



Religious and Ecclesiastical Media in the Hungarian Electronic Media Ecosystem

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Abstract— Many academic works examine religious media institutions and media content producers operating in European countries, including Hungary, but most of them do so in an isolated way, mostly focusing on a particular content producer. The present study aims to provide a comprehensive picture of the operation of religious content producers in Hungary in a broader context, which considers the overall media system from a legal and economic point of view. First, we give a short retrospective overview about the history of Hungarian church press. Afterwards we examine the current legal framework for audiovisual regulation in Hungary. The conclusions are based on data obtained using three different methodologies. We have analyzed the freely accessible records of the Hungarian media authority (NMHH) and legislation, conducted a total of 6 in-depth interviews and an analysis of the content produced by each media outlet. The results of our research showed that in Hungary there is a disconnect between the concepts of church and religious media and that churches have hardly any comprehensive strategy to exploit the potential of digitalization. It can be concluded that church-owned media with religious content cannot be included in the present legal and economic framework without problems. Finally, an important question is whether and how church media are adapting to the changed environment. Our case studies show that the picture is mixed in this respect, because there is a lack of a coherent strategy among the actors on how service providers can adapt as effectively as possible to the new technological consumption patterns.

Keywords- *content, ecclesiastical media, Hungary, media law, media economy, religious*

I. INTRODUCTION

Church media have long existed in most European countries. However, between 1945 and 1989, the Communist dictatorship led to a marked separation between the development of the Eastern and Western European media systems, which did not leave the religious content examined in this study untouched. Eastern Europe was characterised by the general anti-religiousness of the dictatorships, Western Europe by a modern individualistic consumer society, but both processes ultimately reinforced secularisation. (By secularization we mean the process whereby people break with their religious beliefs and practices as belief in supernatural [metaphysical] explanations for world phenomena disappears is, in a broader sense, the process whereby the social function of religion is weakened.)

To varying degrees, the role of the religious media is generally less important than that of the mainstream (business-commercial) and often even public (state-run) media (M1 TV, M2 TV, Duna TV, Kossuth Rádió). In Hungary, according to the 2011 census, 76% of the population identify themselves as adherents of a religion (predominantly Abrahamic), but the number of people who practice their faith intensively is much lower, which explains the relatively small role of religious media in the media system.

Numerous scholars in Hungary have explored the intersection of religion with traditional and digital media, aligning their investigations with global research trends. Their inquiries encompass various aspects, such as the interplay between religion and the public sphere, the dynamics of a mediatized public sphere, and the resultant identity formations. The studies delve into the representation of religions in media, scrutinizing the connections between

the media's institutional framework and that of the church. Additionally, the investigations delve into the relationship between religion and popular (media) culture, examining the impact of network communication and the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic. Within this Hungarian research context, the analysis of how religious content creators perceive their roles is also a focal point [1].

Research in the latter half of the 2010s has been dedicated to examining the perceptions of roles among creators of religious content. Notably, Campbell's extensive nine-year study stands out in this regard. Her research involved multiple data collection phases focusing on religious content creators. Campbell not only delved into the typology of role perceptions but also explored the connection between individual role types and perceptions and a novel form of authority. The primary focus of Campbell's investigation was on the emerging roles of religious workers and influencers equipped with advanced digital tools. The aim was to understand their contributions to shaping and implementing religious authority within the digital culture. Campbell employed in-depth interviews as her methodology, posing four consistent questions to each interviewee. These questions covered aspects such as describing their digital work, understanding how this work extended their religiosity or faith, examining their relationship with specific religious institutions, and exploring those institutions' perspectives on their digital work. Over the period from 2011 to 2019, Campbell conducted 110 interviews with American digital religious creatives (RDCs), followed by an additional 120 interviews. Her analytical approach was rooted in the meaning-making process derived from in-depth interviews, a methodology that we also adopted in our research. From these interviews, Campbell classified religious digital creatives (RDCs) into three major groups: Digital Entrepreneurs, consisting of 50 individuals, Digital Strategists involving 40 people and Digital Spokespersons, consisting of 30 individuals.[2] [3]

Campbell defines Religious Digital Creatives as follows: "Religious digital creatives are understood as those with specialist skills who produce and manage born-digital resources and/or content. Digital creatives are producers of artistic or evocative media content or resources, often motivated by a personal passion or business agenda. . . RDCs are those involved in digital content production and management with the aim of using their skills to serve a religiously motivated agenda or population. They create a variety of online resources and/or content for personal ministry sites and/or institutionally based outlets online in order to influence both personal and communal agendas influencing a wider religious community" [3] (Campbell 2020, pp. 48–49).

This paper examines Hungary's religious and ecclesiastical media from the perspective of media economics and media law. First, however, the content of these two concepts needs to be clarified. The term religious media refers to institutions founded, owned or maintained (financed) by a church officially registered in Hungary. Organizationally, these media may be companies with legal personality (Ltd., stock

companies) or institutions maintained and operated by church organizations subject to the Church Act (CCVI of 2011). The adjective "religious" should be treated separately and is used primarily to qualify the content in the forthcoming. Religious content is also produced, for example, by the public media, which is state-owned and therefore not religious in this sense. A contrary example: ATV is founded by the Hit Gyülekezet (Church of Faith), which is primarily a public media service, not a religious one. The Church of Faith is a Christian denomination founded and centered in Hungary, and a major representative of the charismatic movement in Hungary. The congregation, which started in 1979 as a small prayer group, has grown dynamically and is now one of the largest Christian denominations with communities beyond the borders of the country. The congregation is also present in the media, with interests in the TV channels ATV and ATV Spirit, the weekly public affairs newspaper Hetek, the radio stations Hit Radio and Spirit FM, and the theological journal Új Exodus (New Exodus). Finally, the distinction is also justified by the fact that the amount of this type of content has increased significantly over the last decade [4], [1].

II. RESEARCH METHODS

This research investigates the operation of religious content producers in Hungary within the broader context of the media ecosystem, considering legal and economic aspects. The research activity begins with literature on religious media in Hungary, media regulation, and the historical context of church press in the country. The research method utilizes a mixed-methods approach incorporating qualitative and quantitative research methods.

Scrutinize freely accessible records from the Hungarian media authority (NMHH) and relevant legislation to understand the legal framework. Then, in-depth interviews conducted with key stakeholders, including representatives from church media outlets, legal experts, and other relevant actors.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. The Churches and Freedom Of The Press

The relationship of the historical churches in Hungary to the press and freedom of the press is not independent of the relationship between the church, the state, and society. Accordingly, the secular state that emerged after the French Revolution and its liberal idea of freedom of the press were already the subject of sharp criticism from the Christian churches. For example, Pope Gregory XVI's encyclical 'Mirari vos' of 1832, which condemned religious indifference, said that 'freedom of the press is the most mournful, the most damnable freedom, of which we cannot be sufficiently afraid, and which certain people dare to follow and spread. At the same time, however, the European laws of the time were already seeking to strike a balance between the basic human right of freedom of expression and other fundamental rights, most notably the basic human right later to be generally defined as the right of personality. The real freedom of the

press in Hungary came about as a result of the 1848 Revolution and War of Independence. The 1848: XVIII. law stated that whoever makes a mockery of public and religious morality and decent morals shall be punished with imprisonment for 1 year. After the freedom of the press in 1848, the press in Hungary experienced several transitions from state control to freedom of the press: after 1848 in 1867, with the re-enactment of the April Laws, and with the change of regime in 1989 [5].

Even though there were a good number of Protestant pastors as well as Catholic priests and monks among the editors of the first Hungarian newspapers, religious newspapers were only rarely published until the Reform Era. Because of the ambivalent attitude of the churches towards freedom of the press - already mentioned above - the press in its early stages did not really recognise the potential of modern mass communication. The first Hungarian ecclesiastical periodical was published in Selmečbánya between 1793 and 1803 under the title *Novi Ecclasiastico Scholastici Annales Evangelicorum*, edited by the Lutheran pastor Sámuel Ambrózy. On the Catholic side, the first religious periodical was launched in Veszprém in 1820, under the title *Church Publications and Reports*. Its editor was János Horvát, later Archbishop of Veszprém. The journal lasted for four years [6]. From the mid-19th century onwards, the number of newspapers, magazines, and periodicals owned by the Catholic Church or with a Catholic commitment increased, but at that time the pulpit was still the primary means of church communication. A major step forward was the establishment of the Central Press Company, in which Bishop Ottokár Prohászka of Székesfehérvár played a significant role [7]. The Central Press Office (1918) was one of the most important forums of the Catholic neo-renaissance era between the two world wars, publishing mostly Catholic scientific, cultural, and public press organs.

Less than half a century later, in 1963, the Second Vatican Council of Rome in its decree on the mass media, *Inter Mirifica*, articulated thus: "*It is therefore the innate right of the Church to use and possess these means, in so far as they are necessary and useful for Christian education or for any work for the salvation of souls; and it is the duty of holy pastors to educate and guide the faithful so that they may seek, through the use of the means of mass communication, to achieve the salvation and perfection of themselves and of the whole human family*" [8].

In developing the research concept, we have tried to use a variety of methodologies to ensure that the synergy of the brain components strengthens the validity of our results. This research is essentially descriptive, aiming to describe the topic under study in as much detail as possible. Regarding the time factor, we have used a cross-sectional approach: our conclusions are based on the analysis of data recorded at a given point in time. Accordingly, the conclusions are essentially based on data obtained using three different methodologies. In the first component, we analysed the freely accessible records and relevant legislation of the Hungarian

Media Authority (NMHH). The analysis identified the framework within which the church media operate.

As a second component, a total of 6 targeted in-depth interviews were conducted. The focus of the targeted interviews is on a specific problem or phenomenon, in this case the legal and economic conditions of religious media content production. The purpose of this type of interviews is to collect facts and opinions on the given topic, to obtain background information. In general, the following criteria were applied during the targeted interviews: our questions were neutral, avoiding value-laden wording; the questions were short and clear; we did not ask questions that needed to be answered; a question did not contain multiple statements (multiple choice questions); questions were usually completed and the topic was closed before moving on; we made sure to ask for facts, not just opinions. During the targeted interviews, the main emphasis was put on those problem areas and questions that cannot be investigated with a "harder" measurement tool (e.g., survey, analysis of existing statistics) or only in an "indirect" way.

Finally, non-intrusive content analysis was used to examine the content produced by each medium. This technique was used to collect and analyse information from the press, radio, and television. During the content analysis, our observation units coincided with our analysis units. These were the content produced by religious media: radio programmes, TV programmes, newspapers. In the coding process, we considered both explicit religious terms (e.g., "God", "faith", "heaven", "afterlife", "sin" etc.) and implicit themes that are prominent in the social teaching of the churches (e.g., the service of the common good in the Catholic Church's system of ideas and beliefs).

B. The Legal Environment for Electronic Media In Hungary

Each society is sensitive to different issues depending on its historical traditions, the strength and stability of its democracy, and the nature of its social, cultural, ethnic, and religious norms of behaviour. This sensitivity is often reflected in media content.

After the communist dictatorship, the current legal framework of audiovisual regulation in Hungary was essentially established in 1996 with the creation of the first media law, and in 2010, the legal framework [9] was established on whose basis the Hungarian electronic media still operate today. The general rules include norms defining the role of the press and the limits to press freedom. According to these, the activity of the press is a service that provides citizens with the information they need. The press is not only responsible for simply recording events, but also for exploring and presenting the interrelationships between different social phenomena, conducting debates, and exchanging opinions. As a first-generation political freedom, press freedom is one of the most important freedoms, limited only by respect for constitutional order. The latter includes, among others, freedom of conscience and freedom of religion. Accordingly, the exercise of freedom of the press must not constitute a criminal offence or incitement to

commit a criminal offence, must not offend public morals, and must not infringe the personal rights or religious beliefs of others.

In order to preserve the identity of religious communities through the media, the state itself is actively involved in maintaining and operating public media services, which provide content for religious communities. The objectives of public service media institutions generally include the provision of a socially and culturally comprehensive media service that seeks to reach as many social strata and culturally distinct groups and individuals as possible, as well as meeting the needs of nationalities, religious communities, and other communities, representing their culture, and promoting their mother tongues. The public media shall produce religious programmes based on agreements between the churches and religious communities in Hungary, with their active participation. Both radio and television content are produced using the resources of the Media Services Support and Asset Management Fund (MTVA). (The only exceptions to this are the radio programs of the Catholic Church - Holy Mass broadcasts and Catholic half-hours - which are produced and made available to MTVA by the Hungarian Catholic Church, the Church's own media service provider, using its own infrastructure.)

In addition to the Media Act, public service media provision principles are set out in much more detail in the Public Service Code. The basic purpose of the Code is to guide public service media service providers on the principles of proper operation within the framework of the Media Act. The Public Service Board is responsible for ensuring compliance with the provisions of the Code and for the social supervision of public service media service providers and the national news agency in general. The Board has fourteen members, including one member each from the Hungarian Catholic Church, the Reformed Church of Hungary, the Evangelical Church of Hungary, and the Federation of Jewish Communities in Hungary.

According to the Code, an essential aspect in the development of the public service media service provider's programming policy is the production of programmes that deal with universal and national religious and cultural values, ensuring in particular the presentation of Hungarian national culture, folk and national customs and traditions, and the Hungarian cultural heritage, free of ideological biases, in a multifaceted manner and to preserve values. It shall be obliged to present the religious activities of churches, religious groups, and religious communities of historical or assorted significance, operating and registered in Hungary or in the communities of the Hungarian diaspora (after World War I, 2/3 of Hungary's territory was annexed to neighbouring countries by the victorious powers, as a result, it lost more than half of its original population), and shall ensure in its programmes that those adhering to these faiths have access to appropriate information in proportion to their social representation. In determining the proportions of the various independent religious/sectarian programmes, the public service media service provider shall take into account the number of believers, their geographical location, their

linguistic needs, and the internal religious rules of the church or religious community concerned.

It should strive to present religious issues in an authentic way so that they are an integral part of social existence. It should seek to promote dialogue between different nationalities, religious and other communities. It is important to present the historic churches and other religious communities in a spirit of coexistence, acceptance, and transmission of values. The public service media service provider's programming should be characterised by respect and tolerance for ideological and religious beliefs. Using and quoting religious symbols and values in programmes shall not be offensive. Religious and faith-based programmes shall be intended to promote the presentation and understanding of a religion. It shall endeavour to ensure that the production and presentation of religious and belief programmes are in accordance with the specific aspects and traditions of religious communities.

Independent church media's right to exist, just as the right of any citizen to radio and television, is based on Article IX of the Fundamental Law, which states in paragraph Nr. 2: "*Hungary recognises and protects the freedom and diversity of the press and ensures the conditions of free information necessary for the development of democratic public opinion*" [10]. Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMS Directive 2010/13/EU) The Directive has already created a modern set of rules for the European audiovisual industry, covering both traditional (linear) and on-demand (non-linear) content. The European Community's approach is characterized by the fact that, whereas media regulation was initially essentially economic, it has recently come to accept that the audiovisual industry is not just one industry but also the main vehicle for the cultural and social wealth that the continent produces. Accordingly, values such as the preservation of linguistic, cultural, and religious diversity are becoming increasingly important. According to the European legislation and the Hungarian legislation implementing it, a media service provider may be a natural or legal person who, in the case of television broadcasting, bears editorial responsibility for the selection and compilation of programmes, as defined in the Directive, in the form of effective control over the scheduling of programmes, and in the case of on-demand audiovisual media services, in the compilation of the programme offerings.

The Media Act (Act CLXXXV of 2010) distinguishes between three types of media service providers: commercial, community, and public service. All domestic electronic media services with religious themes operate with community status. Although there is nothing to prevent them from providing commercial services, religious communities in Hungary do not take advantage of this possibility. A linear public media service (radio or television) can serve three purposes under the law. It can serve the needs of a particular social, national, cultural, or religious community and the specific needs of people in a particular locality or region for information and access to cultural programmes, but it can also be a community media service which predominantly publishes programmes that serve the purposes of the public

service media service. They are also subject to specific rules, such as not being allowed to network with commercial media service providers, less advertising than commercial media service providers (commercial/private media service providers are allowed to devote 20% of their airtime to advertising, while social media service providers can devote only 10%), and stricter rules for the eligibility of programmes. They must operate in accordance with so-called media service regulations approved by the media authority.

According to the law, community media services provide regular news coverage of a particular social or local community as well as other news services and cultural programmes, and endeavours to take into account the needs of people with disabilities. In the case of audiovisual media services, they must broadcast programmes which they produce, edit, and premiere (not repeat) for at least four hours per week, and must provide programmes serving the public service objectives set out in the Media Act for more than two thirds of their weekly broadcasting time, including news programmes for the community served, political information programmes, cultural programmes, and other similar content not primarily aimed at that community. In the case of radio services, at least fifty percent of the annual programming time devoted to music must be devoted to Hungarian music. It is also important to note that advertising may not express religious, conscience-based, or philosophical beliefs, except for commercial communications published in religious-themed thematic media services [10].

C. Economic Aspects of The Operation of Church Media

Like most countries in Europe, Hungary operates a dual (i.e., double, two-tier, sometimes competitive, sometimes mixed) media model. Ownership is the organizing principle of media duality, and the parallel operation of state-owned and privately-owned media provides the framework for the media ecosystem. However, religiously owned and operated media cannot be easily classified within this framework. For some time now, there has also been a third dimension to modern media systems, which, although most often referred to as 'small community', are in fact often owned and maintained by large communities and social groups. Church media are de jure mostly run by private companies but owned by churches or religious communities. For example, the media service provider of the Hungarian Catholic Radio is the Hungarian Catholic Radio Ltd., whose sole shareholder is the Hungarian Catholic Bishops' Conference, ultimately the body of Catholic bishops.

The economic approach to media inherently follows a functionalist cultural anthropological paradigm. It is based on the premise that, over time, society develops institutional systems along the lines of certain human needs, the main function of which is to satisfy those needs. According to one of the best-known trends in media research, the use-fulfilment model, the main question is: what do people use the media for? The most obvious answers to this question are information and entertainment, but the fact cannot be ignored that metaphysical or spiritual needs are undoubtedly also

present among the needs that drive media consumption. Thus, among the many functions of the media, there also exists the presentation of content that helps to answer questions that go beyond physical reality, beyond what people can directly experience. In economic terms, religious media content satisfies existing, demonstrable, measurable needs, and consumer choices are essentially about obtaining a spiritual experience. According to Hungarian media scholar, Gálik, these types of experiences are so-called experience goods, in whose acquisition the media consumer assumes a considerable risk, because it is not always possible to know in advance exactly what kind of experience he or she will receive [11]. This is why the criterion of predictability is just as important for religious media as it is for a classical commercial media product.

Domestic service providers basically operate under two types of funding models. As the commercial logic is mostly at odds with the founding intentions, most media rely on external funding in the form of ownership support. The Catholic Church-owned Magyar Katolikus Rádió (Hungarian Catholic Radio) and Szent István Rádió (Radio St. Stephen), as well as the Protestant Europa Rádió (Radio Europe), operate in this manner. The privately owned Mária Rádió (Radio Maria), which is part of a "global family" of non-profit franchises operating in nearly half a hundred countries or the former Bonum TV, now part of the EWTN US-based network, is largely financed by donations, grants, and partnerships (e.g., with monastic orders). This model has a long tradition, predominantly in the United States where it is particularly successful, the flagship being PBS (Public Broadcasting System), founded in the early 1970s, which is financed and enjoys a high degree of independence from economic and political actors [11]. PBS is a publicly funded nonprofit organization and the most prominent provider of educational programs to public television stations in the United States.

On the supply side, a trend has emerged in Hungary since the second half of the 1990s where the development of information-communications technologies and their convergence has led to the emergence of new media services on different electronic communications networks previously providing separate services. Compared to the world of mass media, creative and entrepreneurial individuals, innovative small groups, and small and medium-sized enterprises have had many more opportunities to enter the market, create niche markets, and operate in non-market communication spaces. (Niche markets are partly related to and serve small communities and subcultures, and post-material values are crucial in the creation of these offerings.) Part of the supply is produced according to non-market incentives and not as a commodity in the first place [11].

It is well known that religious content is not "marketable" content, and its viewership, listenership, and readership are below that of mainstream content. This tendency was already evident in the US television market shortly after World War II, where the commercial television channels, which focus on ratings and advertising revenue in direct proportion to ratings, were the first to exclude religious-type programmes,

documentaries, and generally, all sophisticated and expensive content. Church media all over the world are thus forced to finance these media services in order to achieve their objectives (preaching, evangelisation).

From an economic perspective, the question of who the target audience of religious content really is cannot be ignored. Hungarian sociologist of religion, Miklós Tomka, analysing the specificities of religious communication, reaffirms that communication is a multifaceted process, and in order to understand it, it is necessary to clarify who the recipient, the "receiver," and the consumer of the "message" are; what the essence of the message is; where and whom did the message come from; and what characterises the form, the "genre" of the message. Moreover, in the case of religious mass communication, all these questions are further complicated, because this type is typically two-layered. One layer is news about faith, the church, and events in religious life. The other layer is an existential religious experience, an intimate dialogue of the religious community with itself, a common celebration, a deepening of the common faith in living it, a discussion of common things [12]. This line of thought highlights one of the basic dilemmas of the media producing religious content, namely, which is more important, popularity or mission? The so-called two-market logic of the media is based on the principle of profitability: first, to gain as much share as possible in the audience market (i.e., to achieve the highest possible audience share, audience, readership, attendance), then to sell the audience share thus gained in the advertising market, thus generating revenue and ultimately profit. At first glance, the logic of the operation of church media is far from this understanding.

At the same time, religious content producers in niche roles should not completely lose their ability to cater to their audience, as they can only fulfil their inherent mission (e.g., preaching, evangelisation, pre-evangelisation) if they have someone to preach to. This requires them to achieve a delicate balance, which is often achieved by religious content providers in Hungary using very different strategies. In 2020, the Hungarian media authority will register a total of 8 thematic, church/religious stations on the Hungarian radio market. These are Magyar Katolikus Rádió, Szent István Rádió, Európa Rádió, Sola Rádió, Mária Rádió, Spirit FM, Credo Rádió and Manna FM. These 8 media service providers broadcast on almost 30% (57 stations) of the 200 analogue terrestrial UHF (FM) frequencies currently in operation. On the radio market, the differences between, for example, the radio of the Reformed Church: Europe Radio, and the Catholic station: Hungarian Catholic Radio, are clearly audible. The latter tries to achieve its mission of pre-evangelisation with a classical public service programme structure, predominantly prose programmes and relatively little direct liturgical content, while the former produces a lighter, more entertaining programme. (The word "pre-evangelization" entered the pastoral vocabulary of the Church in the early fifties and sixties. The term refers to the work preceding the preaching of the Gospel, a kind of "ground preparation" for the effective proclamation of the Gospel. Pre-evangelization in the practice of the Catholic Church is

thus the addressing of people who do not at that moment consider themselves to be religious, devout, close to the Church, and whom the Church is trying to convert in this way.) In contrast, the privately owned Radio Mary serves the experiencing and deepening of an already established and mostly deep-rooted faith with its direct liturgical content.

D. Religious Content in The New Media Ecosystem

In the last half century, the mass media system has been radically transformed, and with it the media and its institutions. This transformation is based on the evolution of info-communication tools, made possible by digitalisation, essentially the development of a new universal language. The importance of the role of technological innovation in human communication has long been recognised [13], [14] but the speed of change brought about by digitalisation is unprecedented. Although this is now taken for granted, the phenomenon is far from over; it is still ongoing and will likely continue to shape human communication in the future. However, it is already safe to say that a fundamentally new media ecosystem has emerged, which is no longer constituted solely by classical mass media but also by the user who has full access to technology through its democratisation and the content it produces. Moreover, in a broad sense, the ecosystem also includes the context surrounding the ever-expanding media content, thus defining the user's preferences. This does not diminish the social role of the media, but only transforms it in line with changing consumption patterns. It is safe to say that since the turn of the millennium, mass media is no longer the dominant actor in public communication, and perhaps not even *primus inter pares*, but still an important actor [11].

Therefore, an important question is whether and how church media will adapt to this changed environment. The picture is mixed in this respect. There needs to be a coherent strategy among the actors on how service providers can adapt as effectively as possible to the new consumption patterns. Looking at religious content, it is clear that, although it is appearing in large numbers on the new digital platforms, it is still mostly "offline" in a kind of library model: it is trying to reach users by digitising content that was originally intended for traditional spaces. However, with few exceptions, there is little real innovation in content: there are not really any new types of programmes on radio or television. There is little modularity, there is a lack of micro targeting, i.e., dividing audiences into smaller, more homogeneous groups and thus creating thematic content, etc. Most of the time, there is an export of classic offline content, which is inherently an inward-looking behaviour, rather than an outward-looking way of creating new, innovative content that follows new patterns.

For example, in the mobile phone application of the Hungarian Catholic Radio [15], the original radio programme is just one service among many. In addition, users can choose from nine thematic, 24-hour music channels, listen to the news, read the news, and access modular elements such as

Mass broadcasts, a calendar of events, or thematic podcasts with a single click.

Beyond this, the results seem to confirm the many social consequences of technological progress. The information society and the digital world have clearly expanded physical boundaries, creating new social structures and media consumption patterns, and this multifaceted change has brought with it the tools to adapt to new challenges. Smart devices have opened up new ways of disseminating religious messages. However, this requires a paradigm shift on the part of the churches: they need to see the new world and its tools as friends, not enemies, and to welcome with humility all grassroots initiatives and professional civilian expertise, which includes the need for internal development [16]. As already stated in the Vatican Council's Decree Inter Mirifica in 1963, "these means, if properly applied, are of great help to the human race, because they contribute greatly to the rest and cultivation of the spirit and to the spread and consolidation of the Kingdom of God." [17].

V. CONCLUSION

The results of our study suggest that in Hungary there is a disconnect between the religious and the ecclesiastical media: ecclesiastical media often perform "non-religious" functions (e.g., serving the public good). At the same time, they are not sufficiently prepared for technological challenges due to the lack of a comprehensive strategy and vision, which functionally makes it difficult for them to play a social role. Since our results are largely based on qualitative analysis and are not generalisable, it may be worthwhile to add a quantitative component in the future.

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