



CONVEGNO DI STUDIO
DON ALBERIONE
"FONDATORE"

Ariccia 23-25 novembre 2014



SOCIETÀ SAN PAOLO

**Fr. Alberione in the "digital" age
Culture and Pedagogy: new pastoral-apostolic prospects**

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Introduction

To speak of Fr. Alberione in the digital age is to appreciate the value of two converging realities – first, the richness of the Pauline charismatic and pedagogical heritage; and second, the continuing development and evolution of the culture of communication. Believing that the two complement and enrich the other, the current presentation will endeavour to make an in-depth study not only of their convergences but likewise their inherent and distinct divergences. The aim is to extract new apostolic and pastoral prospects in culture and pedagogy for Paulines. Defining each of these terms concretely, the current presentation adopts:

- **digital** as an attribute describing the period of communication wherein contents originally only mechanical, oral and written are digitized or virtualised (text, graphics, audio and visual) and transmitted through the internet, computer or electronic networks.
- **culture** as sum total of the mores, norms, belief, stories, social habits and characteristics, language, music and arts, "mentality, style of life and manner of doing"¹, shared through encounter and interaction;
- **pedagogy** as the preparation and creation of a didactic process leading to transmitting, learning, and living out of formative content;
- **new** in its etymological meaning as the adjective signifying fresh, novel, innovative and original;
- **pastoral** as guiding and leading towards human development through the "substance and style" of the evangelic model of care of true values among persons and in God²;
- **apostolic** as the act of "one who prays, speaks, suffers, writes, publishes, and spreads the word of God" (AE #5); and,
- **prospects** as a journey of *kairos*, "already here yet not yet" to which each one is encouraged to strain forward (Phil 3:13).

Limiting itself to the area of culture and pedagogy within the Pauline mission in the digital era, presentation is divided into three parts: 1) The Pauline charismatic and pedagogical heritage; 2) Evolution and psychodynamics of digital communication; and 3) New pastoral-apostolic prospects of the Pauline pedagogy in the culture of digital communication. Primary references include foremost Church documents on communication, major writings of Fr. Alberione and leading proponents in digital science like Henry Jenkins, Manuel Castells, Dana Boyd, Barry Wellman, Richard Rogers, Pierre Lévy, Howard Rheingold and others. Acknowledging their pertinent value to the task at hand, key themes in the contributions particularly on evangelisation and culture of

¹ Silvio SASSI, "The Total Christ for the Century of Glocal Communication", in SSP, *Jesus, the Master Yesterday, Today and Forever: The Spirituality of the Pauline Cooperator, Acts*, Ariccia: SSP, p. 520)

² Giacomo ALBERIONE, *L'Apostolato dell'edizione – Manuale direttivo di formazione e di apostolato (AE)*, Cinesello Balsamo: Edizioni San Paolo, #29.

communication from Fr. Silvio Sassi, SSP Superior General, will similarly be delineated as part of a resonant launching pad.

1. The Pauline charismatic and pedagogical heritage

“The degree with which you master your tools, you can invest the world with your meaning, the degree with which you are mastered by your tools, the shape of the tools determines your own self image”³. Two years after the death of Fr. Alberione, Ivan Illich, Austrian philosopher and social thinker, penned this thought, something which Fr. Alberione would have felt and which in a significant way present succinctly his charismatic vision *a propos* the means or instruments of social communication. Rather than be mastered by them, the instruments of communication are to be mastered so as to invest the world and its sciences with meaning – that of Christ, who brings fullness to all – the key to the Pauline mission: *“Omnia vestra sunt, vos autem Christi, Christus autem Dei”* (1 Cor 3:22-23: “All are yours, and you are of Christ, and Christ is of God”). This complements the well known adage drawn of Fr. Alberione on 28 June 1969 by Pope Paul VI who considered him “ever intent at scrutinizing the signs of the times, that is to say, the most inspired means of reaching souls and which has given the Church new ways of expressing herself, new means to invigorate and broaden her apostolate, new capacities and a new awareness of the validity and possibilities of her mission in the modern world and with modern means”⁴.

Not intending to repeat nor present another extensive historical excurses of the story of Fr. Alberione, most of which have been discussed earlier in this convention, I will just highlight five interpretative keys, each vital as it is distinctive, to the charismatic and pedagogical heritage of Fr. Alberione.

1.1 The charismatic heritage of *Abundantes Divitiae Grazie Suae*

First among these keys was the abundance of Divine grace Fr. Alberione felt God always extended. Central to these was the **perennial sentiment of nothingness before God and before himself clothed nonetheless with a primary and adamant belief in the light, consolation and strength received from the Eucharist**. *Abundantes Divitiae Gratiae Suae* (AD), the charismatic story of the Pauline Family confirmed this. Thus, in presenting the critical edition of AD, Fr Silvio Pignotti, then superior general of the Society of St Paul, wrote that Fr. Alberione, “did not intend to narrate that which he had done and realised, even with the help of God, but that **he wanted to focus on the marvellous pedagogy with which the extraordinary abundance of grace was willed to be of service to him**, ‘an unworthy and incapable person, to realize his a project in favour of the Church’⁵. In front of the nothingness felt by Alberione, the description highlights two distinctive elements which has originally inspired the book: **mercy** (for an unworthy and incapable person) and the **magnificat** (praise for the extraordinary richness of grace). Both are at the heart of the mystery of the love of God which inspired and continues to inspire the Pauline charismatic heritage.

AD was conceived at the request of some Paulines (Fr. Valentino Gambi, Fr. Renato Perino e Fr. Luigi Roatta) to Fr. Alberione to write something about the story of the Pauline Family. The accounts and narrations were gathered in 1954 in a volume published to celebrate the 40th year of foundation with the title *“My protendo in avanti”* and in 1960, on the occasion of the Special General Chapter, was published under the title *“Io sono con voi”*. On 1971 the first edition of AD came out. Following this were the 1975, 1985, and 1998 editions, which considered not only an autobiography nor a simple story but a collection of the richness of the heritage of the Pauline

³ Ivan ILLICH, *Tools for Conviviality*, London, Marion Boyars, 1973, p.29.

⁴ Quoted in Stephen LAMERA, *Don Giacomo Alberione – A Marvel of Our Times*, USA. Daughters of St Paul, 1977, p.9. Retrieved from <http://paulines.ph/fsp/fsp-downloads/marvel-of-our-times.pdf>.

⁵ Silvio PIGNOTTI, ‘Foreword’, in Giacomo ALBERIONE, *Abundantes Divitiae Grazie Suae* (AD), Roma, Casa Generalizia SSP, 1998.

Family – richness of grace and of nature, of historical prospects, and of spiritual themes – **a key to not only knowing but understanding the past, living the present and seeing the prophecy that holds for the future for the entire Pauline Family.**

For the Hebrews, two elements intersect on the significance of the word mercy: **compassion** (*rahamin*) and **fidelity** (*hesed*). *Rahamin* indicates a link of someone to another. In the Semitic world it can refer to a link to the maternal breast (1 Kg 3:26) or the internal organs (Jer 31:20; Ps 103:13); kindness that spurs to action; or compassion (Ps 106:45) or pardon (Dn 9:9). *Hesed* implies fidelity, non only echo of goodness but goodness that is willed, responsible and faithful to oneself. Christ embodies the totality of God’s mercy. *Magnificat* in its stead refers to the canticle of Mary during her encounter with Elisabeth (Lk 1:46-55). It is a canticle of praise similar to that of Anna (1 Sm 2:1-10) and numerous Psalms (33,3-4; 24,9; 137,6; 70,19; 125,2-3; 110,9; 97,1; 117,16; 32,10; 112,7; 33,11; 97,3; 131,11). It describes the **relationship with God and with his people indicating the fulfilment of the ancient prophecy and pointing towards the new.** Mary recites the canticle describing the greatness of the work and action of God for the world, for his people and his servant. In essence and **at work in the charismatic heritage of the Pauline Family is the abundance of God’s grace which embraces the limitations of persons who are empowered in their encounter with the mercy and fidelity of God.** It was a relational encounter not only known but gradually understood at heart by Fr. Alberione, lived in prayer and the apostolate, and bequoth to each of the members of the Pauline Family who time and again are invited to “live with the times, [not forgetting] their story: a story of grace, of sin and of the journey, like St Paul, to give glory to God”⁶.

1.2 The Publishing Apostolate as a pedagogical heritage

As a recipient of an abundant grace, Fr. Alberione had an active response: “He felt profoundly obliged to prepare himself to do something for the Lord and the people of the new century with whom he would live” (AD, #15). More concretely and reflecting on the call of Toniolo and the encouragement of Pope Leo XII to “unite for if not the enemy will overcome you one by one”, Fr Alberione felt the urge to embark on the publishing apostolate with the aim of **“fighting the bad press with the good press” and actively focussed and stressed not only on what the press was doing badly but what good it can do** for the growth of persons in themselves and in Christ. Fr. Alberione and the Paulines **were pioneers in this apostolate that mainly utilizes the instruments of communication to spread God’s word, to evangelize.** And the Church, through the words of Paul VI cited beforehand and a number of her documents confirmed such apostolate. Moreover, it also resonated with what the same Paul VI himself had said earlier on 9 October 1957: “The fundamental attitude of the Catholics who want to convert the world is to love it. This is the genius of the apostolate: to know how to love. We should love our times, our society, our technical means, our art, our sport, our world.”⁷ Fr. Alberione, through the publishing apostolate in particular, had incarnated both declarations of Paul VI following his initial inspiration of doing something for the people of the new century. This apostolate for Fr. Alberione possesses a similar value and dignity with that of oral preaching. “Your machines are your pulpits”, Alberione would symbolically express, “and bookcenters are your churches” (cf. UPS I, 316). **Both are means whereby God’s word can reach people and in it and with it they can be formed and find meaning and fulfilment.**

A basic and initial exposé of this work Alberione had penned in the book “*L’Apostolato Stampa*” (later on, *L’Apostolato dell’Edizioni - AE*) the origin of which can be traced back in 1933 when it came out. They were composed of texts by Alberione initially published in *Gazetta d’Alba* (1932) and *Vita Pastorale* (1931) – two SSP periodicals – with external readership and formative vocational aim. The 1944 edition, prepared by the Centre of Pauline Spirituality in Rome, was

⁶ POPE FRANCIS, Homily, Vatican City, Sta. Martha, 7 October 2014.

⁷ POPE PAUL VI, World Day of Apostolate of the Laity, 1957.

attributed to Fr. Alberione from his notes gathered and edited by Sr Luigina Borrano FSP, Fr. Giovanni Pellicia SSP and Fr Attilio Tempra (cf. AE #.19). Describing work on cinema, radio (and television), AE contained the underlying guidelines regarding the importance Alberione had placed on the instruments of communication as means of evangelisation. Itself bearing later the subtitle “Handbook of formation and apostolate”, it **defined in concrete the identity of the Pauline – his/her work and his/her formative preparation particular to it that centers on the communication of the identity of Christ**, Way (Morals) , Truth (Faith) and Life (Worship). In its entirety the work can thus be considered likewise as **the fundamental basis of the Pauline pedagogical heritage** containing themes not only scripture, theology, spirituality and liturgy but likewise on the social sciences including history, biography, literature, geography, printing and typography, politics, philosophy, distribution, marketing and promotion, cinema, radio, television and so on . The second edition came out in 1950 and on 26 November 1954, the third edition came out.

In summary, “the aim of the two-part work – the first, of a general theoretical nature, and the second, more practical – is to illustrate who the apostle is and what he or she must do. The title apostle describes every Pauline. The way the subject matter is set out, in the numerous short chapters, highlights the particular pedagogical attention paid to is young readers” (AE, foreword).

1.3 Pedagogical charism of a family of evangelizers

Believing that “the works of God are performed by men and women of God”, Alberione willed and invited persons together to participate in the Pauline charism. They were to be religious men and women who would guarantee its continuity through their work and witness. More than just workers, they were considered as apostles of evangelisation made up of, from the humble beginnings on 20 august 1914 in Italy, the ten branches of the Pauline Family which grew and spread throughout the world according to the divine pedagogy of “living and giving to the world Jesus Christ, Way, Truth and Life”: Society of St Paul (1914), Daughters of St Paul (1915), Disciples of the Divine Master (1924), Pastorelle Sisters (1938), Apostoline Sisters (1959), the Pauline Institutes (1960) - Jesus the Priest, St. Gabriel, the Archangel, Our Lady of the Annunciation, Holy Family - and the Association of Pauline Cooperators (1918). While each are united in the same goal of living Christ integrally as he communicated himself as Way, Truth and Life⁸, each have their distinct apostolic focus and each aiming with their heart, mind, and will at holiness of life and holiness of doctrine.

For Alberione, Paulines are called “**to give the doctrine that saves**”. He always utilised and admonished the care of the image of the four wheels of the Pauline “cart” to symbolise the integral movement of the Pauline pedagogical formation: *prayer* (spiritual formation), *study* (intellectual formation), *apostolate* (apostolic formation) and *poverty* or common life (an authentic equilibrium of the value of secular realities)⁹. **Only through a balance of these four can the Pauline charismatic and pedagogical heritage strain forward towards the Pauline unitary project of “bringing the whole of Christ to persons and the whole of persons to Christ”**. Specific and individual difficulties had and would continue to arise in each of the wheels. What is most important, **is not to remain passively numbed by individual difficulties of a specific wheel that arise but to proceed embraced by the hope on the underlying purpose of the cart as a whole – to bring the message of the Gospel to persons**¹⁰. The Pauline Family is invited to continually be inspired more by the purpose of evangelisation rather than only by its means, no

⁸ Congregazione per gli Istituti di Vita Consacrata e le Società di Vita Apostolica (CIVCSVA), *Scrutate* – ai consacrati e alle consacrate in cammino sui segni di Dio, Città del Vaticano, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2014, #53.

⁹ Cf. Burno SIMONETTO, “Dimensione pedagogica: Cristo Maestro, ‘Forma’ dello sviluppo umano”, in Antonio Ugenti (ed), *La sfida di Don Alberione*, Casale Monferrato, Edizioni Piemme, p.298.

¹⁰ Cf. Silvio SASSI, ‘10CapitoloFSP: Don Silvio Sassi, Superiore generale ssp. Interview in Youtube. FSP 2014. Retrieved from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zy-w4QEk7vY>, 07:00.

matter how modern and current, to achieve it. For Alberione, **the instruments of communication were always specific and necessary means to an end.** They are not ends in themselves of the Pauline apostolate but used in a “good” way become authentic, specific and valid means to achieve the end purpose of bringing persons to Christ – evangelisation.

1.4 Elements of the methodology of the Pauline pedagogy

As with the whole of the Pauline apostolic mission to **“live and give to the world Jesus Christ, Way, Truth and Life” is principal element of the methodology of Pauline pedagogy.** This is achieved by incarnating the reality of the trinomial self and total definition of Christ as Way, Truth and Life (Jn 14:6) to the totality of the human person – will, mind and heart. It aims at the Pauline pedagogical paradigm which is integral and “involves the whole person in his/her mode of being and acting: interiority, suffering, prayer, witness and action” (Alle FSP 1947, IV – VIII, 458). All human sciences should converge and aspire towards this integrality found only in God, the ultimate “altrice”. In God everything begins and ends *“ut unum sint”*.

Considering the institute as “teaching” (Alle FSP 1947, VIII, 59), Alberione believed that Paulines must always be in **profound communion with the Church, the second element of the methodology in Pauline pedagogy,** who continues the mission of Christ: “We should not teach more than nor less than that which the Church teaches. We remain in the Church in a hidden way, to assimilate the treasures of her doctrine, sanctity and grace, to quench ourselves and be quenched” (Alle FSP 1947, VIII, 60-61). Paulines are born from the Eucharist. It is in the Eucharist from which the whole of the Church is nourished and sustained and obtains her inspiration and strength. The continuity and sanctity from which each Pauline religious is entreated primarily ensues from the healthy relationship of each Pauline with the institute, the institute with the Church, the Church with Christ.

The third element is evangelisation. The mission to evangelise the world has always been central in Church documents most especially *Inter Mirifica (1963)*, *Comunio et Progresio (1971)* and *Aetatis Novae (1992)* and the annual Messages for World Day of Communications (from 1967 onwards) which inculcate as their premise the instruments of communication at the service of the Church. The Church exists at the service of Truth and within this strain, activities befitting the people of God are never considered as direct norms but rather their agenda. This Cardinal Paul Poupard later affirmed quoting St. John Paul II: “To evangelise the world, it is necessary to evangelise culture. And if it is true that the future of the world depends on the culture, it is also true that the future of culture depends in a great way on mass media. For this reason it is important to utilise, without fear, mass media to shape a new culture, inspired by faith, forming people anew”¹¹. Recently, **Pope Francis encouraged a “culture of encounter” in this regard symbolically defining its main characteristic with the necessity of authentic “neighbourliness”** as found in parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:29). Three things were underlined: 1) Importance of spaces and time for reflection *vis a vis* the speed of communication with digital media; 2) Importance of being a true neighbour more than persons who are just near each other; and, 3) Although there are often difficulties in using these instruments importance of considering them as a good given by God which can help us human growth. Pope Francis emphasized the true nature of evangelisation in the encounter that happens in the digital era, **“It is not enough to be passersby on the digital highways, simply “connected”; connections need to grow into true encounters.** We cannot live apart, closed in on ourselves. We need to love and to be loved. We need tenderness”¹².

¹¹ Cardinal Paul POUPARD, ‘Presentation’, in Antonio Ugenti (ed), *La sfida di Don Alberione*, Casale Monferrato, Edizioni Piemme, p.6.

¹² POPE FRANCIS, Message for the 48th World Day of Social Communications, 2014. Retrieved from http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/communications/documents/papa-francesco_20140124_messaggio-comunicazioni-sociali.html on 30 September 2014.

1.5 Practical tenets of the Pauline pedagogy

More practically and looking at the future mission of the Pauline Family, Fr Alberione in AD delineated the tenets of Pauline pedagogy as follows: “1) Study the human sciences, 2) unify the sciences with the philosophy of sciences; and 3) demonstrate philosophy as a handmaid that leads directly into Revelation” (AD #18). **Rather than two opposing cultural realities, reason (represented by natural sciences) and faith (represented by Revelation) for Fr Alberione are “two sisters” whose constant embrace leads to integrality and completeness** (AD #198). Continuously updating oneself on both serves personal development and the task of evangelisation. With God’s grace and help of human knowledge, “every science will beam its own ray of light through Philosophy through theology; and the manifold sciences will also find their unity in multiplicity, and through the humility of faith the door opens on the third revelation, ‘*lumen gloriae*’, capable of empowering the cognitive faculty to penetrate the essence of God” (AD # 193).

In line with the three tenets, Alberione invited Paulines to organize themselves well – time as well as resources. He understood that, “organisations have a great force and while anyone can be a saint, alone he or she is only a twig. If however all the branches work together there arises a great force” (*Med. ined. alle FSP*, 28/4/1960). **As a handbook for formation and apostolate, AE provides a number of possible subject areas on which Pauline pedagogy could be organised and developed** with particular attention: 1) to the Pauline mission of “evangelisation through the instruments of communication”; and , 2) to the particular needs of individual recipients which can be categorised as “*beginners* (children in the faith and non-Christians), *proficient* (adolescents in knowledge) and *perfect* (ecclesiastics or lay people who undertake full study of religion” (AD #154-156). At the end, **the Pauline pedagogy aims not primarily at forming “great thinkers or writers who guide the masses” but forming opinion makers who will be like generals guiding an army**” (AD #155).

2. Evolution and Psychodynamics of digital communication

Communication in the digital era implies understanding its language and evolution from the traditional to digital/virtual media. **While traditional media like printing, radio, television, and audiovisuals distribute the contents to the people, they neither create nor easily or economically facilitate spaces for the deepening, development, distribution or exchange of contents.** This is attained through digital communication, above through the internet and social media network which transform *monologic* communication (one to many) to a dialogue (many to many) in a *synchronic* and/or *asynchronic* manner.

2.1 Genesis of digital communication

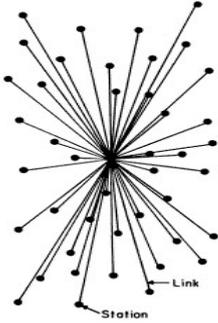
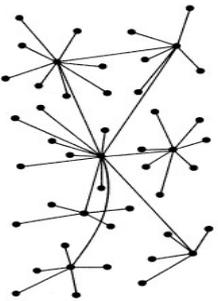
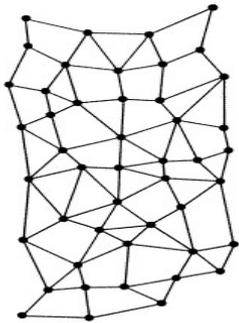
A turning point in communication was the advent of the internet and subsequently, social media network, both hallmarks of the digital culture. **The definition of the internet can be linked with its history involving the evolution of the culture of connectivity and communication where the exchange of information and resources occur.** In general internet is: 1) a network of networks based on the TCP/IP (Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol); 2) a community of persons who communicate among themselves utilizing and developing this network; 3) a collection of resources which could be gathered by these networks. The evolution could be traced back in the 1960s with the Plato computer based education tool of the University of Illinois (USA). **Two significant factors accompanied it: fear and promise.** In 1957 the Sputnik satellite was launched in orbit by Russia. It was out of fear of loosing communication in the eventuality of another cold war (between USA and Russia and their respective allies) that in ‘60’s the Advanced Research Project Agency (ARPA) was created. From this was born ARPANET with the aim of establishing communication (from centralized to distributed) that does not use a central computer but a network of computers located in different places and can function independently. At the start, four universities in the USA participated in the project and in the ‘70’s the information exchange was made through TCP Transmission Control Protocol) and IP (Internet protocols). Other

institutions, even outside USA participated in the network. FTP (File Transfer Protocol) was born which allowed the transfer of files and messages (email) and also the first bulletin board. This allowed for the reception of news even from afar.

In 1983, the military and university/research use of the internet was split: MILNET was used for military use while INTERNET was used for university, research and common communication. The first internet connection between USA and Italy occurred in 1983, through the *Centro Nazionale Universitario di Calcolo Elettronico* (Cruce). In 1990, ARPANET was decommissioned and HTML (Hypertext Marked Language) was born.

In 1992, around one million computers were already digitally connected to the internet network. **Tim Berners Lee**, a researcher from CERN Europe proposed the concept, development and management of the hypertext which would be known as WWW (world wide web). The first browser, MOSAIC, which was used in a computer with a modem, was born in 1993. It offered a big promise in communication, and research, seeing the increasing number of users. The year 2000 saw big developments which paved the way for the use and diffusion of the internet. Among the new technologies were the use of fiber optics, satellite disks, Bluetooth and the wireless technologies, together with the introduction of additional browsers, search engines, CMS to download information, commercial, economic and financial activities and the social media network sites.

In general communicative interaction during the pre-digital era was characterised primarily as information sharing or transmission which although immediate, stable and synchronous, was also static and limited by time and space. In many ways it can be associated with a centralised network communication which later evolved to decentralised interaction and further more to distributed communication. This has been characterised concomitantly as relationship building or socialisation. The evolution can be outlined under three stages: **orality**, **textuality** and **digital/post-textuality**. Their particular characteristics are described in Figure 1 below. Social media processes in digital communication have evolved from simple text messaging to composite communication utilising photos, videos, and other applications.

Figure 1: Evolutive stages of the digital communication network¹³ . .		
Orality	Textuality	Digital (Virtual) Post-textuality
		
Centralised communication LOCAL	Decentralised communication GLOBAL	Distributed communication GLOCAL
interaction and communication considered paratactic, aggregative, redundant, traditionalist, concrete (experience), agonistic,	interaction and communication have been considered analytic, smooth, innovative, reflective, objective and detached, abstract language, stable, more solid and binding, sequential,	communication is fluid, unstable, more exchange, immaterial, real time, non uni-dimensional space, service concession vs. stable property rights, breach of

¹³ Adapted from Paul BARAN, *On Distributed Communications*, Brussels, Rand Corporation, Retrieved on 12 June 2012 from http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_memoranda/RM3420/

participatory and emphatic, homeostatic, uses a situational language, body and significant gestures	linear, empowering, dominant function of the mass media, limited space to civil society, deferred communication, pervasive and textual model	generational agreement of hypertext model, self-affirmation and liberation of the individual, social connections and networks
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2.2 Psychodynamics of digital communication – the “social media network”

Existing prior to the internet, social networking in digital communication is primordial and responds to the human need to socialize. Cognitive psychologists Cheryl Coyle and Heather Vaughn affirm this role of social networking, **considering it more as an evolution rather than a revolution**, “not created in the age of the internet; [but] existing long before”. They confirm that social networks exist because humans are societal and require relationships with other humans in order to survive”.¹⁴ Charles Darwin in 1869 identified man’s instinctive need for survival manifested on the need for nourishment and socialization. The advent of the internet gave birth to the distinction between social network “offline” and “online”. The basic structure of social network nonetheless remains valid for both. They are made up of actors (nodes and vertices) connected by a series of relational links, as can also be seen in the figure given above.

Historically, it was research anthropologist **John Barnes** who in 1954 coined the term *social network* while studying the connectivity and social relationships of persons, in his parish in Norway. He was continuing the work of Jacob Moreno who in 1934 illustrated through *sociograms* some games for children. This continued to evolve and together with it the concept of Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 were later also born that took into account the role of the users, **from being simple participants – consumers (Web 1.0) to being creators of media content as well – prosumers (Web 2.0)**. Web 3.0 promises a great development in the use of social media, not only with the computer but principally through the proliferation of small sized platforms like the IPAD, tablet and smartphones. These devices made more visible the connectivity of social media network and supports social interactions among users. Traditional media like TV and books distribute the contents to the masses but do not facilitate the creation and sharing of the contents. Social media network do it transforming monologue (one to many) to dialogue (many to many). Currently, the different types of social network can be classified as:

- Asynchronous conversations (ex. email - gmail, hotmail, Yahoo mail, MS out look, and forum – google group, listserv);
- Synchronic conversations (chat – Yahoo messenger, Google talk, and audio video conference – skype, Gizimo, Windows live);
- World wide web (personal website or institutional portal);
- Collaborative Authoring (wikipedia, Google docs)
- Blog, microblog e podcast (Wordpress, livejournal, Twitter)
- Social Sharing (YouTube, Vimeo, metacafe, flickr, Picasso, delicious, Digg, Reddit)
- Social network services (Facebook, MySpace, Linked In, Ning)
- Online marketing and production (ebay, Amazon, epinions)
- Virtual world (second life, Haboo, World of warcraft, AION)
- Mobile based services (Foursquare, gowalla)¹⁵

¹⁴ Cheryl COYLE - Heather VAUGHN, *Social Networking: Communication Revolution or Evolution?* in «Bell Labs Technical Journal», 13/2 (2008), 13.

¹⁵ The classification was discussed by Derek HANSEN – Ben Shenderman – Marc Smith (eds.), *Analyzing social media networks with NodeXL*, Amsterdam, Morgan Kaufmann, 2011, 18-25. An indepth and illustrative representation of the classification was proposed by Brian Solis and Jesse Thomas who consider social media network as an act of conversation that constantly evolves. See <http://www.theconversationprism.com>.

By nature, digital communication through social media heralds an evolution within the “network culture”¹⁶. Here each person, each self, continually participates in personal and communal narrations¹⁷. Anthony Kerby believes that these narrations give meaning to what we usually call self. For him,

“the self is a given content, is delineated and embodied, primarily in narrative constructions or stories... This is not to say, however that the concept of self is unimportant [*simply narrated*] and of no practical value, to be relegated only to the ash heap of history. On the contrary the development of selves in our narratives is one of the most characteristically human acts, acts that justifiably remain of central importance to both our personal and communal existence”¹⁸.

Social media allow this embodiment. They provide an avenue for the embodied narration to take place that is most pertinent in the “becoming” of an individual or a group. This embodied narration corresponds to digital narrative texts. Mike Bal maintains that **“a text does not consist solely of narration” but that “in every narrative text, one can point to passages that concern something other than the events: an opinion about something”**¹⁹. The functional role of the text pointing to passages that concern something echoes what Walter Ong has long affirmed: “Unless a text is read it is a nontext. It only gets its significance once it is read”²⁰.

A clear definition of social media in digital communication emerges. **They are internet based application platforms and tools that enhance the network sharing, production and reproduction of information and resources including texts, photos, audio, video.** They are part of the narrative evolution and interaction of self which is better understood with the concept of the socio-cultural changes over time. Bruce Trigger refers to the narrative evolution in social media as the interplay between mechanism and output of history, “to the course of human history (in its overall complexity or its general characteristics) and to the mechanisms that shape that history”²¹. Marco Massarotto affirms this **adding the significance of technique and method, and not just platform or tools, as vital in the network of social media** which he thus defines as, “a combination of techniques [mechanisms, *emphasis mine*] and methods for creating and sharing

¹⁶ The theme of network culture is explored in the works Manuel CASTELLS, *The Rise of the Network Society: Information Age: Economy, Society, and Culture* (Vol I), West Sussex, Blackwell, 2000; Francesca COMUNELLO, *Networked Sociability*, Milano, Guerini, 2010; Zizi PAPACHARISSI, *A Networked Self: Identity, Community, and Culture on Social Network Sites*, London, Routledge, 2010. Most of these referred to earlier works of Harold RHEINGOLD, *The Virtual Community: Homesteading on the Electronic Frontier*, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley, 1993; and Pierre LÉVY, *Il virtuale*, Cortina, Milano, 1997.

¹⁷ The participatory characteristic in the new media is highlighted by Henry JENKINS, *Convergence Culture: Where old and new media collide*, New York, New York University Press, 2008; Jean Elizabeth BURGESS - Joshua Benjamin GREEN, *YouTube: online video and participatory culture*, MA, Polity, 2000.; and Emiliana DE BLASIO, *Coinvolgimento politico e social networking fra accesso e partecipazione*, in «Sociologia. Rivista Quadrimestrale di scienze storiche e sociali», n. 1/2010. Wendy GRISWOLD, *Cultures and societies in a changing world*, Third edition, Los Angeles, Pine Forge, 2008, 153-154, believes that “what is most distinctive of new media is not their speed nor their technologically advanced virtual quality but their participatory nature”.

¹⁸ Anthony KERBY, *Narrative and the self*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1991, 1.

¹⁹ Mieke BAL, *Narratology – introduction to the theory of narrative*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1992, 8. For Catherine RIESSMAN, *Narrative analysis*, London, Sage Publications, 1993, pp. 8-14, narratives are representations and analysis of the narratives requires understanding of the five levels of representation of experience. These are: attending to experience, telling about the experience, transcribing the experience, analyzing the experiencing and reading the experience.

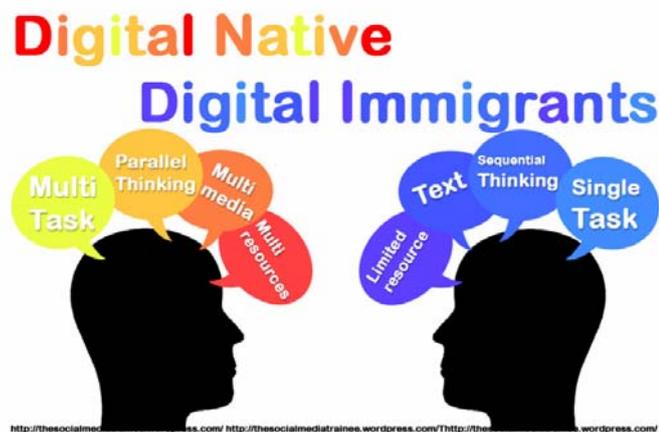
²⁰ Quoted by Dennis WEEKS - Jane Hoogestraat, *Time, Memory and the Verbal Arts: Essays on the Thought of Walter Ong*, Cranbury, Associated University Press, 1998, 14. In his monumental work on orality and literacy Ong mentions two stages of orality: 1) Primary – orality before writing or print; and 2) secondary – orality within writing or print. An further topic of interest for research which unfortunately the current study is limited to cover is the problem how Ong would have described orality within the era of social media where at one point a new language of its own is invented and on the other hand it becomes an indispensable tool for orality and also exists side by side with print.

²¹ Bruce TRIGGER, *Sociocultural evolution: calculation and contingency*, Oxford, Blackwell Publishers, 1998, 11.

contents [output, *emphasis mine*] online. It is an overturning of power where readers or users also becomes authors and audience of contents are also (and can also be) producers themselves”²² Such dynamics in digital communication is best described in the table below. In social media network, the content source and its locus are diffused, widely distributed and give rise to the concept of user generated contents (UGC). Their expressions include the already cited social network, blogs, video sharing, social bookmarking, micro-blogs, chat rooms and forums. Rather than consider digital communication apart from the non-digital they are both best considered as complimentary and part always of a developing whole.

Table 1: Digital – non-digital communication structure	
NON- DIGITAL structured communication	DIGITAL - non-structured communication
Members	Participants
Asynchronous communication	Synchronous communication
More stable language derived from written culture	Unstable language and derived from oral culture
Stability	Fluid
Focused on expressive-poetic and metalinguistic functions	Focused on emotive functions
Feeling of belonging	Feeling of participation
Longer duration	Shorter duration
Stable and authentic identity	Identity fluid and declared
Internationality	National
Context and source of interaction defined	Context and source of interaction undefined
Open/close	Open
Based on being/knowing	Based on doing
Can be oriented towards expressive behaviour	Oriented only on expressive behaviour and experience of identity
Convergence	Divergence
Integration	Interaction
Consumer	Prosumer
Coins	Bitcoins
Spatial interaction	Virtual (Digital)
“Selfishness”	“Selfiness”
Media literacy	Digital literacy
Digital immigrants	Digital natives

Each of the structures represent two pole patterns that often manifest distinct divergences. As an example the figure below shows characteristics of digital natives as well as digital immigrants.



²² MASSAROTTO, *Social network: costruire e comunicare identità in rete*, Milano, Apogeo, 2011, 23.

2.3 Major themes in digital communication

The stages of narrative interactions from centralised to decentralised and then distributed depict how communication itself has evolved from solely an information input to a relational participatory exchange that is continuous and unlimited. Walter Benjamin, art and media theorist, referred to this as a change from “information” to “sensation” where, “the autonomous status of the author is eradicated, literary work subjugated to the commodity market and traditional categories such as genius, creativity and authenticity are rendered obsolete”.²³ **The evolution highlights not mainly the means or instruments itself which are new but moreso the mode or ways of communicating – from information to relationships or network interaction, from the what to the how.**

Looking again at Figure 1, we can deduce that if the focal information point in centralised interaction model collapses, the whole communicative interaction collapses. Decentralised interaction responds to this limitation by diffusing the information nodes yet it offers only limited and specific paths for interaction (e.g. interactants at the bottom can only use specific axes to reach interactants on top). The distributed interaction fills in the gap by creating network axes that acts as additional information bridges enabling the communication from interactants at the bottom to those above. It is this bridging mode of digital communication through social media to which the following major themes in narrative interaction are centred. We have grouped them into four: 1) virtual publics, network identity and community; 2) digital convergence, interactivity and collective cultural participation; 3) authenticity, remediation and user generated content (UGC); and, 4) privacy, governance, deontology, affordance of value and best practice.

2.3.1 Virtual publics, network identity and community

Digital communication highlight the virtual context as a social space where the connection and interaction among persons is of prime importance. Among its major themes are virtual realities, network publics, virtual communities, networked sociability and sociality, and digital connections. Their significance have been pioneered and academically advocated through the years by Pierre Lèvy, Manuel Castells, Howard Rheingold, Barry Wellman, danah boyd, Zizi Papacharissi, and Nancy Baym.²⁴ Digital communication embody this social space wherein relations are harnessed within a sociability that is networked. **This network becomes spaces of possibility not only to use and to obtain information but also to communicate, construct awareness of identity and consent to the human need to socialize.** It opens the window for new ways of narrating one’s story and new ways of recounting one’s proper culture, myths, rites, norms, discourses, conversations, participation, convergence and cross-mediality.²⁵

While traditional media often carry the well known 1964 adage “the medium is the message” of McLuhan, **in digital communication the medium, “is really who we are, our paradigms of perception and interaction which tend to undergo modification so as to adapt to the new medium”**.²⁶ Narrative interaction in the virtual and networked public is based on the

²³ Quoted by Jaeho KANG, *Walter Benjamin and the Media*, Cambridge, Polity, 2014, p.62. Benjamin was most famous for his 1936 book, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*.

²⁴ Their major works on the theme include: Pierre LÈVY, *Il Virtuale*, Cortina, Milano, 1997; Manuel CASTELLS, *The Rise of the Network Society: Information Age: Economy, Society, and Culture (Vol I)*, West Sussex, Blackwell, 2000; Howard Rheingold, *The Virtual Community: Homesteading on the Electronic Frontier*, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley, 1993, Barry WELLMAN - Gulia MILENA, “*Virtual communities as communities. Net surfers don’t ride alone*”, in Marc SMITH and Peter KOLLOCK (eds.), *Communities in Cyberspace*, New York, Routledge, 1999, 167-194; boyd – ELLISON, *Social network sites: Definition, history, and scholarship*; Zizzi PAPANCHARISSI A *Networked Self: Identity, Community, and Culture on Social Network Sites*, London, Routledge, 2010; Nancy BAYM, *Personal Connections in the Digital Age*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2010; and COMUNELLO, *Networked Sociability*. danah boyd’s name by her choice is always in small letters.

²⁵ On cross-mediality see Max GIOVAGNOLI, *Cross-Medi: Le nuove narrazioni*, Milano, Apogeo, 2009.

²⁶ Gabriella PRAVETTONI, *Web Psychology*, Milano, Angelo Guerini, 2002, 177. Translation mine.

accessibility and immediacy of mediatic experiences which encompasses realism to stimulus, interactivity of the instruments, number of persons in the interaction, number of channels, characteristics of the users and characteristics of the contents. Further characteristics can be associated with the *distributed interaction stage* outlined above in Figure 1 whose axis revolves around flexibility, fluidity, greater exchange, incorporeality, real time, multidimensionality and cross-mediality. Convergence in such seeming divergence in virtual publics leaves a constant remonstrance and promise.

2.3.2 *Digital convergence, interactivity and collective cultural participation*

Henry Jenkins has been widely known as the major proponent in studies regarding convergence between the old (traditional) and new (digital) media. Three elements make up this convergence whose interactions can be delineated by a relationship that collides: **media convergence, participatory culture and collective intelligence**.²⁷ For Jenkins each of them expresses a distinct characteristic in an evolving narrative interaction of the self. Although it involves them, media convergence refers not to the delivery mechanism, applications or tools of social media. It is rather the process that refers to the flow of contents across multiple media platforms. Such contents maybe similar and/or diverse and are *narrated* and/or *re-narrated* likewise in the same manner or else in slightly different perspective. For Jenkins, such narrative process is the core of convergence:

It is a process not an endpoint... It involves both a change in the way media is produced and a change in the way media is consumed... It does not just involve commercially produced materials and services but involve people taking media into their own hands, [whose] results can be bad news or else wonderfully creative for all involved.²⁸

While media convergence is principally anchored on contents and its tools for transmission and re-presentation, participatory culture in the digital era focuses mainly on the receivers and how they, using not only tools for transmission but tools for creation, re-narrates the contents, encapsulating it in a unique form, and afterwards re-transmits it. What occurs is a type of “narrative participation”²⁹ which goes beyond the communicative matrix - sender, message-receiver - proposed by semiologist Roman Jakobson. to a participative communication matrix of “message, receiver and sender”³⁰. YouTube, as a digital social medium, exemplifies narrative participation, that in itself is grounded on sharing of collective intelligence which Jenkins considers as akin to alternative source of media power and based on collective meaning-making or construction of meaning.

It was Pierre Lévy who examined more closely the concept of collective intelligence and coined the term in relation to cyberspace. He maintained that in collective intelligence, “no one knows everything, everyone knows something, and all knowledge resides in humanity”³¹. It alludes to a relational sharing of resources of the narrative of self. Rheingold highlights three important

²⁷ Cf. JENKINS, *Convergence Culture*, 2-3. For Jenkins the interactive collision is subtle and forms part of his definition of convergence as, “the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, and the migratory behaviour of media audiences. It describes the technological, industrial, cultural and social changes depending on who’s speaking and what they think they are talking about.”

²⁸ JENKINS, *Convergence Culture*, 16-17. He adds: “Convergence represents a paradigm shift – a move from medium-specific content toward content that flows across multiple media channels, toward the increased interdependence of communications systems, towards multiple ways of accessing media content, and toward ever more complex relations between top-down corporate media and bottom-up participatory culture”, 264.

²⁹ Max GIOVAGNOLI, *Cross-media: Le nuove narrazioni*, Milano, Appogeo, 2009, 109-110, gives practical examples of narrative participation in the media including fanfiction and fanmovies.

³⁰ Quoted by Louis HÉBERT (2011), *The Functions of Language*, in Louis Hébert (dir.), Signo [online], Rimouski (Quebec), Retrieved from <http://www.signosemio.com/jakobson/functions-of-language.asp> on 14 September 2014.

³¹ LÉVY, *Collective intelligence: mankind's emerging world in cyberspace*, New York, Perseus Books, 1999, 13-14.

elements of collective convergence as part of this: coordination (acknowledging its need if one dances by oneself), collaboration (needed to dance with a partner) and cooperation (needed for organising a dance within a group)³².

Acknowledging the significance of convergence as flow of contents (narrated and re-narrated through participating and collective meaning-making) within multiple platforms, a number of issues can be raised including remediation, authenticity and the genre of user generated contents.

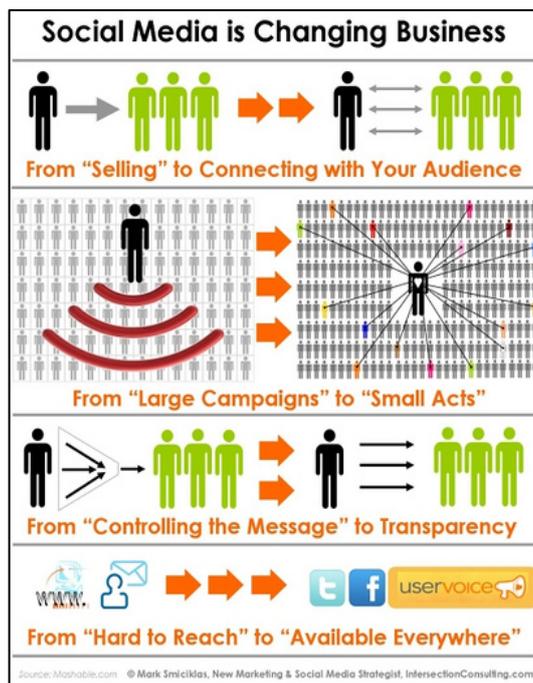
2.3.3 Authenticity, remediation and user generated content (UGC)

In his monumental work first published in 1936 entitled *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* and translated in 1968 as *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, Walter Benjamin, made a critical lament for the decay and loss of aura and authenticity, the loss of authenticity of works of art, including painting, films, music and nature itself, as a result of mechanical, and now, digital reproduction. He has equated authenticity with aura or a presence with originality that opens a sense of wonder or distance between the art itself and the observer “being there” at a particular point in time and space.³³ Loss of authenticity and aura forces in its stead similarity and plurality, likewise typical of virtualised and distributed interaction in social media.

How could aura and authenticity be re-found and re-acquired in social media participation and user generated contents (UGC)?

Jay David Bolter, Blair MacIntyre, Maribeth Gandy, and Petra Schewitzer, believe that “what Benjamin identified was not an end of aura but rather an ongoing crisis, in which the experience of the aura is alternately called in question and reaffirmed”³⁴. The evolution of the narrative interactions in digital communication ushered in paradigm shifts. Authenticity has evolved from subjectivity to objectivity – from uniqueness to similarity, from singularity to plurality, from distance to proximity, and from autonomy to interdependence. With its seeming decay in digital production, aura and authenticity in such evolution, we believe, takes on a new trinomial form: **remediation**, **recombination** and **(re)production**. Bolter has outlined the taxonomy of this remediation highlighting the convergence between the old and new media and the resulting immediacy it generates involving two significant processes³⁵: 1) re-fashioning of the older medium entirely while maintaining a sense of multiplicity or hypermediacy; and 2) absorbing the older medium entirely, so that discontinuities between the two are minimised. The process of change is illustrated in Figure 2 on how social media is changing business: From selling to connecting, from large campaigns to small acts, from control to transparency and from hard to reach to available everywhere.

On his part, De Mul proposes a database ontology or a digital recombination which recognises the basic



³² RHEINGOLD, *Net Smart: How to thrive online*, Cambridge, MIT Press, 2012, 208.

³³ Walter BENJAMIN, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, in Jessica Evans and Stuart Hall (eds.) *Visual Culture: A Reader*, London, Sage, 2008, 72-79, 75. Jos DE MUL in , 'The work of art in the age of digital recombination' in Marianne Van Den Boomen, (ed. et al) *Digital Material: Tracing New Media in Everyday Life and Technology*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009, 95-106, describes this as, "original art is always characterised by uniqueness (Einmaligkeit) and singularity (Einzigkeit) in time and space", 96.

³⁴ Jay David BOLTER, Blair MACINTYRE, Maribeth GANDY and Petra SCHWEITZER, *New Media and the Permanent Crisis of Aura*. «Convergence», 12/2006, 22-39, 22.

³⁵ Cf. Bolter, *Remediation and the Desire for Immediacy*, in «Convergence», 6/2000, 62-71, 65-67.

characteristics of storage and applying it to the user general content – i.e. “insert, select, update and delete”³⁶. De Mul maintains that as the number of recombination from database is infinite, digital media can also bring about infinite instances of aura and authenticity not located in a particular history but in its virtuality. A shift we believe thus occurs **that what becomes prominent in the conception of aura and authenticity does not rely so much on the “being there” (as traditional media) as much as “being with” (in the digital social media) narrative interactions.** Here plurality and universality become keys to social media (re)production – with the self as subject becoming object and vice versa and the auratic distance of “being there” transformed into universal proximity of “being with”.

I believe that although the aura and authenticity seem to be lost it does not mean they cease to exist. **Digital communication present the new trinomial form of authenticity: remediation, recombination and reproduction.** They are not without their issues and limitations. Rather they present a map that takes the narrative self and its interaction to move forward. This, Bolter foretells: “What seems to have disappeared is not the desire for auratic experience, but the claim of auratic art to being the only legitimate style. Digital technology increases options and allows the invocation of aura in new ways”³⁷.

2.3.4 Privacy, governance, deontology, affordance of value and best practice

Issues and limitations regarding consumption of digital communication abound and discussions on them ongoing. They consist of copyright, privacy, common governance, ethical standards, affordance of value, and best practice. Ongoing treatment to each of them has been championed by significant proponents from the academic and institutional sectors alike. Their responses are mostly based on safeguarding the dual narrative networks of self: acknowledging resource outputs (copyright), protecting and enhancing (privacy and ethical standards), appropriating common policy for use and participation (governance and best practice), and identifying value stakeholders (affordance of value). More often than not, issues regarding digital communication converge on the value affordance of self. Table 2 proposes five identifiable value stakeholders in digital social media communication:

Profile	Embodiment	Communicative interaction	Identity representation
1. Owners/keepers	Channel creators, accepted friendship, registered channel	Network within self	Fluid
2. Sharers	Existing friends, friends of friends	Self within network	Fluid
3. Caretakers	SNS application platform	Network within network	Stable / Fixed
4. Distributors /marketers	advertisers	Network within network	Stable / Fixed
5. Monitors	Government agencies – regulatory bodies	Network within network	Stable / Fixed

The five identifiable value stakeholders in digital communication share a collective root in the profiles or channels (in YouTube) that one creates and uses as a member. Here value is used to mean importance, significance and worth. The five value stakeholders are: 1) *Profile*

³⁶ DE MUL, *The work of art in the age of digital recombination*, 99.

³⁷ BOLTER, et. al., *New Media and the Permanent Crisis of Aura*, 36.

³⁸ Norman Melchor PENA, *The value of friendship in social network sites, 2009*. Part of our research project for the Master of Communication degree at Griffith University in Brisbane, Australia, 2009.

owners/keepers, persons who created a channel or accepted a friendship request, subscribed to, opened an account in other social media like Facebook. Membership is normally required for participation in social media. In the case of Facebook more than half of the members are college or high school students³⁹. One accesses Facebook by registering a profile and making connections to existing friends and those one come to know through the site or through received or sent email addresses. 2) *Profile sharers*, first connections of *existing friends, only friends, friends of friends and friends of friends* to the *n*th degree. Interaction happens through receipt of activity news feeds, comments, and posting of videos and photographs. 3) *Profile caretakers*, social network themselves (e.g. Facebook, Google+, Twitter). *Caretakers* can be generic (Facebook, LinkedIn) or product focused (Flickr for photos, Twitter for blogs). The caretakers collect and gather the profiles, maintain the SNSs infrastructure and plans and executes enhancements 4) *Profile distributors/marketers*, those who through advertising support the financial cost of SNSs, the “capitalists interest” of third parties using the data of the organising power of algorithms in the social network.⁴⁰ Through the information acquired from the *caretakers distributors* are able to diffuse product preferences and make contact, through advert banners and texts, with the *profile owners*. Profile preference made by *owners* allows for product segmentation and/or focus; 5) Last, *profile monitors*, avant-garde provisioners of infrastructure and monitoring of SNSs on correspondence to societal ethical norms and performance.⁴¹ Aside from government and recognised regulatory bodies, they include guardians and focus advocacy groups.

3. The Pauline pedagogy in the culture of digital communication

The précis we have made on the value of the richness Pauline charismatic and pedagogical heritage and the continuing development and evolution of the culture of communication, equips us more firmly now to reflect on 10 new pastoral-apostolic prospects, not in order of importance, in line with the cultural and pedagogical legacy of Fr. Alberione. They are primarily fruits of the pastoral experience of having lived, worked, prayed, and studied as a member of the Society of St Paul and the Pauline Family for the past 35 years in the Philippines, Australia and Italy.

On each of the prospects we believe the true nature of Pauline pedagogy should set sail which also responds to 10 corresponding temptations that has kept it anchored. It is hoped that the 10 reflections be accompanied by the prayer himself of Pope Francis that each person “speak frankly and listen with humility”⁴².

3.1 “Scio cui credidi” - Inculturating *Abundantes Divitiae* and the whole operaomnia

The challenge to inculturate AD and the whole operaomnia is meant to be a continuation of their charismatic nature and significance rather than be seen as provocative or revolutionary. Simply stated it requires having the conviction that the treasures of AD is not only for Fr. Alberione, and experienced by him but likewise grace that continues in the story of each Pauline. Unfortunately, the temptation often exist to make AD mainly only as footnote or endnote references in research, thesis, talks and lectures. **The story of AD should not finish with Alberione only but must continue in us!** The time has come that each of our missionary experiences be the footnotes in the work and charismatic and pedagogical legacy of Fr. Alberione.

³⁹ Cf. Kevin LEWIS, Jason KAUFMAN, Nicolas CHRISTAKIS, *The Taste for Privacy: An Analysis of College Student Privacy Settings in an Online Social Network*, in «Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication» 14 (2008) 79–100.

⁴⁰ Cf. David BEER. *Social network(ing) sites. revisiting the story so far: A response to danah boyd & Nicole Ellison*, in «Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication», 2008 13, pp.516-529, 526. See also Terry FLEW, *New Media: An Introduction* (3rd Edition). Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2008.

⁴¹ Cf. danah BOYD, *Facebook’s privacy trainwreck*, in «Convergence», 2008 14 (1): 13-20.

⁴² POPE FRANCIS, "Pope to Synod Fathers: speak frankly and listen humbly". Opening of the III Extraordinary Synod held in Rome in October 2014. Retrieved from <http://www.news.va/en/news/pope-to-synod-fathers-speak-frankly-and-listen-hum> on 07 October 2014.

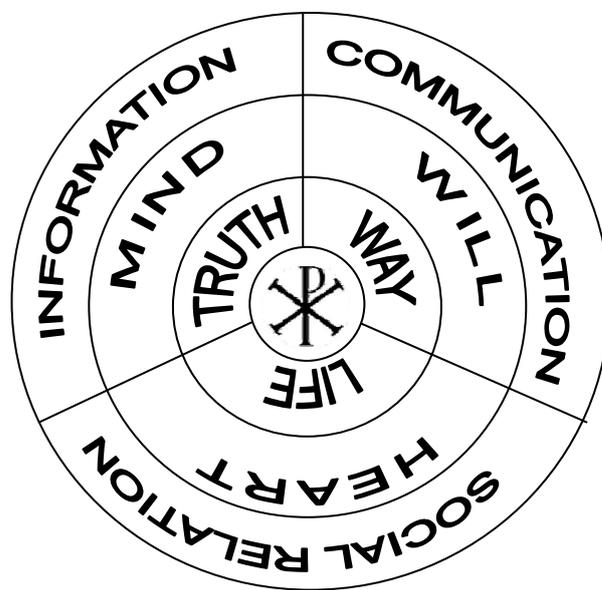
This means inculturating AD in our lives and that the pedagogy remains not only for Paulines but becomes an invitation applicable to all through us as its living witnesses. As footnotes or endnotes we are not to be limited only to being part of a “research” to be consult but should rather be the fruitful and living results of a pedagogy wherein the grace of God is felt and abounds. St Paul leaves three recommendations in this regard: 1) Rekindle the gift you have received; 2) Take care with apostolic passion the precious gift that has been given you; and, 3) faith in the *scio cui credidi* (cf. 2 Tm 1:6-14).

“Rekindling the gift we have received” asks us to recognise the value of being heirs of the Pauline charismatic heritage. Recognising the value means continuously promoting to update ourselves and members of our circumscriptions, not only knowing it through reading or writing but understanding and manifesting it sincerely in our lives. We betray Fr. Alberione otherwise! Like him we also have our own weaknesses and limitations, even economically. Yet each of us are asked to believe that the greatness of the founder has been in the action of God manifesting itself even in the midst of limitations. Weakness according to St Paul, serves to launch ourselves to the finish line.

Along with the word “*custodire*” (take care, preserve, or guard), Alberione often used the word “*affidamento*” (entrust), especially when referring to Fr. Giaccardo⁴³. The Pauline task of taking care ensues from the reality of being entrusted with such gift. The temptation comes too of just burying and hiding talents and gift as a legitimate mode of preserving it. Paulines are asked to take care of them with apostolic passion, through the mission of evangelisation. At the end they are asked to affirm too not only *scio cui credidi* (I know him in whom I have believed) but more positively *cognovit me et mihi credidit* (he knows me in whom he has believed). God knows and believes in us Paulines. How are we inculturating this in the Pauline pedagogy? What does God know about us to which we can truly be a witness? How much of the “*affidamento*” is present within member institutes of the Pauline Family?

3.2 “Dare al mondo Gesù Cristo” – Giving Christ “in other words”

Principal element of the methodology of Pauline pedagogy is its Christ centeredness. Paulines affirm with St Peter, “I do not have silver nor gold. But what I have I give to you – in the name of Jesus Christ, rise and walk” (Acts 3:6). Again, living and giving Christ to the word in his totality is an indispensable component of the Pauline pedagogy which Fr. Alberione has affirmed saying, “Everything is here: to live Jesus Christ, Way, Truth, and Life; and to perform the charity of Christ to those populations who are deprived of him and together hungry of him; let us in fact give the total Christ, Way, Truth and Life” (San Paolo December 1957 and CISP 862). The repetition of the verb “give” is significant. In Pauline pedagogy “giving is equivalent to “propose”, an attitude of service that is never an imposition in as much the Christian message always appeals to freedom”.⁴⁴



⁴³ Fr Alberione wrote: “Certainly I trust him more than I trust myself, and I am glad to have its proof”. Quoted in Stefano LAMERA, *Blessed Timothy Giaccardo, Apostle of Communication*. Roma: Paoline, 2010.

⁴⁴ Cf. Teofilo PEREZ, “Jesus Master in our Apostolate according to Fr. Alberione”, in SSP, *Jesus, the Master Yesterday, Today and Forever: The Spirituality of the Pauline Cooperator, Acts*, Ariccia: SSP, p. 464. He also echoed Fr. Alberione who said “the fruit of our apostolate is proportionate to presenting Jesus Christ”. To present him in his totality.

The *raison d'être* for this “giving” and/or “proposal” is the formation of the human person in his/her totality – mind, heart and will. **We give the total Christ, who has defined himself as TRUTH, WAY, LIFE, so that the human person can also have a vision of the fullness to which he/she is destined. This Christian proposal does not grow old in as much as it is maturity of mind, heart and will that defines an authentic human person.** Here I propose the *Pauline Communication Pedagogical Wheel*, illustrated on top, which highlights the relational encounter between the trinomial evolution of communication (outer cycle) and the trinomial tenets of the Pauline pedagogy (inner cycle).

In the pedagogical task of “giving Christ to the world” the five temptations cited by Pope Francis at the conclusion of the III Extraordinary Synod of Bishops on the family are likewise worth noting⁴⁵: 1) Temptation to hostile inflexibility; 2) Temptation to a destructive tendency to goodness; 3) Temptation to come down off the cross, to please only people and not God; 4) Temptation to transform stones into bread abandoning the value of suffering and throwing stones at others; and, 5) Temptation to neglect the deposit of faith and one’s identity as custodians of God’s creation. Each of them finds current incarnation in a number of life situations today that asks for integral pastoral responses on our part. How open are we to dialogue and how do we define it? What are our normal responses to difficulties and suffering? What are our pedagogical attitudes towards the communication of the teachings of the Church?

An observable truth in digital communication, especially in social media, is that one cannot control what people say – e.g. negative words and trolls. From this the temptation also arises to consider digital media not as a suitable means for evangelisation. However, an accompanying truth that comes with digital communication use is that **although you cannot control what people say, you can actually offer areas or themes which people can talk about.** This requires not limiting evangelisation solely on religious terms (e.g. grace, sin, God, Christ) but be opening the foundational significance of such terms - goodness, love, forgiveness, etc. Digital communication offers possibility for evangelisation, for speaking of Christ “in and through these other words”. How much of this “Christ in other words” is already promoted in the Pauline charism? What else can be done to encourage it? And what are its other benefits?

3.3. “Un semi-cieco guidato” - Pioneers and avant-gardes of evangelisation through communication

Admittedly there are super abundant writings exploring the Pauline identity as pioneers in the use of the instruments of communication for evangelisation, pioneers as heirs of a charism, a great promise (e.g. AD and AE)⁴⁶. And rightly so are we! As Cardinal Poupard highlighted: “Don Alberione was not only a prophet, at times misunderstood, but also a courageous pioneer who had opened to the Church new ways of evangelisation in the contemporary world”⁴⁷.

The affirmation however carries with it too the temptation to just be content to be bearers of and be anchored on the title “pioneer”. There is the temptation to nostalgia and to run in vain. Paulines are challenged rather to **raise the anchor, set sail and allow the title “pioneer”**

⁴⁵ POPE FRANCIS, “Pope Francis speech at the conclusion of the Synod”. Retrieved from http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2014/10/18/pope_francis_speech_at_the_conclusion_of_the_synod/1108944 on 19 October 2014.

⁴⁶ Among them too were Fr. Silvio Sassi and the other predecessors of Fr. Alberione as Superiors General. See http://www.paulus.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&id=206&Itemid=1726; *Documenti dei successori di Don Alberione. Vol 1* - Don Luigi Zanoni, Don Raffaele Tonni, Don Silvio Pignotti, Don Pietro Campus - Roma, Casa Generalizia SSP, 2009, Retrieved from http://www.paulus.net/doc/archivistorico/successori_1.pdf on 30 September 2014; and *Documenti dei successori di Don Alberione. Vol 2* - Don Renato Perino, Rome, Casa Generalizia SSP, 2009. Retrieved from http://www.paulus.net/doc/archivistorico/successori_2.pdf on 30 September 2014.

⁴⁷ POUPARD, ‘Presentation’, in Antonio Ugenti (ed), *La sfida di Don Alberione*, p.6.

to strain forward by considering ourselves more now as avant-gardes in evangelisation through communication.

And how can the affirmation as avant-gardes be attained and emphasized more? St Paul offers a pertinent message in this regard, “to the extent that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule. Let us be of the same mind” (Phil 3:16). Our legacy as pioneers should be the foundation of our task of being avant-gardes. This, in a way, Fr Sassi already emphasized: “If communication falls into a myth of the past, a utopia of the future and into an all-embracing ideology, it comes an uncontrollable phenomenon. In order that it remains the path to understanding and to useful organization for society, it must remain within the confines of “culture” to which it relates”⁴⁸. As avant-gardes, for us, “communication is not an option, but the mode of evangelisation. And we must stay with the pace of the times, new technologies. This prevents us from remaining just seated”⁴⁹. The truth is that, like St Paul, we are on a journey and have not yet arrived the finish line. Our imperfections should not be an excuse for not running or not rising when we fall. We are avant-gardes who focus more on the overall purpose the Pauline cart on arriving so as to evangelise, to be spokespersons of God, rather than concentrate all energies on a small difficulty or challenge. Which areas in our mission as avant-gardes do we still need to update ourselves? What can we do in our communities to combat the spirit of complacency attached with being the pioneers?

3.4 “Benvenuto a questa casa” – Publishers as prosumers in the digital sphere

The evolution of communication from oral (conveying information), to textual (mediated communication), to digital (interactive relational socialisation) highlight the development from a focus on the means (instruments) to focus on the end (purpose). **Digital advancement in technology along with the pioneering spirit brings about the temptation to focus only on having and working with the modern means rather than working on what end we want them to serve.** It is the latter which should characterise our being publishers bearing a purpose to which we strain. We are evangelical *prosumers* in the digital sphere and we believe, as did St John Paul II that,

Involvement in the mass media, however, is not meant merely to strengthen the preaching of the Gospel. There is a deeper reality involved here: since the very evangelization of modern culture depends to a great extent on the influence of the media, **it is not enough to use the media simply to spread the Christian message. It is also necessary to integrate that message into the "new culture" created by modern communications.** This is a complex issue, since the "new culture" originates not just from whatever content is eventually expressed, but from the very fact that there exist new ways of communicating, with new languages, new techniques and a new psychology.⁵⁰

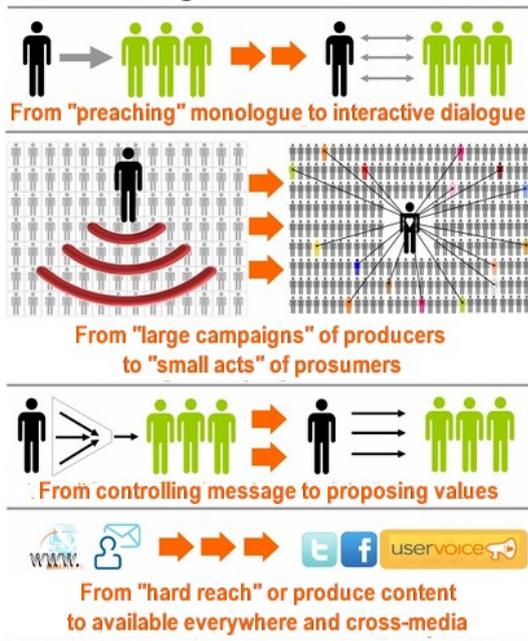
Part of the Pauline pedagogy is creating and diffusing didactic programs that give others a sense of welcome, a “benvenuto a questa casa” (welcomed to this house) and train them likewise to be *prosumers* like us. As recipients they become evangelizers themselves whose witness and lives become the true contents of diffusion. Such content becomes more central than the manner of diffusion. As digital communication is characterised by sharing, participation and interaction, evangelical *prosumers* are asked to follow this emerging pattern. Here I propose to remediate the figure earlier shown regarding *Social Media as Changing Business* to read as *Evangelisation and Pedagogy in Digital Communication* with a reformulation of its salient points:

⁴⁸ SASSI, “The Total Christ for the Century of Global Communication”, p.520.

⁴⁹ SASSI interviewed by Annachiara VALLE, ‘Da 100 anni mettiamo Dio in prima pagina’, in *Famiglia Cristiana*, 17 August 2014, p.45.

⁵⁰ JOHN PAUL II, *Redemptoris missio*, Vatican City, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, # 37. Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_07121990_redemptoris-missio_en.html on 29 September 2014. He added: “the split between the Gospel and culture is undoubtedly the tragedy of our time”

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Adapted from Mark Smiciklas, New Marketing and Social Media Strategist, IntersectionConsulting.com. Retrieved from Mashable.com

We continue to be tempted and have the problem with translation, in particular with the word “*editore*” which we normally translate in English as *editor* and whose dictionary definition means persons who do editorial work. **Continuing to translate the word solely as editor in truth limits its Pauline essence which is much broader.** Publisher is a more apt English translation that includes the phase of editing, printing, and diffusion, that which Alberione intended in Italian. Admittedly AE links these phases with the English word editor, but not all persons would have the chance to read AE, so it is advisable to communicate the correct concept first hand. Aside from this **there is need to re-align the terms we have become so used to and we promote including *multimedia*, *cyberspace*, and the *virtual* which in current digital culture are becoming outdated.** While recognising value of these terms, most current theorists, professors, scholars, researchers have recognise the evolution of *cross-mediality* (interaction that takes place among multimedia elements) and the *digital sphere* (acknowledging that it

is now possible to define the location of what is communicated digitally and therefore the value and space occupied by *cyberspace* and the *virtual* becomes less necessary). Are we promoting more the means or the ends in our mission? How do we update ourselves with what is pedagogically novel in digital communication? Is our missionary orientation characterised by what affects us as Paulines only or what affects the Church and the world in general? Is our participation in the activities of the Church based on contributing our “logo” or contributing our “spirit”?

3.5 “Finche la gente comunica avete qualcosa di fare” - Family network of evangelizers

The principal tenets of Pauline pedagogy, underlined earlier by Fr. Alberione namely: “1) Study the human sciences, 2) unify the sciences with the philosophy of sciences; and 3) demonstrate philosophy as a handmaid that leads directly into Revelation” (AD #189), requires that **they be always seen as an encounter, an interaction between those who teach (masters) and those who learn (disciples).** Three affirmations are vital in this regard: 1) the necessity of living in a “continual conversion”; 2) the call to collaborate and evangelise as open to all; and 3) the reality of non-exclusivity in the school of the Master.

That Paulines always live in continual conversion necessitates participating in periods of ongoing formation and considering them as essential in Pauline pedagogy. There is always a continuous cycle of learning as well as teaching, a continuous cycle of Paulines being teachers as well as learners. There can be the temptation among a number of Paulines that they know all, that updating for them is no longer necessary. Like St Paul who always run so as to attain the finish line, no Pauline can ever say he has finished learning all that can be learned about the Pauline charism nor that the Pauline work of evangelisation is already fulfilled. Fr Alberione always said: “As long as people communicate on earth you will have something to do”.

Linked to the temptation of knowing all, is the temptation of doing it all. Encouraging always the value of individual effort in evangelisation, Alberione nonetheless responded to the call that united efforts can achieve and from it the Pauline Family has been born as a family network of evangelizers. In a symbolic way, the “essence of *La Donna Associata allo zelo sacerdotale*” carries this principal united effort too. How have we been promoting collaborative effort in the Pauline Family as regards Pauline pedagogy? What have been its apparent obstacles? How can they be turned into strength?

A study on how the Pauline pedagogy could focus not only inward (applicable only to Paulines) but likewise outward (also for the general public) is worth undertaking. This would counter likewise the temptation to consider works like *Donec formetur* and *L' Apostolato stampa* only for Paulines. These works need to be inculturated for a more general audience for the Pauline pedagogy to work and ultimately for the mission of evangelisation. **There is need to inculturate not only the culture of communication but more so our own Pauline culture. The social network embraced in digital communication can be a fundamental building block for this task where the existence of the network of self becomes apparent.** It continuously functions under three levels: *the network within self* (material, individual and local) – includes bodily appetites, instincts and love of adornment; *the self within a network* (social, collective, global) – includes desire to please, be noticed, admired and be sociable; and *the networked self* (spiritual, collective individual, and global) – includes morals, religious aspiration and consciousness⁵¹. The Pauline pedagogy aims at upholding the network of self within the totality of its functions.

3.6 “Fare la carità della verità” – Do an apostolate or be an apostle?

“Before you can communicate Christ you must first have him in you” is a well known Pauline adage descriptive of the what is supposed to be a priority in Pauline pedagogy. There is always the temptation of working and spending much time and resources for the apostolate (*fare apostolato*) to extent of neglecting to work and spend time and resources for the apostle (*farsi apostolo*). **Vigilance on their equilibrium ought to be maintained acknowledging the truth that our mission begins with our call, with the choice that God has made of us and our response to such call.** The affirmation of our call allows us, using the words of Alberione, “to look up to the top of the tree whose edge we cannot see” and to “see in the roots of the same three ourselves as part of its foundation”. This is **the Pauline pedagogical tree! An active recognition of who we are allows us to do more for our apostolate.** The recent film *Jobs*, which recounts the story of Steve Jobs, founder of Apple, highlights this well too. Asked why he praises every single achievement of his competitors, Steve reveals, “**we do not win by competing nor by doing better what others are doing but by affirming, focussing and working on what we have, our uniqueness, that which makes us distinct**”⁵². There is need to discover or re-discover our uniqueness and promote it instead. Are our apostolic initiatives focussed on competition or by distinction? How do we promote that which is uniquely Pauline in our apostolic activities? We have identified it, I believe, but have we practically defined it in practice?

In an interview about the role of the Church and the digital platform, Msgr Paul Tighe, Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications (PCCS), highlighted a vital note in the definition asked of us as Paulines. He said that in front of these platforms, the main role of the PCCS, “is advocacy, that is, to promote globally the significance and importance of communication in the life of the Church and the life of the world in general”⁵³. Paulines share in this advocacy role. **Distinctive though in Pauline mission and part of its pioneering role is not mainly remaining in the task of advocacy but continuing as a primary task of all its members to “use the instruments of communication for evangelisation” and to teach others to do the same.** Looking at the specialisations per circumscriptions, how many are focused on the “technical”? We have many members specialized in theology and spirituality, which are indeed

⁵¹ Initially, William JAMES, *The Principles of Psychology*. Originally published in 1890, published something regarding the empirical self and its three divisions of material, social and spiritual. . Online version published by Christopher GREEN, *Classics of the History of Psychology* and retrieved from <http://psychclassics.asu.edu/James/Principles/prin10.htm> on 1 April 2013

⁵² *Jobs* is a biographical film on Steve Jobs, founder of Apple. The film came out in 2013 and was directed by Joshua Michael Stern. Cf. Official trailer: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3tDHH1eXKmA>.

⁵³ Cf. PCCS, ‘Monsignor Paul Tighe discusses how the Vatican has embraced digital platforms’, video interview, 27 October 2014. Retrieved from <http://www.pccs.va/index.php/en/news2/attualita/item/2635-monsignor-paul-tighe-discusses-how-the-vatican-has-embraced-digital-platforms> on 30 November 2014.

important and laudable, but remembering our Pauline distinctiveness, how much do we value and promote technical specializations. The Pauline pedagogy should likewise reflect such distinctiveness. Interestingly too our culture loves to use the word “experts” and we see it in many promotional advertisement to talks – experts in spirituality, experts in communication, etc. **Reality often manifest an incongruity. Those experts in communication for instance are those who do not know how to communicate well and those experts in spirituality are those who find less time to pray.**

Again we need to re-examine our collaborative attitude with the local Church. Success in digital remains not to be anchored solely on information and communication but set sail likewise on participation, encounter and social relations. From a marketing point of view, there is benefit in having a space in our websites for example to market others so that they too could have a space for us, where their *prosumers*, become likewise our own. **There is a need to rejoice in the achievement of others because in doing so we are able to recognise too what is distinctly ours.** Pope Francis encouraged this too: “Do not close yourselves to dialogue and encounter, but welcome all that is valid and positive in what they offer”⁵⁴. In a personal way each Pauline is continually asked to this task which in a significant way is part of the Pauline admonition to “*fare la carità della verità*” (literally translated, *do the charity of the truth*)⁵⁵. It recognises that the “service of truth is a gesture of love”⁵⁶ and that the *fare* (doing) could in a personal way refer likewise to *diventare* or “become” which is more participative as it is active. Doing the will of God could also be understood as “being” or living in ourselves such will. It requires a conversion from *selfishness* to *selfie-ness* (literally taking a photo of oneself through a mobile or smartphone). While *selfishness* refers to producing things yourself for oneself, *selfie-ness* means producing things yourself and actually sharing it to others through digital media, like facebook.

3.7 “La nostra parrocchia è il mondo - Communication as culture

The significance of the *culture of communication* and *communication as culture* has been a theme echoed in the documents of the Church. Recently Pope Francis underlined its aspect as an “encounter”⁵⁷ the authenticity of which lies not only as a “neighbour” who is simply physically near but “neighbourliness” who continue to manifest concern for the growth of others although physically less near. **Under the umbrella of neighbourliness the words of Alberione that “our parish is the world” obtains an added significance. The Pauline pedagogical mission in as much as it is called to be of service to the whole world, is called to usher and cloth it always with an attitude of neighbourliness .** This of course should begin in each of our houses and communities. How do we promote an attitude of neighbourliness among us? Do we still communicate personally with each other in fraternal way or simply allow the modern means to do it this fraternity for us? It is of course hoped that we always recognise and live the *Illichian* dictum of investing “our” meaning to the world, our communities, our formation institutes, and not the meaning of the instruments we use. Furthermore we can, I believe, embrace as a challenge the words of Mark Zuckerberg, founder of Facebook, the most successful social media platform to date: “Our mission is not to connect one seventh of the world but the entire world!”⁵⁸ While

⁵⁴ POPE FRANCIS, General Audience, Vatican City, Wednesday, 8 October 2014.

⁵⁵ Attributed among others to Fr. Alberione. Antonio RIZZOLI, SSP, in ‘The Charity of Truth’, USMI Unione Superiore Maggiore d’Italia, expounds the phrase defining “the service of truth as a gesture of love”. Retrieved from http://www.usminazionale.it/2006_11/rizzolo_eng.htm on 4 November 2014.

⁵⁶ RIZZOLI, ‘The Charity of Truth’.

⁵⁷ Theme of the Pope’s message was “Communication at the service of an authentic culture of encounter”, Message for the 48th World Day of Communication, 1 June 2014. Retrievable from http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/communications/documents/papa-francesco_20140124_messaggio-comunicazioni-sociali.html.

⁵⁸ Mark ZUCHERBERG, Keynote given at the Mobile World Congress 2014 in Barcelona, Spain.

Facebook relies heavily on the social economy to reach its goal, we rely more on the divine economy to reach our own.

Undeniably Fr. Silvio Sassi was one of the Paulines who, through his writings and profound study and awareness of the works and life of the founder, had passionately and untiringly showered us with the Pauline truths about the culture of communication and the need to evangelise it. He wrote that, **“communication is not a mere means but a culture; it is not enough to include it in the Christian message and the Church’s magisterium. It is a must to integrate them in this culture”**.⁵⁹ Other recurring albeit vital themes he advocated in his writings were: “inculturation of faith in communication”, “evangelisation with the communication of today”, “totality against every particularism”, “creative fidelity to the mission of Christ as experienced by Paul and entrusted to the Church”, “identity of the Pauline apostle and Pauline apostolate”, “the Pauline observatory in communication”, “merging the audacity of innovative thinking with new ways of action in evangelisation”, “unity in collaborative diversity between the Pauline and local parish”, “social, ecclesial and religious communities in communication for new evangelisation”, “actualisation of the richness of the cultural and demographic diversity of members”, and “Pauline project for new evangelisation”⁶⁰. Together with other written resources on Pauline mission, they form a rich treasury of reference for pedagogy that needs to be translated into practical programs and lines of action that are doable as well as liveable.

Direct outlets of the Pauline pedagogy currently includes the communication faculties and institutes in Brazil, India, Mexico, and the Philippines. With these are likewise the e-learning formation courses some of our circumscriptions offer (Colombia, Venezuela, Argentina-Chile-Peru) in coordination with recognised universities. **SPICS was a pioneer institute in communication studies in Italy!** Everyone knew and acknowledged its glory. **Nonetheless we bury and suffocate it more and ourselves too now by only rekindling in nostalgia such glory instead of straining forward to program innovative and enduring ways to make what it stood for breath and live anew in the world considered our parish.** What “straining forward” lessons can we learn from SPICS? What can our pedagogical institutes within the entire Pauline Family do together in this regard? Where do we start? And how can it be sustained? The three important elements of collective convergence earlier named by Rheingold fits well here: *coordination* (acknowledging its need if one dances by oneself), *collaboration* (needed to dance with a partner) and *cooperation* (needed for organising a dance within a group)⁶¹.

3.8 “Parlare di tutti cristianamente” - Evangelisation online and online evangelisation

Underlined earlier was the truth that in the culture of digital communication “although you cannot control what people say, you can actually offer areas or themes which people can talk about”. This opens the door to the encouragement of Fr. Alberione to “speak of everything in a Christian way” and the Pauline mission of evangelisation (AD #87). There will always be the temptation today, as had happened in Alberione’s time to consider the media as “evil” because of the bad things they portray yet the undeniable good that they do are not to be neglected. Part of the challenge in Pauline pedagogy is **finding a balance between the social shaping of religion in a way that it becomes continually relevant in culture on one side and the spiritualisation of**

⁵⁹ SASSI, “New wine into fresh skins”, in SSP To Be St. Paul alive Today – Reflections and Documents of the 8th General Chapter, 2004, p.188.

⁶⁰ These recurring themes can be found in most of the writings of Fr. Silvio Sassi including “The Total Christ for the Century of Glocal Communication”, in SSP, *Jesus, the Master Yesterday, Today and Forever: The Spirituality of the Pauline Communicator*, Acts, Ariccia: SSP, 1996, pp.505-526; “New wine into fresh skins”, in SSP To Be St. Paul alive Today – Reflections and Documents of the 8th General Chapter, 2004, p.153-204; “L’attualizzazione del carisma Paolino nel terzo millennio: spiritualità e missione, Atti, SSP, Roma, 2008, pp.157-192; “La comunicazione per la nuova evangelizzazione”, Acireale (Italia), CISM, 7 November 2012” and “Carisma Paolino e comunicazione: 1914-2014”, Madrid, SSP, 1-4 October 2012.

⁶¹ RHEINGOLD, *Net Smart: How to thrive online*, p. 208.

technology on the other so as to give to these means a more valuable significance in terms of helping people be who they are.

There is an ebb of resources exploring the relationship between religion and the digital media. They can be classified as either academic annotations (reflective commentaries) or comprehensive social research (indepth research analysis).⁶²

Laura Busch takes an open approach to the evolution of religious identity within the digital media network and affirms their interactions as, “opportunities for spiritualizing technology”⁶³. Backed by her extensive global research of major religious traditions, Heidi Campbell correlates this with social spiritual space, spiritualizing the internet and explorations on the meeting between religion and new digital media. She holds that just **as digital media have the capacity to shape religion, there is also a need for a “religious-social shaping of technology”**.⁶⁴ Community is a core element in new media religious identification and this Campbell defined as online community. It involves not just the creation of individual social connections but more importantly relational participation in the social web. This is processed through a type of negotiation with digital social media and this involves acceptance, rejection, reconfiguration and innovation. Shared faith is a key to this process that distinguishes religious online community from other online communities. Campbell further nominates four patterns of appropriation in this shared faith and new media use: proselytism, global networking, agenda setting and digitalization of rites.⁶⁵ Each apply in religious identity a representation of the dual networks of self: agenda setting and digitalization of rites and rituals (networks within self); and global networking and proclamation of core beliefs (self within a network).

The appropriation patterns are significant in the distinction which Christopher Helland made and coined: *religion online* (religion placed online, exemplified by institutional websites like www.vatican.va) and, *online religion* (religion formed and practiced online like www.beliefnet.com). Both forms have distinct strengths and weaknesses yet Helland underlined a correlative significance. For him in as much as,

[religion online] is characteristic of institutionalized religious structures, representing the harnessing of the medium as a traditional form of one to many communication, [online religion] is a direct reaction to religion in the secular world which allows for a new manifestation of religious interaction, participation and community.⁶⁶

The two forms of Helland have had its critique and support. Glenn Young (2004) and Douglas Cowan (2005) emphasized that the distinctions made by Helland seem to advocate two separate endpoints and thus do not really consider the necessary convergence between the issues of information and interactive participation in religion in the virtual sphere to which some religious websites already cater.⁶⁷ Campbell however considers the two forms of Helland as co-mutual and

⁶² Distinctive among them are the works Laura Busch, Heidi Campbell and Christopher Helland. Cf. Laura BUSCH, *To come to a correct understanding of Buddhism: A case study on spiritualizing technology, religious authority, and the boundaries of orthodoxy and identity in a Buddhist Web forum*, in «New Media Society» 12 (2011), 58-74; Heidi CAMPBELL, *When Religion Meets New Media*; and Christopher HELLAND, *Online-Religion/Religion-Online and Virtual Communitas*, in HADDEN and COWAN (eds), *Religion on the Internet: Research Prospects and Promises*, London, JAI Press, 2000.

⁶³ BUSCH, *To come to a correct understanding of Buddhism*, in «New Media Society» 12 (2011), 58-74

⁶⁴ CAMPBELL, *When Religion Meets New Media*, 187.

⁶⁵ CAMPBELL, *When Religion Meets New Media*, 185.

⁶⁶ HELLAND, *Online-Religion/Religion-Online and Virtual Communitas*, 205. He adds that religion-online presents information about religion. It is a controlled environment. The site has been structured to limit participation. In contrast, online religion provides an interactive religious environment for the user.

⁶⁷ Cf. Glenn YOUNG, *Reading and Praying online: The continuity of Religion online and Online Religion in Internet Christianity*, in Lorne DAWSON – Douglas COWAN (Eds.), *Religion Online: Finding Faith on the Internet*, London, Routledge, 2004, 93; and Douglas COWAN, *Cyberhenge: modern pagans and the internet*, New York, Routledge,

not at variance. In the table below, I propose a summary of the key frames of reference of *religion online* and *online religion* merged with the appropriation pattern proposed by Campbell. It highlights the evolving distinctive co-mutuality in religious identity. For the purpose of presenting a possible Pauline pedagogical orientation, nonetheless we decided to focus and utilize evangelization instead of religion to thus have the characteristics of *evangelisation online* and *online evangelisation*. The positive characteristics of both and their roles in responding to a need in the religious narration of the institutional and personal self is highlighted.

Evangelisation online and online evangelisation pedagogical appropriation pattern		
Pedagogical Appropriation Pattern	Evangelisation Online	Online Evangelisation
1. Proselytism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High level of information • Reading • User learns • Presents input • Institutional focus • Doctrinal experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High level of exchange • Participating • User shares • Encourages output • Community focus • Personal experience
2. Global networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-to-many • Members • Top-down communication • Communication of self • Identity stable • Structures defined 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many-to-many • Participants • Bottom up communication • Selves communicating • Identity fluid • Free-flow structure
3. Agenda setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preached religion • Controlled interaction • Long term • Based on being - knowing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lived religion • Liberal interaction • Short term • Based on doing
4. Digitalization of rites and rituals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutionally generated content (IGC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • User generated content (UGC)

Without doubt the co-mutuality proposal of Helland stresses the constructive role of social media in evangelization. Domenico Pompili expresses this role in *Il nuovo nell'antico* (the new in the old) wherein he traces the positive evolution of media communication from primitive orality to digital witness, challenges and future prospects as regards social interaction, education, evangelization and narrations of self⁶⁸. Antonio Spadaro links these with the network of relationships that social media create. As a platform of the construction of meaning, social media are not only, “media to use or instruments of communication”. Rather, they are part of a, “cultural, communicative, formative and informative environment that welcomes new ways of learning, stimulates the intelligence and constructs understanding and relationships”.⁶⁹

A similar constructive role is described by Fabio Pasqualetti in *Nuovo tecnologie: nuovo sfide personali e collettive per un utilizzo attivo, critico e responsabile* (*New technologies: new personal and collective challenges for their active, critical and responsible use*) where he highlights the social order shaped by the evolution of religious identity in the media. Responsibility is part of such shaping. From authentic responsibility ensues the construction of meaning in one’s narration

2005. For Young: “If religion online and online religion are treated as two theoretical endpoints then the issues of information provision versus religious participation and the primary reference to online versus offline activity can be understand as two axes which extend between them”.⁹⁵

⁶⁸ Cf. Domenico POMPILI, *Il nuovo nell'antico: comunicazione e testimonianza nell'era digitale*, Cinisello Balsamo, San Paolo, 2010. The book outlines pastoral guidelines on the current use of new media.

⁶⁹ Antonio SPADARO, *Web2.0 – reti di relazioni*, Milano, Paoline Editoriale Libri, 2010., 7-8.

of self, a sort of evolution which Pasqualetti illustrated with the transformation of the concepts of *homo sapiens* to *homo technologicus*⁷⁰. We can expand this transformation to becoming *homo Dei*. Digital media provide people with the capacity and opportunity to become people of God.

3.9 “Iniziare dal Betlemme” - “New” is an attitude and not a noun

Part of the re-structuring that has occurred in a number of our circumscriptions have been the closure of some of our printing houses and yielding of the publications of some of our journals for economical or vocational reasons. Other than our remaining publishing houses, a number of our bookcentres continue their service, along with our pedagogical institutes, biblical and communication program initiatives, digital apps and productions, e-learning, e-commerce, and pastoral and vocational promotion. Aware of the temptation that the concept of new and digital media be understood solely in terms of modern instruments of communication, the Pauline pedagogy proposed **adopts new as an attitude rather than a noun** that only refers to the said instruments. It gives prime importance and encourages attitudes that are “fresh, novel, innovative and original”. The thoughts of Illich, a part of which was earlier mentioned, provide a welcome panacea in this regard:

Tools are intrinsic to social relationships. An individual relates himself in action to his society through the use of tools that he actively masters, or by which he is passively acted upon. To the degree that he masters his tools, he can invest the world with his meaning; to the degree that he is mastered by his tools, the shape of the tool determines his own self-image. Convivial tools are those which give each person who uses them the greatest opportunity to enrich the environment with the fruits of his or her vision.⁷¹

In truth, the desire of Fr Alberione that “everything starts from Bethlehem” pertains to an perennial open attitude which is most essential – investing the current culture of encounter and communication with meaning, and this meaning found in Christ – who brings integral fullness to the mind, will and heart of each person. This has been the experience of the Magi who “in their brief visit to the Bethlehem learned the whole of the Gospel and left the manger transformed as apostles as well as saints”.⁷² Bethlehem conveys an attitude that transforms reasons for being. The Pauline pedagogy focuses not mainly on the material content of the new instruments of communication but on their reason for being. For Illich they become convivial once their true reason for being is achieved. And this reason for being was part of the signs of the times to which Alberione was always attentive. He believed that through them we can also create, sustain and nourish authentic relationships – first with God and then with each other. Once more we ask: Whose and what meaning do we give to the world we evangelise – ours or the modern instruments we use?

Allowing ourselves to be mastered by our tools, instead of vice versa, forces the success of our pedagogy to be based and be measured solely on methods rather than the fruits. Here Illich reminds us to be attentive:

Society can be destroyed when further growth of mass production renders the milieu hostile, when it extinguishes the free use of the natural abilities of society’s members, when it isolates people from each other and locks them into a man-made shell, when it undermines the texture of community by promoting extreme social polarization and splintering specialization, or when cancerous acceleration

⁷⁰ Cf. Fabio PASQUALETTI, *Nuovo tecnologie: nuove sfide personali e collettive per un utilizzo attivo, critico e responsabile*, in Massimiliano PADULA (ed.), *Involucro della Contemporaneità – un discorso sui media*, Città del Vaticano, Lateran University Press, 2010, 141-184. Earlier on Eric Erikson employed a similar image to refer to the formation itself of identity.

⁷¹ ILLICH, *Tools for Conviviality*, p.29.

⁷² Giacomo ALBERIONE, ‘Vita di Maria (MNS3)’, 1955. Retrieved from <http://www.alberione.info/operaomnia/dettaglio.php?recordID=64786&trova> on 6 November 2014.

enforces social change at a rate that rules out legal, cultural, and political precedents as formal guidelines to present behavior.⁷³

3.10 “Attirare alla scuola del Divin Maestro tutti” – *L’Apostato dell’Edizioni* as a didactic manual

While AD in many ways defined the genesis of the Pauline cultural and charismatic heritage, AE in many ways define in its entirety the foundations of the Pauline pedagogical heritage from which didactic curricula can be formulated. Centered on the communication of the identity of Christ, *Way* (Morals -Will) , *Truth* (Faith - Mind) and *Life* (Worship - Heart), it contains curricular subject areas not only scripture, theology, spirituality and liturgy but likewise on the social sciences including history, biography, literature, geography, printing and typography, politics, philosophy, distribution, marketing and promotion, cinema, radio, television and so on. In a broad way it hints on the likely Faculties of the Pauline pedagogy. Here we can cite as an example a practical tenet of Fr. Alberione on a possible Faculty of Church History focussed on the Pauline trinomial mind, will, and heart: “To describe how the Church taught, how the Church led people to virtue, how the Church communicated the grace of Jesus Christ, means to write the history of the Catholic Church” (AE #197). To a possible Faculty of Social Sciences Fr. Alberione upheld the following: “Politics, social sciences (sociology, law, economics) and philosophy are all valid subjects when the defence and propagation of faith and of natural and Christian morals demand it. There are two ways of writing [speaking] about social sciences – absolute way (actions of persons as members of society) or contingent way (manner of conveying social realities in general laws, sociology)” (AE #364,366).

It is to be acknowledged that AE was originally intended by Fr. Alberione for Pauline formation. This in essence has dual reference poles: the formation “of” Paulines and a formation based “on” the Pauline charism which can be applied also to non-Paulines. A strong perennial challenge for us Paulines is to surmount the temptation of limiting AE only for the formation of Paulines and creating more didactic programs that welcomes and includes non Paulines. Fr. Alberione himself has encouraged “to draw everyone to the school of the Divine Master”. Here the aim, end or reason for being of the instruments of digital communication as mentioned earlier becomes most vital and must take precedence. Applying it to pedagogy, Neil Postman, educator and media communication critic, advocated a focus on “the end of education”. He suggested four essential points to education which I believe are likewise applicable to the Pauline pedagogy and goes beyond personal empowerment and understanding it in a new way:

1. Education should be about how to make a life as distinct from how to make a living.
2. Education is not the same as schooling and not so much of it takes place in school.
3. Education should revolve around ends rather than means. Such end has two meanings: “purpose” and “finish”. Without a transcendent and honourable purpose schools are undergone only as to finish. With a purpose however schooling becomes a central institution where reasons for continuing to learn is found.
4. There is need for a spiritual and serious intellectual dimension to learning.⁷⁴

Developing AE as a didactic manual requires that curricular programs (lessons and academic content) be formulated and learned based on each of the sciences underlined by Fr Alberione. These programs ought to be aligned or mapped with regular learning standards reflecting the design and goals of the Pauline pedagogical philosophy⁷⁵ – integral formation of

⁷³ ILLICH, *Tools for Conviviality*, p.4.

⁷⁴ Neil POSTMAN, *The End of Education*, New York, Alfred Knof, 1995, pp. ix-xi and 195.

⁷⁵ Example of these curricular standards can be found in Hidden curriculum (2014, August 26). In S. Abbott (Ed.), *The glossary of education reform*. Last updated 3 March 2014. Retrieved from <http://edglossary.org/hidden-curriculum>.

persons in mind, heart and will mapped with the communicated integral identity himself of Christ (Jn 14:6). **That we as Paulines have this concrete and distinct pedagogical methodology to contribute to the evangelising mission of the Church is beyond doubt!** Once more a rough panoramic look at Pauline specializations of the members nonetheless shows an imbalance which needs to be addressed on future pedagogical programming. **While we have a sea of specialization resources in theology, spirituality and biblical studies, the well of our resources on social sciences have been running dry.** A glimpse at the SSP statistics too reveals that a number of those who have specialisations would already be ineligible to teach normally, due to age limit, while others who are specialized are actually assigned not in areas where they have specialized or are actually not teaching. The current general government has tried to resolve this in two ways: 1) encouraging young members to do specialized studies in communication; and, 2) monitoring specialisation study overlaps or doubling. What to do after the specialisation programs and where to teach are also important challenges needing to be addressed along with the financial responsibilities that specialization requires. Admittedly **we have a distinct and important method for pedagogy yet in some circumscriptions have less arena and financial shield to exercise and support it.**

In drawing and inviting everyone to the school of the Divine Master, Pauline pedagogy, aims to share with them ultimately its end of integral formation. This it does not only through advocacy contained in its curricula but witnessed and practiced through direct involvement in the use of its instruments.

Conclusion

The genius of Pauline pedagogy will continually be rekindled preserving the end which Alberione himself has envisioned. For him **the instruments of communication were always specific and necessary means to an end.** They are not ends in themselves of the Pauline apostolate but used in a “good” way become authentic, specific and valid means to bring persons to Christ – evangelisation within the words and the world of the culture of communication currently characterised by the presence of digital technologies. Let our unique charism continually anchor us and the 10 pedagogical and cultural prospects set our sail on our *kairos* journey to strain forward.

The Pauline pedagogy, embraced by the digital communication that surrounds it now, lives in each of us Paulines who encounter persons in a social relation and who form and are formed to grow maturely and responsibly by consequent encounters that are created, learned, lived and sustained. The formation we receive and give in this growth is an indispensable good that is vital and necessary.

What shall be the future of Pauline pedagogy in the digital era? The advertisement of *Leclerc Conad*, an Italian supermarket, I believe offers a pertinent vision in its regard: “We cannot increase the salary of our customers, but we can increase its value”. Constantly based on an integral nourishment of the mind heart and will of each person whose apex is found in the trinomial autodefinition of Christ, the Pauline pedagogy can distinctly increase the value of the identity of each person – from information to social relations, from big advertisements to small personal acts, and from control of the message to being the message. True Fr Alberione, “had no knowledge of terms like “computer”, “IT”, “optic fiber”, “mobile and satellite phones, “social media”, or any other means of interactive communication which progress makes available” (AE, foreword), but certainly he would have LIKED and adopted their good use for evangelisation. This task he actively entrust to us as pedagogical “affidamento”. Like in Alberione’s time we might not still be able to see the top of the Pauline pedagogical tree, yet through invariable creative fidelity, we continuously become the roots which sustains it.