Theologian as Imagineer
Theologizing in the Era of Image, Music and Story

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Our conference question "who do you *tweet* that I am?" evokes responses radically different in content, meaning and expression than the original question asked by Jesus to Peter, "Who do you *say* that I am?" Jesus' question and Peter's answer would make a perfect tweet in terms of the number of characters as well as the tone and texture. Yet *Saying* and *Tweeting* are not the same for various reasons, so is also reading, writing or imaging it. Each form of communication, oral, written or digital has its own grammar, logic and rhetoric! Its meaning, imageries as well as interpretation are different. Theology using dominant media of different time and place is different, as is evidenced by the teachings of Jesus, the preaching of the Apostles, the homilies of the Fathers and treatises of medieval theologians, manuals of the neo-scholastics or monographs of the modern period. They are different not only in format and length, but also in its content, meaning and interpretation as well. This prompts us to ask 'what is the shape of theology' in the era of social and entertainment media, with its ingredients of image, music and story. Theologian of the the digital age may be qualified as Imagineer.

Imagineer is a word which combines the sounds and meanings of "imagination" and "engineering", coined by the ALCOA in 1940, to name an internal "Imagineering" program to encourage innovative usage of aluminum. [1] The term was borrowed and popularized by *Walt Disney Imagineering* (also known as WDI or simply Imagineering), to designate people responsible for the design and construction of Disney theme parks worldwide. Over 140 different job titles fall under the banner of Imagineering, including illustrators, architects, engineers, lighting designers, show writers, graphic designers, and many more.[2] At Disney, Imagineering - means "letting your imagination soar, and then engineering it down to earth", making Disney "the most collectively successful cultural repository of our generation".[3] Characterizing a theologian as imagineer, I am not doing a *theology of Disney*[4] or of entertainment, not even a Disneology to find the religious overtones of Disney parks. Aware of the criticisms of Disney and its secularist connections, I want to borrow its 'grammar, logic and rhetoric' to charter the course of theology in the digital culture with its new language, tools and technology. 'Imagineering' epitomizes the mood and mindset as well as the communication culture and tools of our times.

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[1] "For a long time we've sought a word to describe what we all work at hard here at Alcoa... IMAGINEERING is the word... Imagineering is letting your imagination soar, and then engineering it down to earth". "The Place They Do Imagineering". *Time*. 1942-02-16. p. 59.

[2] Wright, Alex; Imagineers (2005). *The Imagineering Field Guide to Magic Kingdom at Walt Disney World*. New York: Disney Editions contains fascinating textual information and related images (drawings, photos, and graphics), pointing out details and telling stories, back stories, and Imagineering insights, typifies the infotainment industry of our times.

[3] Stan A. Lindsay, Disneology: Religious Rhetoric at Walt Disney World, 2010.

[4] http://forestbaptistchurch.org/a-theology-of-disneyland/. amusement parks, like Disneyland, reveals our subconscious yearnings as fallen men and women - real world is imperfect and lacking, innate longing for happiness and rest, quest for the utopian. The reason for this is simple: Disneyland is our best attempt at the Garden of Eden.

With emergence of the digital culture and social media, we are faced with a situation similar to that of the early Christianity, which struggled to 'migrate' Christian teaching from a predominantly oral-pastoral culture of the Biblical times and places into the literate culture of the Greco-Roman World. The new 'grammar, logic and rhetoric' of the digital culture invites us to theologize using image, music and story, the ingredients of the infotainment industry. This is quite a challenge given the nature of theology as a strict discipline dealing with matters of faith and doctrine. "Who do you tweet that I am?" is a relevant question in this regard.

1. A Media History of Theology

Looking through the lens of media ecology, we find that Christian theology, spanning a period of 2 millennia, has passed through all significant media ages of human history: being born in the predominantly oral biblical culture and brought up in the literate culture of document and print media, the official theology is in the text culture. From Moses, the first writer of the Old Testament, through prophets and Jesus, to the first reader-writer Augustine, we witness a shift from Oral to literate culture. Literate theology got refined through the successive era of manuscripts during the scholastic times and that of printing in in modern times. Theology found a place of pride in the academia. The social media has added a new dimension to this cultural transition. It is no more apologetics or treatises that are the building blocks of 'thinking and expression' but image, music and story. Theology is yet to come to terms with these changes, although it did well in all previous media ages oral and literate culture.

1.1. First Transmediatization of Theology: Orality to Literacy

By engraving the Decalogue, Moses initiated the technology revolution of the Bible. Prophets are representatives of finest form of oral communication strategy and rhetoric of all times. So also were Jesus and the apostles. Boomershine thinks that Jesus made Judaism viable in the new literate culture in a distinctive way and the Jewish sect flourished in the Greco-Roman world. Although we find the presence of a scripture, Judaism was predominantly an oral culture. While Rabbinic Judaism used literacy as subordinate to orality, "Christians were aggressive in the appropriation of the communications technology of literacy". Christians developed a new synthesis of oral and written tradition. Christians produced and distributed a "a veritable flood of new literary forms and traditions – rhetorical traditions of homiletics, liturgical hymns and prayers, hymns, letters, dogmatic writings as well as more traditional literary forms like Gospels, acts, epistles, apocalypse. Christians actively pursued literate culture to make the teachings of Jesus relevant and universal. The writing of first apologists and ante-Nicene fathers were highly literate writings. This led to the expansion of Christianity into Greco-Roman world and possibly led to the split with Judaism, among other causes.

Hellenization of Christianity was not just a change in geography or demography, but a change in medium that implied change in language, culture and thought system. Change in media leads to change in thought; change in thinking leads to change in life. The earliest theology shows a radical shift from a predominantly oral to a literate culture. As the Christian faith moved from the predominantly oral culture of Jerusalem to the literate culture of the Greeks, theology, as we know today, originated.   In this sense, the change from an oral to literate culture has definitely changed both the method and content of theologizing. The transmediatization – translation of Christian thinking to Greek literate system - led to *learned theology* as opposed to the *simple faith* (Origen). While it served to make Christianity understandable (communicable) to the Greco-Roman intellectual world, theology was rendered an abstract discipline of intellect. Many heresies are purely a matter of language, thinking style and product of literate thinking and mind-set, rather than a matter of conviction of heart and confession with lips (Rom 10:9-10).

The definitive shift to the literate culture was a necessary adaptation to make Christianity prominent. This led to spread and growth of Christianity not only in numbers, but also in content and reflection. Manuscripts of the gospel spread to all corners of Roman Empire and served as the subversive

force to win over the empire for the Gospel. Transmediatization of faith served the best interest of the word, making the Christian message universally relevant and meaningful. The linear and hierarchical thinking gave the church organizational strength and stability and doctrinal clarity and unity. It was great move that set Christianity on a new journey of theology to dominate the western world for 2000 years.

1.2. Second Transmediatization of Theology: Alphabetical Literacy and Textual Ratio

The popularization of learning starting with the manuscripts and schools of the Scholastics and the universalization of literacy (reading and writing) with the arrival of the printed book, led to the emergence of enlightenment and growth of philosophy, sciences and technology. The enlightenment thinkers proposed reason as the universal human activity and privileged subjective consciousness as the centre of all human activity. As a result, alphabetical language and literacy became the basis of human communication and intersubjectivity. Education began to give primacy to reading and writing skills like word recognition, comprehension, scanning text in order to retrieve information, familiarity with different text organization/structure; author's viewpoint, purpose and overall effect of the text on the reader. Likewise writing skills like spelling, punctuation, syntax, adapting range of forms, using language for effect, writing for known/unknown audiences, using text to negotiate and collaborate are considered as education. As a consequence, non-language users are left out of the 'fellowship of discourse" of elite intellectual groups and members of the educational institutions have appropriate intellectual discourse and set rules of discourse. "Because subjective consciousness is verbally structured, common bond of human community is based on linguistic training and human history will be verbal history of ideas, its evidence will be verbal texts of the past, written by the most skilled language users f their time." This is true of even theological thinking and training, especially the one initiated by the new seminary system mandated by the Council of Trent. Theology was defined as a purely rational quest based on exegetical study of the scriptures and texts of the past.

1.3. Challenge of Digital and Social Media: Audio-visual literacy

The new digital and multimedia communication challenges the hegemony of the word and language based communication, by a pictorial turn and a new orality and hypertextuality, which undermine the supremacy of the communication system based on the dominant skills of reading and writing the alphabetical text. Today literacy means multimedia literacy and a set of skills to make sense of multimedia and multi-sensorial communication. The new technologies of communication have dramatically changed not only human *media* of communication, but also the patterns of interaction, habits of thought and expression and styles of living. The digital communication system is much more than Ipad, smartphone, Apple Store and Google Play; Digital communication indicate new tools, techniques and communication style as well as mark a new era in human communication, shrinking space and time on the one hand and converging all the hitherto known tools, techniques and forms of human communication. These new technologies have given rise to a culture, with "new ways of communicating, with new languages, new techniques and a new psychology" (*Redemptoris Missio*, 37c; *Aetatis Novae* 11).

1.3.1. Multimedia and Multi-sensorial Communication

The audio-visual-textual coding of the digital communication makes communication multi-media and multi-sensorial and thereby rendering play and entertainment as the predominant form of even exchange of information. Still and moving images, vibrating music and storytelling have become the grammar, logic and rhetoric of the digital communication, reducing text to minimum. The new digital and multimedia communication challenges the hegemony of the word and language based communication, by a pictorial turn and a new orality and hypertextuality, which undermine the supremacy of the communication system based on the dominant skills of reading and writing alphabetical text. Today literacy means multimedia literacy and a set of skills to make sense images, sounds and texts used simultaneously to construct meanings. Participation and interactivity are considered as the norm of construction of meaning, rather than one way communication from a source/sender to receiver.

1.3.2. Theology after Google, Wiki and Twitter

The internet and the social media too add a new dimension to knowing and expression. The availability of wide range of information, texts and audiovisual material on the internet and the infinite possibility of search offered by search engines have added still new facets to the "search for God". Added to this, the Wiki way of information management and wide ranging social media networks like Facebook, Blogs and Twitter empower everyone to be everything – author or publisher, reader or critic, co-creator or contra. In these systems of information creation and sharing, knowledge comes from nothing but discussion and consensus, poses a challenge to traditional sources and authorities in knowledge management. Together with these media changes, its counterpart of post-modern and post-literate tendencies demand a radically new way of looking at God, world and man. The hermeneutics of suspicion which developed over the span of two centuries have rendered false any form of scriptural authority as the norm of life and thought, leaving all sacred texts as rhetoric of false consciousness[5]. Any idea based on 'discussion and consensus' alone and not on traditional authorities, definitely challenges theology, which is primarily based on the authority of the Scripture and tradition as well as the control and supervision of the magisterium. The flourishing of wiki-style knowledge and learning systems, compels to take a new look at theologizing[6]. A good wiki culture is found to be functional and successful because, higher involvement among the users is found (in turn) to improve the content and usefulness.

2. Theologian as Imagineer

The Church is "200 years behind the times" and in need of a "radical transformation," Italian Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini said in an interview two weeks before his death[7]. He must be referring to a cultural lag in the Church, which may be explained with a comment from the "Theology After Google"[8] conference: "We tend to deliver our message using technologies that date back to Gutenberg: books, academic articles, sermons, and so forth. We aren't making effective use of the new technologies, social media, and social networking. … to do theology for a Google-shaped world". The media studies today tell us that the thinking tools, and hence thought itself and culture in general, are shaped by the leading "technologies of the word" - to borrow the phrase from Walter Ong – viz., the communication tools, techniques and media of each age. Theology as reflection on faith uses the intellectual tools of each time and place. The "grammar, logic and rhetoric of our times" are shaped by the digital cultural tools, which depends heavily on audio-visual-textual communication. Theologians have to becomeImagineers - "letting imagination soar, and then engineering it down to earth" – to become fluent communicators in the digital culture.

2.1. Need to go Beyond the Constitutive ratio of the printed text.

We are inclined to think of Christianity as a religion of the book, the Word and the Logos, because the traditional approach to the study of Christianity and Christian theology as a history of doctrine, and as progressive articulation of doctrinal concepts. A purely logocentric and conceptual theology is not capable of articulating a comprehensive vision of reality through a textual discourse. Religions depended hence on 'traditions' which include practices, ethos, rituals, liturgies and sacraments. According to anthropologists it

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[5] Unfortunately, Christian theology and biblical interpretation developed during this period silently adapted to this hermeneutic of suspicion and demythologization and other historical and literary methods of bible study too in some sense undermine the 'inspired' and faith element of biblical texts - found in all other religions except Christianity.

[6] Theology too can survive and flourish in that soil, although the general trend in today's culture is to reduce theology into religious studies or phenomenon of religions. "The School of Theology is devoted to study of religion, spirituality, and deities. Participants here at this school may use rational analysis and argument to discuss, interpret, and teach on any of a myriad of religious topics." http://en.wikiversity.org/wiki/School:Theology, June 18, 2013.

[7] http://ncronline.org/news/people/just-death-martini-church-200-years-out-date (20.6.13)

[8] Theology After Google: Leveraging New Technologies and Networks for Transformative Ministry, March 10, 2010 - March 12, 2010 in Claremont California with money from Ford Foundation.

is the verbal arts – poetry, ritual, liturgy, stories – and the visual arts that articulate the emotional lives of the individuals and cultures, including their ethos, worldviews and quality of life[9]. This emphasis on tradition is the greatest strength of the Catholic theology vis-à-vis the protestant reliance on the *Scripture* or written and printed word. With all its precision and efficacy a purely logocentric theology remains conceptual and fail to touch life as expressed by late Pierre Babin in the context of religious education at least in the digital culture characterized by audio-visual and kinesthetic communication. While language is capable of expressing thought, it informs and limits articulation of experience. Hence conceptual theology which rely on propositions and creedal formula fail to capture the complete texture of human life and economy of salvation, in its truth, goodness and beauty. Theology has to become conceptually, perceptively and affectively articulate.

2.2. Adopting Audio-Visual Language

At present theology is generally understood and practiced as 'faith seeking understanding' where, understanding means verbal-textual interpretation (rational discourse) of biblical texts and creedal propositions. Images and rituals are ignored as lesser forms of Christian expressions meant for illustration and for devotion, if not for aesthetic purpose. But the emergence of the image as the predominant and effective means of communication challenges any Christian theology which is purely verbal and textual. The question relates to whether images too can be employed alongside word and language for theologizing in the present image-dominated culture. It is not about instrumental use of image as illustration, but how images can partner with word in meaning-making. Image does not work like texts to give precise information or conclusions, despite its inherent multivalence allowing a range of possibilities of interpretations. Many think that images affect the persons and engage the whole human being better than verbal intellection as expressed by Hugh of St. Viktor who said that images are better than concepts in communicating God.

The ordinary believers have recourse to all forms of visual and auditory media like visual images, sermons, liturgy, festivals, drama, literature and poetry. Hence a true history of theology should study history of ideas, images, and all other media of communication used by a particular culture. The claim to universality of language arises primarily from the possibility of abstraction of a statement that contains meaning in itself; the universality of image consists not in detachable content or potential for abstraction, but ability to give the viewer a universal affectivity – affective energy. [10]   Miles, in the Preface to her book, *Image as Insight*, calls for "the most pervasive readjustment of the human society ever conceived", through "the reintegration of our alienated and manipulated capacity to 'understand through the eyes'"[11]. Miles calls for "a genuine and thorough going appreciation" for visual perception and expression, because that is "most capable of receiving and delighting in the sensible world of bodies and things in all their multiplicity, particularity and diversity" [12]. In other words, we have to explore if the audiovisual language be recognized as a theological language to mediate God-talk to the present generation. Theology needs to develop an "informed and disciplined vision" and "the ability to read and interpret both texts and images in their full nuanced complexity". A theology conversant with the communication culture of the day needs to take into consideration semantic and epistemological validity of the visual communication. A conceptual, perspective and affective theology is more comprehensive and complete.

2.3. Reinstatement of Imagination

Starting with the Platonic 'mytho-*logy*', the emergence of conceptual ratio has led to the 'demythologization' and demeaning of imagination. In the height of alphabetical literacy, the modernists

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[9] Geertz, *Interpretation of cultures*, 89-90.

[10] Miles, *Image as Insight*, 30

[11] Miles, *Image as Insight*, xiii.

[12] Miles, *Image as Insight*, 254.

taught that imagination is the diametric opposite of reality and depicted it as the organ of fiction and error. Suspicion of imagination proposed by Feuerbach and promoted by Nietzche depicted imagination as engine of religion and ground of its falsity - rendering Christian (religious) vision of the world as a great lie. In the flow of time, Christian theologians and Bible scholars subscribed to the 'hermeneutic of suspicion' to such an extent that demythologization became a theological agenda in the 20th century. Surprisingly, post-modernity, with idea of deconstruction, undermined the authority of all written texts(not only myths) to arrive at reality at all and posits imagination as a way of apprehending reality by acknowledging fiduciary element inherent in all human activities': all knowing depends on imagination, use of reason itself entails some kind of faith; whether we get things right or not is a function not only of our intelligence and powers of observatin but also of the lenses through which we observe. It is true that imagination has the potential to become a source of speculation, fantasy and illusion, unless subjected to critical reason; it is equally true that reason can become abstract and unreal without help of *imagination.* Human beings are identified by a subjective consciousness which is thinking and feeling activity.

Digital technologies have initiated the emergence of a radically new environment for *performance*. The cyberspace created by electronic media enables us to create, navigate and experience another world, beyond time and space by the mediation between the 'here and now' and an 'another time, another place'. Even the simplest audiovisual creation of TV and film are mental constructions of the team of media artists. So are the visual arts and performances of all sorts. A laser light show or a film or a 3D rendering of animation of a drawing is a visualization of its author or originator to the degree that it can be called a creation posited out there. This goes to the extent of construction of para-realities, not only from a dramatic perspective, but also as a kind of inner-hyper-reality, beyond all fictional realities of art and literature, especially when the real (characters) and the constructed (virtual animated) interact creating new realities and identities. The emergent immersive and ethereal music which emphasizes only listening on the moment rely primarily on acoustics or the instantaneous production of realities on the stage performance through lights, laser show are typical examples of virtuality of day to day life, going to the extent of virtual experience merging with the real for creation of new realities of the sort. These environments of performance format the human consciousness and promote a special state of consciousness, through a combined articulation of abstract and concrete thinking or experience.[13] Today digital technology functions on the principle of 'conversio ad res', rendering interior image (*phantasma*) into real audible-visible-tangible. As a consequence Imagination and creativity constitute a new way of knowing and self-expression, together with reason. In film and gaming, we find the powerful return of mythology and magic.

2.4. Embodiment as Norm in Digital Culture

The refinement of audio-visual expression and the reinstatement of imagination as legitimate ways to knowledge and experience bring the discussion on the importance of the incarnate nature of man. The argument that truth claims are mediated by imagination is closely linked to our bodily and historical existence. Miles says "just as language formulates, articulates and communicates human life as the life of the mind, images express represent and interpret life of the body, embodied existence". Foucault also speaks of the power of body. Human embodiment has to be taken into consideration in communication and history. For Pierre Babin, the generation of the television and internet are different from the generation of the book and ideas. Babin says "In the culture of the media the body is our way to have a soul and to communicate it. … Body is the way of being in the world." "The Body is the message", he says, meanings are not in words but in images, gestures, vibrations; not in conceptual intelligence but in the nervous system.[14]

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[13]   Kjell   Peterson,   "The   emergence   of   hyper-reality   narratives   in   performance", http://www.nouspace.net/dene/shapingconsciousness.html. (May 10, 2008).

[14] Babin and Zukowski, 87, 89.

The Christian idea of incarnation as "Word become flesh" typifies the logocentric core expressed in embodiment as well as the constitutive dimension of human communication, which is product of the mind and expression of the senses. The abstract word of the prophets assumed flesh in Jesus Christ as the Image of the invisible God. This is in tune with the scriptural paradigm of the world as the place where God makes himself available to human imagination. In this sense the task of theology is "*imagining* God and world scripturally". The emerging biblical hermeneutical model of rhetorical study of the Bible invites us to understand the whole of Bible as a story, which is narrated in many stories. This is not exactly a return to the primitive world of myths, nor re-enchantment of the world in the sense of the romantic philosophers but a rediscovery of the presence and action of God in history in fidelity to the biblical tradition and the dynamics of emerging digital communication systems.

2.5. New Authorities: Interactive and Communitarian Ratio

Learning and knowledge are increasingly becoming interactive and communitarian, in the global village. Advancement of knowledge is a communitarian and participatory process rather than an individual quest. Increased interactivity enabled by digital technologies challenge the transmission model of communication epitomized by the Lasswell formula and all consequent presuppositions of authority and truth claims. This epistemological shift necessitates non-dogmatic interaction around ideas moving away from right and wrong ideas. Especially the social media and networked technologies threaten the old private identities of the ABCED-minded (literate) philosopher-thinker-theologian of 'silent' reading and research and create new connected identities of the bloggers, wiki-teams, Facebook favorites and twitter kings. This challenges the hierarchical, communicator-centred and purely text-based theology. How can we have genuine and reliable theology? Or, Where does theology find its authority in the hyper market of Cyber theology?

One of the earliest foundational principles of theology employed by the Fathers of the Church[15], can be called in to rescue theology in the era of Wiki and Twitter. When the first transmediatization of Christianity led to the proliferation of heretical interpretations, St Ireneus proposed the *sensus fidei* or *believer's sense of faith*[16] as the remedy. Sensus fidei refers to the instinctive capacity of a Christian to know and embrace and proclaim the truth regarding salvation. This concept is best explained by Vincent of Lerins (+456) in his *Commonitorium* Ch. 23, where he states "what has been believed everywhere, always, by all must be true." Qualifed *as sensus ecclesiasticus et catholicus* (Eusebius and St. Jerome), it is better expressed as *consensus fidelium* mentioned in Trent (DS1637) and widely used by Vatican II (DV 8, 10, LG12, 25; GS 52, 62). This can be applied to theologizing in the social media. However, the concept of *sensus fidei* or *consensus fidelium* cannot automatically be applied to justify all that is expressed by individual Christians on faith and theology. Although social media has radically redefined the idea of community, Christianity is not complete without the ecclesial communities, which is constituted by physical presence of members in a place of worship, study and action. Theologian is never alone. He is a member of a Christian community, which is the locus of theology.

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[15] Dan Martins, an Anglican Priest states that "wiki-theology seems strangely consonant with a very traditional and very Catholic concept—the *consensus fidelium*, the consensus of the faithful. Even in the most hierarchically ordered churches, the voice of the hierarchy is understood to be ultimately credible inasmuch as it is also the voice of the entire ecclesial community. A decree of the magisterium, or of an ecumenical council, is formally final, but effectively is concluded with an asterisk: It must still be "received" (a technical term in ecclesiology) by the "faithful" (another technical term pretty much synonymous with "baptized," therefore denoting the whole body of the Church, not merely those whose piety is exemplary)." Dan Martins blog is called Confessions of a Carioca: http://cariocaconfessions.blogspot.com/2010/03/wiki-theology.html)

[16] "The quality of the subject upon whom the grace of faith, love and gift of the Holy Spirit confers capacity to perceive the truth of faith and to discern what is contrary to the same" (DTF 992).

2.6. New *Habitus Theologicus*: Theologian as Imagineer

The coexistence of oral, literate and audiovisual communication in the digital culture represents a new era in human thinking and expression. The return of the affective intelligence through the use of image-music- story as the predominant narrative, is an indication that theology is gearing up to step out of the portals of the Aristotelian academia to wander the Socratic streets. In other words, theology is already undergoing transformation from a strictly academic discipline as developed by the scholastic thinkers and perfected by modern theology, to a people's theology, which epitomizes contemporary man's quest for meaning and ultimate sense of life. Whether popular or academic in nature and name, theology is faith seeking understanding and expression, or better communication.

Prophets and Jesus told stories and parables to capture the imagination of the people and to give them a glimpse of the eternal truths through everyday experiences and stories. Jesus taught the whole truths about God, world and man through imageries, stories, parables. The whole bulk of 'learned theology' of the past two thousand years is based on these biblical narrative. The inherent oral-personal dimension of the biblical faith dwelt intact within the written-read word to make the Church and theology integral. Early Christians appropriated the technology of writing and rational discourse to thrive in the Greco-Roman world. Progressively, the printed text became the primary medium of communication and theology became textual, rational, propositional and dogmatic. However, most world religions, including eastern Christianity retained more of oral, intuitive and mythical elements and are capable of communicating better to the men and women of the digital culture.

Today digital media technologies have revolutionized human communication by integrating all the previous media of sound, image and text. The digital storytelling using the audio-visual-textual coding provides new opportunities for reincarnating the biblical narrative to release the hidden energies of the Gospel in order to bring alive the original God-experience mysteriously held alive in the biblical narratives. . Disproportionate academic focus on system thinking that dominated the last millennium should be balanced by aesthetic and practical approach to faith by recourse to imagination as a key for translating what is inevitably unreachable into what is existential and energizing. The extreme rationalization of theology led to the rejection of beauty in favor of truth and goodness. The digital communication operates basically in the realm of beauty and pleasure often without proper roots in truth and goodness. But today's communications has shown that truth and goodness cannot communicate itself convincingly and attractively without being in the company of beauty. And beauty without the connection to truth and goodness becomes ephemeral and meaningless. Today theology is faced with the task of retrieval of God as beauty.

The invisible God became visible in the humanity of God (Jesus); Word became visible in the flesh. The sacred became present and manifest in the secular. As the Medellin Conference (1968) said it beautifully, today the 'word' also becomes image, colors and sounds, acquiring varied forms from the diverse media of social communications. Hence, true theology cannot remain purely rational and notional but must be experiential and tangible sights, sounds and stories of the multimedia and multi-sensorial communication. Stories of faith make God transparent in parables and metaphors, art and music, rituals and celebration, than through the abstract doctrines or perfect statement of faith. The task of the theologian in the digital culture is to reclaim the "imaginal effect", "symbolic expression" and "artistic conception" of revelation-faith experience and the reflection on it.[17]

Theologians have to become *Imagineers*.

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[17] Sebastian Elavuthingal, "Art and Theological Communication", in Palakeel, *Towards a Communication Theology*, 121-140.

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