of possibilities are offered by new media? What about the relation between faith and advertising? What about the clashing rights of free speech and religious freedom? Not only faith and ideologies, but values and standards are also subject to new developments in mass media. How can we deal with them if communication tools are no longer representatives of (political) ideologies and faith systems, but structures obeying economic and commercial laws and interests? How can the many and rapid technological innovations be incorporated in church communications? To what extent does virtual reality become a faith reality? Must information be available to anyone at any place?

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## The Language of Media and the Language of Faith

Peter HORSFIELD

I taught in a Theological College for ten years, where I argued for the importance of media study in a classical scholarly context in which the common view of media was one of disdain. One day outside our library, I met our esteemed Professor of Early Church History and told him that I would like to have a chat sometime about attitudes toward writing in the early church. He replied abruptly, *Journal of Theological Studies*, 1959 and he walked on. So I went and looked and there, in the *Journal of Theological Studies* in 1959, was an article written by him called “Teaching and writing in the first chapter of the *Stromateis* of Clement of Alexandria” (Osborn, 1959). His article looked at opposition to writing in Christian churches in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century and Clement’s defence of his use of it.

Numerous works have addressed the interaction of oral and written forms, and cultures, in the first centuries of Christianity’s construction. A number of scholars, in more recent years, have indicated that the two modes of communication complemented each other and facilitate different understandings and emphases of faith, different preferences in community organisation, and different hierarchies of religious authority which often contested with each other (Sawicki, 1994). Though Christians had been adopting techniques from various genres and cultures of writing for several centuries, there was still strong prejudice against writing by the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. So much so that Clement considered it necessary to, in the first chapter of *The Stromata* (“The suitcase”), give an extended justification for why he was writing down his teachings rather than just delivering them verbally.

Osborn identifies four main concerns that had been raised about writing in the early Christian Church. The first was that, “The living voice was the best medium for the communication of Christian faith”. This is a basic “faith and media” question. It was inconceivable to many Christians that faith in a living Jesus could be communicated in any way other than through the lives of people. How could black marks on sheep skins, or pounded reeds, be any match for a faith embodied in eyes and presence of a person before you; a faith spoken with the richness

modulation, movement and passion of the human voice. Putting the personal Christian faith into impersonal writing required a significant reworking of faith, in a way that did not necessarily require *im-mediate* embodiment. Innate to this issue, therefore, is the question: Is there a fundamental language of faith, or mode of being of faith, that is indispensable to faith itself? A mode of being that can be augmented but cannot be dispensed with? And who says which mode that is?

The second objection to writing, that Osborn identifies, is that "Writings were public and it was wrong to 'cast pearls before swine.'" Face-to-face communication, such as that between a teacher and pupil, involved much more than just the transmission of information. In an interpersonal teaching situation, the teacher was constantly evaluating the maturity and readiness of the student, and paced the information according to the student's capacity to deal with it. In the process, the teacher formed the student's character, along with their mind. The holism of communication was lost if Christian teachings were removed from the person-to-person nexus and distributed publicly through writing. Making Christian teachings available publicly therefore ran the risk of cheapening them by making them accessible even to opponents of Christianity, and also made them vulnerable to misuse and misunderstanding. There are many groups still who make privileged information available only to those who have been through the processes of initiation — or to those who can afford to buy it.

The third objection was that "To write implied that one was inspired by the Holy Spirit and this was a presumptuous claim". This relates both to the perception of the different natures of religious texts<sup>1</sup> and also to the perception of inspiration. Inspiration, by definition, is a bodily state. When a person was present before you, it was easy to tell if they were inspired or not. The look in their eyes, their body language, their speech rhythms, their passion, and their responses to questions all gave physical signs indicating whether a speaker was faking it or was genuinely spirited. How could one tell if a writing was inspired if one could not see the writer? How could one tell whether one set of marks on a piece of papyrus were inspired and another set of marks were not? The adaptation of Christian teachings to writing, therefore, required the development of a different literacy of inspiration — language, logic and grammar — that worked, even if the person writing was not present. Once one is literate in a new media form, whether that form is writing or film production, most of these questions are resolved — different literacies have their own ways of seeing these things. But for those who are

not literate in a particular media form, or who are trying to apply the rules of one form of literacy to another medium, it can seem as though something that is very important is being lost in the new medium.

Finally, Osborn advocates, there was concern that the heretics were using clever styles of writing to mislead and corrupt people, and it was unwise, therefore, to associate Christian truth with a medium that was being used for deceptive purposes. It was even suggested that if Christians were to write, it would be better for them to write badly in order to distinguish unadorned Christian truth from the clever style of the heretics. This argument echoes the Apostle Paul's argument that God chooses to use foolishness to shame the wise and weakness to shame the strong (1 Cor 1:27). Underlying this objection was the fundamental question of whether Christian ideas should compete in the wider marketplace of ideas, or whether making Christian ideas widely and freely available in a readily accessible way diminished them. It seems like quaint argument now, but that same question of media style versus substance is one of the questions foregrounded in this book, which was based on a conference. The conference description, for example, says "In the current era of mass communication strategies, perception takes priority over identity, and a new set of questions arise". No, not a new set of questions: the same questions with different references.

This was the context within which Clement of Alexandria wrote his defence of Christian writing, presenting what Osborn calls "the most extensive treatment of this question" — the question of faith and media of the time.

Alexandria was, for more than six centuries, the second city of the ancient world. It was a major trading centre where East and West met, attracting Greeks, Romans and Jews. It boasted the most famous library in the Empire, and was a centre of imperial intellectual life. By 185AD a famous Christian catechetical school existed under leadership of the converted stoic philosopher Pantaenus. This school produced the influential theologians of the early church: Clement (c.155-215) and his pupil Origen (c.182-c.251).

Clement's *Stromata* indicates that arguing for writing was more than just arguing for a technology. Like debates about media today, it also involved argumentation over the range of cultural associations that came with the medium. In his defence of writing, Clement mounts a number of arguments (Clement, 1991, Book 1). Writing is a valuable tool for sharing and cultivating wisdom, which Christians are mandated to do. In this, writing does not stand in isolation, but sows seeds in the soul of the learner that can grow in fullness through interaction. Writing is a useful device for handing on tradition, and reduces the chance of forgetting and losing the wisdom of the past. Clement writes: "Th

<sup>1</sup> Tim 3:16 "All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness."

work of mine in writing is not artfully constructed for display, but my memoranda are stored up against old age, as a remedy against forgetfulness, truly an image and outline of those vigorous and animated discourses which I was privileged to hear".

Rather than opening Christianity to heresy, Clement saw writing as a valuable means of combating the heretics on their own turf. "It is certainly ridiculous for one to disapprove of the writing of earnest men, and approve of those who are not such" – a view echoed 14 centuries later by John Milton in his defence of free publication, given to the English Parliament in 1644.<sup>2</sup>

Clement even suggests that writing is better in helping Christian teachers to avoid pride in their teaching, because they cannot be flattered by their audience the way a teacher teaching face-to-face can.

More than just defending the use of writing, both Clement and Origen wrote extensively and, through their writing, contributed significantly to the development and translation of Christian ideas within the culture and framework of Hellenistic Neo-Platonic philosophy. Alexandria was a key centre of such thought. Clement's major work was a trilogy of writings<sup>3</sup> which some scholars argue inaugurated Christian literature, that is, a style of writing which "adopted the literary forms of the Greek and Latin tradition, precisely in order to communicate with representatives of that tradition" (Moreschini, 2005: xiii).

Origen took the Alexandrian faith and writing project even further. According to Eusebius, Origen wrote up to 2,000 works – though others suggest there could have been as many as 6,000 – most of which have been destroyed because they were, at various times, considered to be controversial or heretical. Origen's work includes writings on philosophy, textual criticism, systematic, practical and apologetic theology and letters. Among his writings was the *Hexapla*, a work that placed the text of six versions of the Old Testament side by side with each other. Even if Eusebius' lower figure of 2,000 is correct, Origen would have needed to produce around three written works each month for the whole 50 years of his adult life. To reach such a level of output, Origen put in place what was, in effect, a media production centre to service and distribute his intellectual output. Stenographers took down his sermons and lectures in shorthand as he delivered them. Secretaries then transcribed the notes into full text. A team of calligraphers then worked

<sup>2</sup> The *Areopagitica*: "For who knows not that Truth is strong, next to the Almighty? She needs no policies, nor stratagems, nor licensings to make her victorious; those are the shifts and the defences that error uses against her power" (Milton, 1644).

<sup>3</sup> Clement's major trilogy comprised the *Protrepticus* ("Exhortation to the Greeks"), the *Paedagogus* ("Instructor"), and the *Stromata* ("Miscellanies").

with the text to produce multiple copies for sale or distribution. (Mills 1994) The calligraphers could possibly have included young women because their dainty fingers produced a more elegant script. Origen was in high demand as a speaker and mediator among the various church and, like a current rock star or author on tour, whenever he travelled, carried written material with him for distribution, thereby extending the reach and influence of his writings.

I am addressing the contemporary question of media and religion with such a distant historical example in order to make more apparent the indivisible relationship there is between faith and media. Even a technology medium, such as writing, was once actively disputed and its capacity to embody Christian faith seriously questioned.

The example of a medium that was once disputed, but today is seen as integral to a religion, namely Christianity, illustrates the hegemony that can operate in discussions about faith and media, particularly when talking about recent new media and the major faith traditions. The hegemony today operates according to the supposition that there is given or traditional faith that is formed in its own terms that is the brought into an engagement with media in some way. The introductory statement of this publication reflects this perspective when it frames the question of faith and media in this way: "In the past, ideologies and religions manipulated or shunned the media of communication".

The historical examples of Clement and Origen illustrate that it is inadequate and misleading to talk about faith and media in terms that suggest that religion is a distinctive phenomenon that can, if it chooses, quarantine itself against the influence, or contamination, of external media. Every expression of faith, every experience of spirituality, every religion is a mediated phenomenon. It is mediated in its generative construction, and dissemination. In the process of its mediation, it incarnated with particular grammar, logic, validations, sensibilities, frames, industrial requirements, cultural associations, power relationships, opportunities, and limitations that give it nuances that contrast with other mediations of the same faith (if we can in fact call other mediations the 'same' faith, which is another question altogether).

There may be momentary *in-mediate* mystical events at the foundation of religious experiences that appear to be timeless and spaceless in character. But the minute that a person tries to make sense out of such events, the minute that they begin to talk about them, reflective consciousness enters the experience, and that consciousness depends on meaning-making processes that are the product of past, and anticipatory mediation practices and their distinctive grammars, cultural associations, cognitive structures and literacies.

This practicality requires us to acknowledge that what we consider today to be a given ideology or religion is itself a particular mediated form of that ideology or religion that, at the time it was being shaped, probably conflicted with other mediated versions of that ideology or religion that were around at the time. This is certainly true for Christianity. I think the same can be said for other religious traditions as well. We cannot talk about the relation between 'faith' and 'the media' without explicitly asking, which mediation of faith are we talking about and what media are we talking about?

A publication such as this, therefore, needs to ask a number of preliminary questions and to carry those questions through the various presentations. These questions are key to accurate research and effective policy decisions: *Who is saying what faith is* – in general and in relation to a particular faith? *What particular mediation* of a particular faith, compared to others, are we talking about? When someone begins talking about "real faith" or "traditional Islam", or "orthodox Christianity", or "the central truth of a religion", *what media preferences and practices* are informing that particular point of view and what hierarchical packaging of mediation practices have been surreptitiously privileged, even normalised, in that particular understanding?

These questions involve a more materialistic view of religion and spirituality. It involves not only an acknowledgement that a religion is a function of its formative spiritual insights, but also that it is the interaction of those insights with the practical demands, constraints and opportunities within which they are embodied. Furthermore, the founding spiritual insights themselves need to be seen as products of the context that gave rise to them. These questions also require the recognition that there is immense diversity and difference in all faiths and religions. Even a single religious entity, such as Christianity, is extremely diverse – even contradictory in places – within itself.

Acknowledging this pluralism is, of course, not new. What has been largely overlooked though, is the extent to which the media preferences and media hierarchies of particular faith positions are a factor in the construction of their differences. What has also been overlooked is the significant hegemony that is at work in the submerging and normalising of the media preferences of one faith position, while criticising the distortions made by media in the faith positions of others. It is not uncommon in discussions such as this to find criticisms being made of the threat posed to Christianity by the decaying ontology of popular journalism or the trivialising of faith by its incorporation of adaptations arising from consumerism, advertising, and popular culture. Yet no criticisms are directed at the threat posed to Christianity by the incomprehensibility and impracticality of many of the religious ideas pub-

lished by theologians or religious leaders in theological journals and books.

It is in opening up these hegemonic processes that I find the historical case study of Clement and Origen to be very instructive. For the were significant consequences introduced by the systematic adaptation of Christian faith to writing in the early centuries of Christianity, touching on almost every aspect of the religion: the relationship of prophetic and teaching, the institutionalising of men over women in leadership, the structure of Christian community, the nature and concerns of church doctrine, the shape of worship, alignments of faith with political order, etc. This was not the responsibility of Clement or Origen alone – contention over mediation practices in Christianity both preceded and followed these two writers – but the examples of Clement and Origen bring these contests into clearer focus.

In his work on the history of Christianity, Hans King notes that the adaptation of Christian faith to the elite literate culture of Hellenism, led by the Greek Church fathers, resulted in major changes in how Christianity came to be understood, practised and organised. Without attributing a single determinate cause, King says this of the period:

One thing cannot be ignored from the beginning in this Hellenisation of the gospel: now Christianity was understood less and less as existential discipleship of Jesus Christ and more – in an intellectual narrowing – as the acceptance of a revealed doctrine about God and Jesus Christ, the world and human beings. And it was to be above all the Logos Christology which increasingly forced back the Jesus of history in favour of a doctrine and finally a church dogma of the 'incarnate God' (King, 1994: 134-135).

This progressive textualisation of Christianity was continued in the Latin expansion and development of Christianity into an imperial institutional organisation in which access to writing was fundamental to the exercise of power, and the use of writing therefore regulated. The work of Augustine, the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> century bishop, theologian, and general trouble-shooter extraordinaire, illustrates this. Augustine's doctrine of the Trinity, for which he is widely known, was developed explicitly and is dependent on writing in order to understand it. Augustine explicitly addresses his doctrine not to hearers but to readers. At the beginning of his first book on the Trinity, he says:

Let me ask of my reader, wherever, alike with myself, he is certain, there go with me; wherever, alike, he hesitates, there to join with me in enquiry wherever he recognises himself to be in error, there to return to me; wherever he recognises me to be so, there to call me back: so that we may enter together upon the path of charity (Augustine, Chap. 3.5).

What Augustine is doing is a very neat media sleight of hand. He is invoking the metaphor of dialogue: a process of mutual consideration, discussion and influence. While it is likely that most manuscripts of the time were read aloud and possibly within groups, it is nonetheless a sleight of hand. The reader does not go with Augustine; the reader continues to read Augustine's fixed text. The reader does not come back to Augustine; the reader returns to the textual product. The reader does not call Augustine back in correction, so that he changes Augustine's mind; the reader imagines himself doing so and may even debate it with other listeners, but Augustine's mind is made up and fixed in the text. In fact, Augustine even says to the reader, if my language is too difficult for you, throw my book away and go and read someone you can understand.<sup>4</sup> The text dogmatically remains unchanged, as does the doctrine – fixed by the nature of the medium within which the faith has been constructed.

For all the discussion there may have been on it over the centuries, Augustine's doctrine of the trinity is unchanged from how Augustine first wrote it. It is the nature of that form of mediation. As much as he presented it as an invitational process, Augustine's doctrine is unchanged from the original, first fixed in the text. The significance of this is that King, for one, considers Augustine's idea of God as one divine nature and three persons as an innovation for the time. It is complex and speculative and, in King's opinion, provides "little stimulus for the Christian life of 'lay people' in the world or for a cosmic piety" (King, 1994: 297). What has come to be regarded as *the* heart of Christian faith, and one of the fundamental Christian dogmas, is primarily an organisation of abstract philosophical ideas that can be comprehended only by sophisticated readers – as anyone who has tried to preach or teach it to children, will tell you.

The Catholic theologian Hermann Stieglecker argues that it was this speculative philosophical move of Christianity in writing that was one of the main causes for the total collapse of Christianity across the Near East and North Africa in the face of the expansion of Islam. For the average Christian, he argues, it was "simpler to believe in the One God and Muhammad, the Prophet after Jesus", than it was to try to understand or build a practical ethical life on the basis of the competing philosophical arguments about Christology and Trinity (King, 1994:

<sup>4</sup> "Therefore, who finds this fault with my discourse, see whether he can understand other men who have handled similar subjects and questions, when he does not understand me: and if he can, let him put down my book, or even, if he pleases, throw it away; and let him spend labor and time rather on those whom he understands" (Chap. 3.5).

343). Unless my thinking has been distorted by my own theological training, theology has ever since been one of the key instruments defining the character and identity of Christianity.

Until recently that is, until the fixed nature of written text, functioning symbiotically with institutional practices of scribal and mass production, have begun to be subverted by the more fluid text possibilities of digital writing and reproduction and the range changes being introduced by new media. New data and communication technologies are producing an explosive multiplication of information that is making many of the practices of theology unworkable. The way people are interacting with machines, in the process of acquiring information, are producing different sensory ways of being religious. Shifts in the foundation on which social authority is recognised, and institutions are managed, are refiguring the basis and locus of religious authority. The increasing role being played by branding creates the need constantly renew the currency of one's social reputation, even one social existence. Visual design is reassuming its role as partner with content in the meaning of a text.<sup>5</sup> Narrative is challenging conceptual frameworks as an effective basis for constructing coherence in meaning. There is a reworking of community formation and new institutions service those new formations. There is an emphasis on dynamism and change – virtile madness – facilitated by technologies that allow users to adapt all sorts of material, symbolic, and information resources from the marketplace to their specific individual purposes. New, technological based, interactive virtual realities are challenging the formerly dominant virtual realities of institutional religious mythologies and rituals.

The consequences of these shifts, I think, are greater for institution religion than they are for faith. I think the argument can be mounted that the fluidity of audio-visual and electronic technologies and their narratives is one of the factors underlying a rekindled interest in faith exploration by breaking down the rigidity of materialistic science based mechanistic technologies of reproduction (see, for example, Campbell, 2006; Lövhelm, 2006; Wertheim, 1999).

The construction and ordering of these new faith explorations, however, are going to be different in many ways from the construction and ordering of what has come before. One of the areas that is feeling the challenge is theology. How important are ideas, mediated as written theology, to faith? Theology has been defined as the "statement of the truth of the Christian message and the interpretation of this truth fr

<sup>5</sup> Though this is not new – the redesign of text in typography to make a text more accessible, consumable profitable, was an important aspect of the movement from written to printed text in the early decades of printing.



every generation" (Tillich, 1951: 3). But of course it is much more than this. Theology is not just about faith. Theology as we know it today is also a cultural industry of a particular media age, closely intertwined with the needs and power of religious institutions *and* commercial printing industries – theology has a symbiotic relationship with commercial publishing. Every professional theologian gets started on their career by studying within a book-based institution, centred on a library of commercially published books. We demonstrate our competence by reading printed material and typing essays. To take the next step up the ladder we must win approval by writing a doctoral thesis that has to include a comprehensive survey and review of other theologians' books. We progress up the ladder by presenting written papers at conferences and getting those papers published in a product created by a publishing company after market research tells them they can make a profit from it. (In what ways has the marketability of printed texts influenced theologians' thinking about God?).

The fundamental assumptions and structures of that particular media and faith framework, which have been a major influence and constraint in the shaping of social religiosity to this point, are now being challenged by changes in the technologies and structures of social media. What would Augustine's doctrine of the Trinity have looked like if, instead of locking it up in a closed text, Augustine had written it on Wikipedia and the disagreements people had with his ideas became part of the text and the doctrine?

In what I think was an astute insight, Martin Marty wrote the following almost twenty years ago:

The concept of theology expressed through a moderate diversity of books is called into question by hyper-modern and counter-modern tendencies. This is not the time to speculate... It is time to say that theological expression was reliant upon the stable, purchasable, book-length products of theologians in community within free societies. Those were books written by people whose vocation climaxed in reading and writing them. Now they represent a fragile, endangered species. What happens to the book will have much to do with the form or cast and eventually, one must speculate, substance of theology (Marty, 1989: 186-187).

For traditional religions, this raises questions about the basis of any religion's identity and coherence, and how that identity and coherence translate across different media expressions. It suggests that the dualistic frame of this conference – faith and the media – needs to be expanded significantly to include consideration of the differently mediated embodiments of faith and their different cultural alignments that comprise any single religion.

In relation to a particular faith tradition, such as Christianity, one of the issues raised by modern media is not really about faith and media per se, but about faith understood within the particular media context of theological and liturgical practice, within the relatively controlled religious institutional economy of written and printed texts, and faith explored practically, within the relatively uncontrolled marketplace economy of interactive digital text and visually. In many ways throughout the centuries, of course, Christianity has always had tensions between 'official' views of institutional leaders with their agendas and the much more eclectic unofficial views that are formed and practiced by the common Christian in the marketplace. The media, today, constitute the new marketplace of the common Christian.

Similar questions are raised in other faith traditions as well. In November 2005 I attended a conference in Tehran on media and religion the first such conference to my knowledge held in a Muslim majority country. What became apparent in that conference were underlying differences and tensions between representatives of the formal institutions of religion in the country, who were trying to propagate their version of Islam through the centralised mass media under their control, and the difficulty they were having attracting and influencing young Muslims who were forming a much more eclectic view of Islam resourced by their access to global media.

The other important perspective that needs to be addressed in any discussion on the relation between media and faith is: what do we mean by 'media'? The term is frequently used in an unquestioned way, as if its meaning is tacit and commonly accepted.

I am one of the old school – I think it's an old school – that considers the word 'media' as a plural term and that plurality is significant. Media are a marketplace. They include products: cereal boxes and logos, fashion bibles, pornographic magazines, popular and literary novels, quality and mass transit newspapers, DVDs, downloadable music, mobile phone ring tones, video games, scholarly journal articles broadcast cable and web TV, Myspace, Youtube, iPods, blogs, and vlogs. Each of these have their own distinctive communities of interest patterns of reception, literacies, cultures, and hierarchies of leaders, devotees and those just trying to keep up with the latest update. Can we talk about faith and media without being more specific about what exactly we are talking about?

'Media' includes the limitless construction of texts made possible by technologies, from the pencil to the iPhone; the development of skills to negotiate these technologies without being overwhelmed or paralysed; and the individual, group, national and international cultures that are formed around particular media preferences, technologies or packaging.

Media includes the gathering, production, distribution, and reception industries, without which media would not exist, that now count for up to 20% of the global economy: the single mobile phone contractor in Bangladesh, the two-person design studio in a Melbourne city lane, the multi-national PR company in New York that is contracted by businesses to start wars.

Media are contradictory. They include *Biggest Losers* and *BBC World News*, 'shock jocks' and Philip Adams, online gambling and online cancer support groups, base consumerism and new collective altruisms, old religious intolerance and new religious dialogues, and the media industries of scholarship, including on-line databases accessed through your university library from anywhere in the world.

Exactly which media are we talking about when we talk about 'faith' and 'media'? Potentially our discussions could take us to the relationship between differently mediated faith phenomena, mediated institutional faith, mediated non-institutional faith, or the contests of faith that underlie different media activities such as the following mediated forms of communication: commerce, news, entertainment, propaganda, institutional promotion, politics, etc. The situation is much more complex than a simple dichotomy of faith and the media. It is more a question of tracking the nature of faith within different and changing marketplaces, within different and changing mediascapes. That perspective provokes a plethora of interesting questions.

What is faith and what will faith be in this new global market? What new institutional forms will faith take? What will become the objects of faith, and what will be the reasons that those objects are perceived as trustworthy? What will be the measures of truth and reliability of that which is trusted? What will be the new criteria of coherence and discipline that create and define old and new religious traditions? In what ways will the new forms of mediated faith inform and inspire ethical decision-making, discipline and action for social change?

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