How Does the Media Portray God? The Challenge of Religious Socialization in a Media Age

According to recent studies, media is a more frequent arena than family and church for contacts with religious ideas and values, especially for young people. What are the main religious worldviews being portrayed in popular western media, and what impact does this make on young people's religious socialization? How do we deal with the responsibility to achieve religious media literacy in our evangelical churches, even if it involves engaging with relativism and syncretism?

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I. Understanding the Role of the Media

- 1. The Role of the Media in our Contemporary Culture
- 2. The Role of the Media in Socialization, competing with Family, School and Church

3. The Need for Media Awareness and Critique

II. Uncovering Media Messages (A): How Does the Media Portray God? Five alternative pictures / narratives, with examples:

| 1. | God as absent (a secularized media world - version 1) |
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| 2. | God as irrelevant and old-fashioned (a secularized media world - version 2) |
| 3. | God as a politically correct service provider (a religious media world: "hatching, matching and dispatching") |
| 4. | God as made in our own image (a religious media world: pluralistic, relativistic or syncretistic) |
| 5. | God as a dangerous superstition (a secular media world: cf. the new atheists) |

| III. | Uncovering Media Messages (B): What Worldviews Are Shaping the Media? 1. Secular Humanism |
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| | 2. Naturalism |
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| | 3. Pantheism |
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| | 4. Alternative Monotheisms |
| | Various media examples as case-studies. |
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| IV. | Understanding the Role of Media in Identity Formation |

1. Media Messages, Personal Identity and Young People

| | 2. | Media Messages, Religious Socialization and Young People |
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| | 3. | Affects on young people inside / outside churches |
| V. | M 0 | edia Messages: A Tool-Box for Media Literacy in the Churches John 17, Math 5:13-16, Phil 4:8 |
| | 2. | Double listening |
| | 3. | The process of worldview analysis |
| | 4. | Points of contact and points of tension |