

ФИЛОСОФИЯ НА РЕЛИГИЯТА

VIRTUAL CONSPIRACIES ABOUT JESUS CHRIST: PASTORAL AND MEDIA PERSPECTIVES

Hedviga Tkáčová,

PhDr., ThDr., PhD., Faculty of Arts and Letters Catholic University, Slovakia

hedwiga.tkacova@gmail.com

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3062-2284>

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Анотация

Хедвига Ткачова. Виртуалните конспиративни теории за Исус Христос: пастирските и медийните перспективи. Изследването представя феномена на виртуалните конспиративни теории за Исус Христос. Отбелязва се, че в епохата на цифровите технологии конспиративните теории бързо се разпространяват и намират широка аудитория. Пастирската перспектива разкрива как тези теории могат да влияят върху вярата и духовния живот на вярващите, докато медийната перспектива изследва ролята на цифровите платформи и социалните мрежи в разпространението на тези конспирации, подчертавайки как социалните медии позволяват подобно съдържание да придобие популярност и достоверност сред потребителите. В хода на обсъждането изследването представя възможни стратегии за вярващите в борбата с дезинформацията.

Ключови думи: пастирска перспектива, медийна перспектива, дезинформация, стратегии, Исус Христос

Анотация

Гедвіга Ткачова. Виртуалні змови про Ісуса Христа: пасторська та медійна перспективи. У дослідженні аналізується феномен віртуальних теорій змови про Ісуса Христа. Зазначається, що в епоху цифрових технологій теорії змови швидко поширюються та знаходять широку аудиторію. Душпастирська перспектива розкриває, як ці теорії можуть впливати на віру та духовне життя віруючих, тоді як медійна перспектива досліджує роль цифрових платформ і соціальних медіа в поширенні цих змов, підкреслюючи, як соціальні медіа дозволяють такому контенту завоювати популярність і довіру серед користувачів. У розділі обговорення дослідження представляє можливі стратегії для віруючих у боротьбі з дезінформацією.

Ключові слова: душпастирська перспектива, медійна перспектива, дезінформація, стратегії, Ісус Христос

Abstract

Hedviga Tkáčová. Virtual conspiracies about Jesus Christ: Pastoral and media perspectives. The study presents the phenomenon of virtual conspiracy theories about Jesus Christ. It points out that in the digital age, conspiracy theories spread quickly and find a wide audience. The pastoral perspective reveals how these theories can influence the faith and spiritual life of believers, while the media perspective examines the role of digital platforms and social media in spreading these conspiracies, highlighting how social media allows such content to gain popularity

and credibility among users. In the discussion section, the study presents possible strategies for believers to combat disinformation.

Keywords: Pastoral perspective, media perspective, disinformation, strategies, Jesus Christ

Introduction. In today's society, where digital media pervade nearly every aspect of our lives, the landscape of information dissemination has undergone a profound transformation. The rich possibilities offered by digital platforms and social media have democratized the sharing of ideas and opinions, allowing information to spread with unprecedented speed and unlimited reach.

However, amidst this vast amount of information lies a growing concern – the proliferation of virtual conspiracy theories. These theories, often propagated through digital channels, pose a significant danger, not only in distorting truth but also in shaping beliefs and perceptions, particularly when it comes to sensitive topics such as religious faith.

Conspiracy theories refer to relatively comprehensive explanations positing coordinated efforts to conceal or manipulate events, typically without concrete evidence. These theories often depict events as orchestrated by powerful or malevolent forces (Šnídl, 2017), leading to the rejection of widely accepted narratives. Conspiracy theorists view explanations of situations presented by official authorities as further evidence of a cover-up (Reid, 2024) or as classified information withheld from the public (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, n.d.). Due to their speculative nature and lack of evidence, conspiracy theories are often dismissed as incorrect, absurd, or even irrational (Šnídl, 2017).

All four Gospels report that after Christ's resurrection, the priests colluded with the Roman guards to spread the word that it was the disciples who had stolen Jesus' body (Matthew 28:11-15). At a time shortly after Jesus' death, this story seemed legitimate because, in the words of J. Stacy, people trusted the authority of the priesthood (Stacy, 2023). Furthermore, it also points out that conspiracy theories have been around as long as conspiracies themselves. This example illustrates two key points: first, the evangelists record an actual conspiracy by priests and Roman guards to spread a false conspiracy theory about the disciples; second, the historical example has elements relevant not only to the first century but also to today. Surprisingly, it is just as valid today. Conspiracies or entire conspiracy theories do not arise out of nowhere; they are often instigated by malicious individuals with dubious intentions who know that they are not spreading the truth.

As we navigate the digital space, it becomes increasingly important to understand the mechanisms of conspiracies, as well as their impact, and to develop strategies to combat their dissemination. In this context, exploring both pastoral and media perspectives on virtual conspiracies about Jesus Christ within this study becomes not only relevant but also necessary.

... and while writing we therefore remind ourselves again that even the first fall of humanity began with an attack on the truth.

1. The phenomenon of virtual conspiracy theories

If we consider the nature of conspiracy beliefs in general, it is intriguing to adopt a historical perspective and juxtapose it with contemporary manifestations of conspiracism. Through this comparison, several intriguing parallels and differences emerge:

a) According to J. Harnbam and S. Aupers, a notable difference between ancient and modern conspiracy beliefs lies in their scope and focus. In ancient history, conspiracies typically centered on smaller-scale events, often localized to specific regions (such as the fire in Rome, which primarily concerned Rome itself). Moreover, ancient conspiracy theories often targeted external enemies, such as Jews (for Christians, and possibly Romans) or Christians (for Jews and Romans).

In contrast, modern conspiracy theories encompass a broader range of events and exhibit a wider geographical reach. These contemporary conspiracies tend to identify internal enemies, including local governments, intelligence agencies, large corporations, and international organizations like NATO, the EU, and the USA.

b) Both historical and contemporary conspiracies often involve the amalgamation of multiple conspiracy theories simultaneously. For instance, in the case of the great fire in Rome, as documented by the historian Tacitus, accusations were levelled both against Emperor Nero, the highest authority of the government at the time, and against the Christian minority¹, portrayed as acting against the majority. This example illustrates how conspiracies throughout history have intertwined various narratives to explain complex events or phenomena.

c) The themes presented in conspiracy theories, along with the events they purport to explain, exhibit a recurring pattern throughout human history, as noted by Z. Panczová. These repeated narratives, particularly prevalent in religious and political ideologies expressing pessimistic or apocalyptic visions of humanity's future, persist across time (Panczová, 2017, p. 80). Therefore, both historical and contemporary conspiracies and conspiracy theories reflect broader, global phenomena that transcend specific temporal or spatial contexts, emphasizing their universality and enduring relevance.

d) A demonstrable increase in social conspiracism can be confirmed in the digital environment. In addition, with the use of digital media, conspirators manage to reach a huge number of users at the same time. They not only accept fake content, but also willingly spread it or even create it themselves. Thus, within the social media space, an engaged audience emerges as an extension of the relentless machinery of conspiracy (Miller, 2022).

e) In the digital environment, the phenomenon of virtual conspiracy theories adopts distinct characteristics. G. G. Pocheptsov underscores the complexity of these theories and their profound societal impact. Within the digital realm, conspiracy narratives are meticulously crafted and intentionally misleading, designed to disseminate rapidly and effectively (Pocheptsov, 2019).

f) Cyber-conspiracies, as outlined by G. G. Pocheptsov, are rooted in pre-existing societal concepts that highlight conflicting "truths." These narratives often target specific social groups, portraying them negatively to sway public opinion towards one side of the presented conflict. Conflict narratives leverage opponents' reactions to generate "counter-narratives," thereby escalating the conflict and facilitating its propagation within digital media spaces. Utilizing digital platforms, these narratives draw in initially disinterested audiences. Moreover, conflicting narratives frequently spill over from the virtual realm into the physical world, potentially instigating social changes, such as mass protests (Pocheptsov, 2019).

2. Selected samples of virtual conspiracy theories about Jesus Christ

In the following section of this study, we will explore the phenomenon of virtual conspiracy theories, specifically focusing on the most widely circulated theories concerning Jesus Christ. These theories often revolve around secret associations, withheld information, rumours regarding his marriage and offspring, as well as alternative interpretations of his death or mission. Despite their speculative nature, these comprehensive conspiracy theories have endured over time and continue to thrive within the virtual environment.

¹ Panczová talks about the collective guilt that not only Christians had to endure, but in the history of mankind actually all members of minority groups that disturbed the unity of the majority. In ancient Rome, they were also Christians (against the state entity of Rome or against the Jews, a religious group recognized by the Romans); in the Middle Ages, the "minority" included not only members of ethnic minorities but also vagabonds or sorcerers. In the context of accusations of collective guilt, representatives of minorities were accused of various crimes and immoralities (poisoning, ritual murders, spreading epidemics, etc.) (Panczová, 2017, p. 35).

a) **Challenged identity of Jesus Christ** – The conspiracy theory stems from the belief that Jesus Christ was not the Son of God, born in human form (i.e., both fully human and fully divine), but rather was another significant figure with an unconventional origin or identity. Conspiracies offer various simple answers to the complex question of Jesus' identity and origin. Conspirators declare that Jesus was a political leader, extraterrestrial, reincarnated spiritual being, the envoy from another civilization, or a Greek philosopher¹.

b) **Non-existence of Jesus Christ** – The following conspiracy theory also denies Christ's identity. According to it, Jesus Christ was not a historical figure but a fictional character, a myth created by the church to control people. According to conspirators, Christ's identity and teachings are merely invented doctrines designed to lead people into obedience and accumulate church property. This belief has its followers although "apart from the gospels, Roman politicians like Tacitus mention Jesus's crucifixion, while even pagan chroniclers who insulted Jesus and his followers never doubted that he was a real figure" (Flannagan, Fischer, 2024). A similar conspiracy speaks of Jesus and Christianity as invented concepts created by members of secret societies and mysterious schools to unify the Roman Empire² under one state religion (Patti, 2016).

c) **Jesus as the author of "secret" teachings** – The conspiracy theory presents a rumor about a secret collection of information left by Jesus Christ but deliberately concealed by the church. It consists of mysterious and profound truths intended only for the "initiated," containing spiritual and esoteric knowledge. Part of the secret teachings may include healing techniques, mystical insights, or information about hidden aspects of human existence. According to conspirators, the church is interested in concealing this teaching out of fear of losing its power over the interpretation of Christian faith and practice. This conspiracy seems to appeal to ordinary people because it provides the appearance of resolving complex religious questions (intended only for the initiated) without requiring a deeper examination of the facts.

d) **Jesus as a proponent of reincarnation** – The conspiracy theory asserts that Christ believed in reincarnation, which the Church suppressed and erased from its teachings about the Savior. The reason for destroying evidence of Jesus' belief in reincarnation is said to be its inconsistency with other principles and teachings of the Church. This assertion originates solely from the writings of the early Christian theologian Origen, who was later declared a heretic. None of the many other theologians or biblical scholars support the idea that Jesus advocated belief in reincarnation (Patti, 2016).

e) **Marriage and concealed offspring of Jesus Christ** – According to this conspiracy theory, based on the Gnostic Gospel of Philip, Jesus Christ entered into marriage during his lifetime, from which offspring arose. This is an elaborated version of Dan Brown's³ claim *inter alia* that Jewish men were expected to marry and that celibacy⁴ was more than unusual (Brown, 2003). Conspiracies

¹ The conspiracy claims that Jesus was mistaken by historians for the ancient Greek philosopher Apollonius, who came from the city of Tyana in present-day Turkey. Both men are believed to have lived around the same time, were born under "miraculous" circumstances, and were called by their followers, for example, "the son of God" (Hignett, 2019).

² The unification of the Roman Empire as a motivation for the creation of Christianity as a state religion is also the motive of the book "The Christ Conspiracy: The Greatest Story Ever Sold" by Acharya S., which claims that these groups drew on a number of myths and rituals that already existed long before Christianity era, and reworked them into a story known from the Bible. See more: Acharya S. (1999). *The Christ Conspiracy: The Greatest Story Ever Sold*. Illinois, United States: Adventures Unlimited Press, 1999.

³ Dan Brown's novel "The Da Vinci Code" was published in 2003. Today, with more than 80 million copies sold worldwide, it is among the ten best-selling books in history. A successful film directed by Ron Howard was made based on the themes of the book. Starring Tom Hanks.

⁴ There is no evidence that all the rabbis at the time of Jesus Christ were married. According to G. F. Moore, it was not uncommon for rabbis devoted to the special study of God's word to remain single (Moore, 1997, pp. 119-120).

about Jesus' marriage and hidden offspring unfold in various ways. One, for example, speaks of Jesus and Mary Magdalene as "divine partners," while another rumour describes their two common children (Kruger, 2020). Another version tells of a secret marriage to preserve Jesus' spiritual leadership. Conspiracy theorists point to various historical texts and legends, which they interpret as clear references to Jesus' secret marriage or offspring. They overlook a significant fact – the claim that Jesus was married demands real, positive evidence; in the gospels or any other writings from the early church period, we find no evidence of Jesus' marriage or offspring.

f) **Twin of Jesus Christ** – Across most Christian churches and denominations prevails the belief that Jesus had at least one brother, James. Initially, he did not follow him, but later became a faithful disciple; James' transformation from sceptic to devoted believer confirms compelling evidence of Jesus' messianic claims. After Jesus' resurrection, James becomes one of the most significant figures of the early Christian church. The conspiracy about Jesus having a twin brother claims that Jesus did not have a brother James, but an identical twin – Thomas – who was identical to Jesus in appearance and in supernatural power (Lasher, 2023). The conspiracy denies Jesus' sacrifice on the cross and Jesus' victory over sin and death. At the same time, it also undermines Jesus' unique status as a perfect sacrifice because it presents another divine being (identical twin) born of Mary.

g) **False death and escape of Jesus Christ** – The conspiracy claims that Jesus Christ was not actually crucified and did not die on the cross; instead, he merely pretended his death to secretly escape; i.e., death was a staged event. The conspiracy is accompanied by several alternative explanations of how Jesus could have survived his alleged crucifixion. One well-known notion suggests that Jesus used his power and medical knowledge not only to survive crucifixion but to avoid death on the cross altogether. Another conspiracy is based on the belief that Jesus did not actually die but merely "fainted" on the cross⁵ and eventually managed to crawl out of the tomb without assistance. Others argue that he was crucified only according to legend and that his body was later substituted or stolen, allowing him to escape. It's worth noting that the idea of Jesus not dying carries a strong emotional charge – it provides hope and supports the belief or even desire to believe that a heroic figure like Jesus could have evaded death and continued his mission.

h) **Other conspiracy theories** – Beyond already mentioned theories, numerous other conspiracies exist surrounding Jesus Christ, ranging from claims of hidden manuscripts or relics to allegations of different cover-ups by religious authorities. These theories reflect a persistent fascination with the enigmatic figure of Jesus and his impact on history and faith.

3. Virtual conspiracy theories about Jesus Christ – a pastoral perspective

In the current digital era, the rapid dissemination of conspiracy theories has become increasingly pervasive, finding resonance across a broad audience. While the propagation of such theories is not novel, its prevalence has intensified in recent years, largely due to shifts in how individuals access and consume information. An emerging trend involves a notable departure from factual accuracy, with emotional rhetoric gaining precedence over objective truth. Consequently, there's a growing scepticism towards established information channels and previously trusted sources. As early as 2018, R. Edelman highlighted society's descent into a "world without common facts and objective truth," underscoring the dominance of fake news, disinformation, and conspiracies (Edelman, 2018). This trend signifies a significant departure from traditional notions of shared reality, ushering in an era marked by uncertainty and the proliferation of alternative narratives

⁵ The idea of Jesus fainting on the cross is contradictory. Especially in connection with the executors of the sentence - the Romans - who were "good at carrying out death and dying" (St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, n.d.). Let's add that the car of the fourth Gospel records that Jesus was stabbed in the side, which confirmed his death (Jn 19:31-37).

(Levy, 2017; Bakir, McStay, 2018; Fitzpatrick, 2018 and so on).

The emergence of the term "post-truth" (i.e., post-factuality) signifies a departure from an era where truth held sway, signalling the dawn of a new epoch. M. Arias-Maldonado elucidates this phenomenon, highlighting the coexistence of disparate "truths"¹ within the same societal framework, often devoid of scientific scrutiny or adherence to scientific principles (Arias-Maldonado, 2020). A similar conceptualization of "post-truth" is echoed in the Cambridge dictionary, which defines it as a state wherein individuals are inclined to embrace arguments based on emotion and personal beliefs over factual evidence (Cambridge dictionary, n.d.).

The post-truth phenomenon is undergoing rapid evolution and amplification in the digital media landscape. The burgeoning popularity of digital platforms is intricately linked to their escalating influence and the attendant risks encountered in the online sphere. These risks encompass the fragmentation of online resources, the proliferation of sensationalist and tabloidized content, the blurring of boundaries between authentic and fabricated content, and the erosion of user privacy (Zafarani, Mohammad, Liu, 2014; Olteanu et al., 2019). Within this milieu, the sophisticated technology underpinning digital media has both facilitated and exacerbated the manipulative ramifications associated with the dissemination of various forms of misinformation. This includes the formation of echo chambers – information bubbles that connect like-minded individuals – and the propagation of an infodemic environment.

From a pastoral perspective, it's evident that conspiracy theories wield a significant influence on the faith and spiritual well-being of believers, often causing doubt and confusion. Pastoral care, therefore, must incorporate strategies to address these theories, strengthen faith, and provide clear, accurate theological guidance. Clergy and religious educators should be equipped to engage with these digital narratives, offering guidance and support to navigate the complex information landscape.

Effective countermeasures against misinformation include promoting media literacy, fostering critical thinking, and facilitating open dialogue within religious communities. Collaboration between religious leaders and media professionals is essential in combatting the spread of conspiracy theories. By comprehending the mechanisms and impact of these theories, both pastors and media practitioners can better protect their communities and uphold the integrity of public discourse.

Ultimately, the aim is to diminish the influence of virtual conspiracy theories on contemporary religious practice and societal dialogue. By confronting these challenges directly, we can ensure that the digital sphere remains a bastion of truth, integrity, and constructive interaction, embodying the fundamental values of faith and reason.

4. Virtual conspiracy theories about Jesus Christ – media perspective

A media perspective examines the role of digital platforms and social media in the spread of conspiracy theories about Jesus Christ. At the same time, it represents the character of character media from its inception to remind that not only the character of social media, conspiratorial content makes it possible to gain their popularity and credibility.

Media theorist D. McQuail also discussed the rich possibilities of the media in the early 1990s. He described the media in general:

- a) As means of influence and social manipulation;
- b) As an environment where public life and public debate take place;
- c) As sources of interpretation of social reality and even truth, since what is reported in the media is considered "true";

¹ We realize that science and scientific conclusions are quite complex and can be explained in many ways. In the interpretation of scientific knowledge, there is also a wide space for ambiguity, contradictory findings, or mistakes. However, this does not change the harmfulness of conspiracy explanations that have nothing to do with science, scientific methods, and interpretation.

- d) As a source of ideas about what is "normal";
- e) As sources of amusement and adventure;
- f) As carriers of the worldview, serving as carriers of values and moral standards (McQuail, 2009).

Jiráček and Wolák focus on the relationship between media and society, particularly in the context of "digital media," describing them as co-creators of society's economic, political, and cultural nature. They view digital media as proactive participants in activities that occur with their involvement (Jiráček, Wolák, 2007). The authors highlight the interconnectedness of individual, group, and societal lives with media, especially digital media, which permeate life through their existence, activities, and effects. In other words, today we can talk about the unprecedented availability of both information and misinformation that inundates individuals through the internet (Willing, 2021). The online space has removed old barriers to publishing and distributing potentially false news, opening the floodgates for everyone².

Finally, the role of digital platforms and social media in spreading conspiracy theories about Jesus Christ is not negligible. The nature of social media contributes substantially to the popularity of such conspiracy theories. Social media has increased the number of conspiracy theories by altering communication methods and stimulating an active audience that not only accesses this information but also shares or even creates it (Levy, 2017).

Furthermore, digital media technology has enabled quick and unrestricted access to specific sources of information while ignoring those that conflict with an individual's views, emphasizing personal beliefs and experiences (i.e., emotionalism) (Bakir & McStay, 2018). As a result, users are exposed only to positions they identify with and conspiracies they are inclined to believe. This selective exposure reinforces user attitudes and leads to greater polarization (Serrano-Puche, 2021).

On the other hand, the "attractiveness" of conspiracy narratives cannot be denied. These narratives are characterized by their fast, massive, and emotional nature, focusing on negative phenomena that affect everyone and offering simple explanations. Complex phenomena become easy to understand thanks to straightforward interpretations, personal feelings, and partial explanations from conspirators. This approach is intellectually simpler and faster, requiring neither a deeper understanding of the context nor additional intellectual effort (Krazit, 2017).

Moreover, simple causes and explanations are processed intuitively. We do not need to analyse the phenomena or events in a complex way, allowing us to decide on their truth spontaneously (Flintham, 2018).

We believe that the phenomena just described are also decisive in the current spread of cyber conspiracy theories about Jesus Christ.

5. Discussion

We are convinced that viral conspiracies about Jesus Christ and their false contents can have a significant impact especially on religious communities and their believers. These narratives often deviate from Christianity's central tenets, particularly concerning Jesus Christ as the Savior of the world. They frequently cast doubt on Christ's identity as the firstborn of all creation (Colossians 1:15), the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end (Revelation 22:12-15), the source of life and light (John 1:3), the only Son of God, and the embodiment of the Kingdom of God (Mark 9:1).

² Since their inception, social networks such as Facebook, Twitter or Instagram "have developed systems that target and amplify the impact of disinformation, although this was not their intention". Today we know that algorithms are specifically designed to keep users in the digital space and therefore offer content that users want to hear; while being guaranteed to be surrounded and supported by like-minded society (Willing, 2021).

By challenging or rejecting these foundational beliefs, conspiracy theories undermine the legitimacy of Christ and diminish the significance of believers' faith and spiritual lives.

In the discussion section, we will further present several strategies that believers can use to fight disinformation. Above all, it is a purposeful and persistent effort to:

- a) Avoid believing something simply because "it makes sense" without true evidence;
- b) Reject speculation as fact without proof, except the evidence provided by conspirators;
- c) Avoid taking facts out of context and creating partial truths that appear to favour the conspiracy;
- d) Verify the truth of conspiracies through other sources before accepting them;
- e) Search for and read professional analyses and scientific studies that provide substantiated and reliable information;
- f) Educate themselves about how disinformation and conspiracy theories work to better recognize and protect against manipulative tactics;
- g) Avoid conspiratorial thinking;
- h) Keep an open mind and be willing to change opinions when new, credible evidence is presented;
- i) Refrain from looking for "culprits" and their bad motivations in events that can be easily explained;
- j) Avoid connecting information from seemingly random or unrelated events (correlation does not mean causation);
- k) Reject "evidence" that cannot be proven or disproved;
- l) Be sceptical of conspiracies that seem too significant to remain hidden from the public;
- m) Distinguish one's own emotions from the facts themselves;
- n) Provide space for opinions that do not align with personal beliefs;
- o) Avoid contributing to the polarization of opinions (i.e., considering conspiracy opinions as the only right and others as wrong);
- p) Engage in similar mindful practices to ensure balanced and rational judgment;
- q) Other strategies.

Can we adopt responsible strategies and manage them on a daily basis? God (of Christians) expects nothing less.

6. Conclusion

The application of effective strategies that believers can use in the fight against misinformation certainly includes not only the physical world, but also the digital space, in which, in addition to many ills, the concept of post-truth has flourished, often lacking scientific knowledge and the application of scientific criteria (Arias-Maldonado, 2020). Moreover, post-truth describes a situation in which people accept arguments based on their emotions and beliefs rather than on facts (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.). Conspiracy is one of the many negative online phenomena that cry out for correction.

Within this study, we remind you that the phenomenon of virtual conspiracy theories about Jesus Christ might present significant challenges for both religious communities and society. In the digital space, these theories spread rapidly through social media and other digital platforms, gaining wide audiences and considerable influence. This study highlights the dual perspectives necessary to understand and address these challenges: the pastoral and the media perspectives.

From the pastoral perspective, it is clear that conspiracy theories can profoundly impact the faith and spiritual lives of believers, sowing doubt and confusion. Pastoral care must therefore include strategies for addressing these theories, reinforcing faith, and providing clear, accurate theological

teaching. Clergy and religious educators must be prepared to engage with these digital narratives, offering guidance and support to help believers navigate the complex information landscape.

From the media perspective, this study highlights the critical role of digital platforms in spreading conspiracy theories, as social media's tendency to promote sensational content often amplifies these narratives, giving them undue credibility. Combating this trend requires media literacy, critical thinking, and collaboration between educators, journalists, and religious leaders to provide accurate information and foster environments where truth prevails. Effective strategies include promoting media literacy, encouraging open dialogue, and understanding the responsible strategies behind these theories to maintain the integrity of public discourse. Ultimately, responsible addressing these challenges ensures that the digital space remains grounded in truth and the values of faith and reason.

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