

*Brian Gates*

**MEDIA AND INTER RELIGIOUS COMMUNICATION –  
A CHALLENGE FOR RELIGIOUS STUDIES AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

**Abstract**

“Times they are a changing.” They have changed, are changing and will continue to do so. This was always true, but the rate of change is increasing exponentially because of the millions of minds involved and the magnification through communication technology. Within the lifetime of our children, it's likely that the computer based internet and mobile phones will be replaced by chip implants in our heads. Evolution continues.

The multiplication of TV channels now available via satellite is astonishing. There are so many that only a selection will be watched by most viewers, and channel hopping is commonplace. Superabundance of websites is even more apparent from google searches. The consequence is a 'swamp effect'. Many excellent sites are missed 'drowned by the dross'. They flicker briefly in and out of consciousness and attention anyway may easily be distracted by lesser sites (and sights).

As a result, inter religious communication, the study of religions and religious education are all faced with related challenges. They are compounded by national and global diversification in religious belief and belonging. This presentation proposes that we develop a jointly owned website that will help change Babel into Boon. It will network agencies and individuals internationally, it will have built-in awareness of relevant religion/belief and educational criteria, and it will develop simple activities for direct interaction. It is designed to promote sustaining consciousness and depth. This will be its first manifestation."

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