

The problem with simple audio-visual communication, then, was not the audiovisual media themselves, but a radical change in the culture of young people that called for an equally radical change in forms of communication. A new type of human functioning, a new type of school, family, and society was being born.

The real question seemed to be: What are the new languages of communication? I began to see that going no further than adding audio-visual aids to existing forms of education – sprinkling in a few slides and films – was only a palliative and might even become dangerously illusory, preventing us from seeing the real changes in contemporary culture and communication.

The written – or spoken – word could no longer give meaning to everything. Audiovisual is another mode of communication, one that brings out in us quite different aspects of our understanding and personality.

Audiovisually oriented people were being born, and we could no longer speak to them as we had spoken in the past. The church's education and pastoral work had to change.

I recognised three characteristics of modern life that we must keep in mind in our approach to the younger generations:

- the resurgence of the imagination,
- the importance of affective relationships and values,
- and the dissolution of national and cultural frontiers.

McLuhan opened my mind to the fact that the crucial factors in changing culture and human behaviour are not just ideas, philosophies, and religions, but more fundamentally are the technological innovations of the era, especially when they touch on communications.

...the introduction of electronic media has changed the meaning of all of our cultural institutions and every aspect of our structures of thought, including changes to both religious institutions and theological concepts.

The message of faith is not first and foremost information affecting my understanding. It is the effect produced in me by the whole complex known as the medium. In the communication of faith, the message is my conversion.

The message is not first
and foremost the material
vehicle of communication.

The message is the whole
complex of ministries and
conditions that are required
for an effect to be produced.

The content of the faith message is not primarily the ideas or the teaching, but rather the listeners themselves insofar as they are affected by the medium.

In the communication of faith, the content is not first and foremost the teaching of Christ. Rather it is those who are being taught, insofar as they are reached by Christ and his church; by the medium.

These media are not just technologies transporting content, but they form a world, an enveloping environment like the countryside, which everywhere surrounds us with its rhythms of life and its mechanisms for coping with problems.

Another way of approaching the electronic medium as formal cause is to see the content of media not primarily as an object being moved externally from source to receiver, but as a mass of new configurations giving shape to cultural information that we are already aware of.

Media sources are primarily pattern makers...

**The society of information, then,
is a society in which giving a new form
is more important than producing
material goods or even data...**

**The values of the new society are
concerned with creating more
interconnections of information and
giving to everything and everybody
a more harmonious form.**

... we are entering a time when putting on a show carries more weight than do values and underlying realities.

Both the affective and the imaginative, strongly stimulated by audiovisual images, are becoming the central part of human and religious functioning.

Whatever may be happening in schools and in churches, the computer and the audiovisual media are indissolubly associated in a society where giving things a form is the uppermost priority. Consequently, we can no longer speak of the efficaciousness of a liturgy, but rather we must speak of its beauty.

Today, technology is the privileged place of the incarnation. Formerly, when one spoke of incarnation, one referred to nation, country, and culture.

Today, one must speak of technology, because the electronic technologies are shaping the new type of person and creating a world where national frontiers are disintegrating. I believe that technologies now constitute the greatest challenge and opportunity for the incarnation. But we shall have to enter this new universe with the same enormous sympathy that Christ has for his earth.

The electronic universe shapes another type of moral behaviour that is distinguished by the characteristics of electronics. Vibration, speed, interconnections, dematerialisation, globalism - all of which are properties of the electronic medium - give shape to new moral conditions

When I read my newspapers and magazines on the train, I am not consolidating my mind, but developing my membership of the world. I am not, therefore, still trying to live through the inner solidity of my joints, but am adapting myself correctly to this world.

Humankind, which is now fragmented and dislocated, can feel at ease in an anonymous crowd of people in a great department store or on the beach. A person can stand upright there, not because of support by an inner ideological structure, but because of belonging to the group and reacting intuitively to the stimuli this world provides.

We are living not so much in a civilisation of the image as in one of the vibration. Vibration conditions the ear much more than the eye. The dominant sense, therefore, is hearing... If hearing, however, predominates in the electronic age, it is less in a physical than a symbolic sense. The ear symbolises our body.

The essence of electronic communication is modulation, vibration... The ear represents the archetype of perception through vibration... the whole body, in a manner of speaking, becomes a giant ear. Knowledge then tends to be transmitted effectively through vibrations. For many young people, if they are not shaken by the information, they are not interested in knowing.

Beauty creates an intimate link between knowledge, emotion, and pleasure...

The key to religious education is, first and foremost, offering people places and times where they can have a spiritual experience with a taste of paradise. Christianity has to begin with a leap into paradise, for its beauty is a pleasure that is paradisiacal and absolute...

The religious educator cannot simply be a teacher, but must awaken beauty.

Introducing the religious into our modern world is, above all, reintroducing silence into communication. In audiovisual terms, this means finding religious documents that will help a person to enter into his or her innermost depths when someone is speaking.

Archetypes, stimulated by the media, awaken religious feeling and a certain distant openness to religion. This leads to a type of rebirth of a 'pagan' and fundamental religious feeling...

[The] essential problem of religious education consists of re-establishing the bond between the archetypes and dogmas. The most important task confronting those involved in religious education is to make people aware, not simply intellectually but vitally, of these connections.

The symbolic way is “an experiential process that, by stimulating fundamental religious feelings, leads toward their historical connections in revelation...

Its aim is not primarily intellectual understanding, but a participation of the heart and conversion. It relies not on explanation, but on the communication of an experience.