

## Christian Life and Mass Medias



The fortress of the city of Troy was quite safe. It was impossible for the enemy troop, however they may try to break through the fortress and enter the city. Realizing this, the enemy troop, cunningly withdrew leaving a wooden horse. The people in the city opened the gates of the fortress and brought the horse into the fortress with all pomp and show. Everybody liked this beautiful wooden horse. The Greek soldiers, hidden in the wooden horse, got out at night and opened the gates of the fortress. The enemy troop entered the city immediately and conquered the sleeping city. This is the story of the famous Trojan horse. Modern Media is also like that and hence they are termed as Trojan horses. How securely we may close the doors and windows of our houses, the Media comes to our houses unawares.

### **The Fascinating Power of Media**

Media is a co-traveler of modern man. They are the open windows before human thoughts and feelings without any difference of night and day. The speciality of today's media world is a competition to present the events and scenes in any corner of the world quickly, easily, clearly and attractively. Media includes a conversation around a tea table to computer device that enabled a person to talk from Moon to Earth. The world of media is very broad. It included books using all the possibilities of the printing press, newspapers, posters, audio devices like radio, phone, the audio-visual devices of language like television, cinema, computer, internet, web-com-phone, e-mail, video conference etc. Internet device is an explosion in the field of technology. Internet was unknown to the world a few years back. It has reduced today's world into the circumference of a drawing room. Internet enables us to read newspapers, to go through the library books of foreign countries and to book air tickets etc.

## **The Goal of Media**

Media has three main goals: give knowledge, teach and entertain.

### **1. Give knowledge**

Today media can impart knowledge about what happens around the world at the same moment. News has no 'past' now. What happens in the present reaches people without delay. Media forms the vision of life. When media opens before man, a big world of knowledge, it is his duty to use them creatively. IInd Vatican Council teaches about the use of media thus: "Those who use these media, especially the youth, should be self-controlled and self-disciplined. Let them try to reach the depth of wisdom about what they see and hear. They must consult teachers and experts, discern and come to the right decisions" (Mass Media-10).

### **2. Teach**

The second goal of media is to teach. Though media cannot substitute teacher, it can develop and nourish the knowledge gained from schools. Media cannot be a true guru, recognizing the possibilities and drawbacks of the students and the specialities of his character. But media can open a wide and large collection of knowledge before him. Media helps to conscientize people about the changes in the fields of science and technology.

### **3. Entertain**

Entertaining is also an important duty of media. Intervals of ease are necessary for a busy life. The means of entertainment of a particular country- cinema, drama, dance etc proclaim its culture too. In that sense, media is an ambassador of culture to other countries. Especially in a globalised age, where world becomes a small village, media has a duty to display the original culture of each country in all its purity.

## **Negative Influence of Media**

Visual media can lead human mind to noble thoughts and vision of life. Art, literature and speech or elocution can lead the struggling disappointed lives to hope and make their life new and fresh. What system other than media can inform the community of people the new objects and things in the market at the proper time? But media deviates from its real goal in this field itself.

When business interest of media goes beyond limits, a community of immorality and insecurity is born. Media has played a very important role in the social disintegration of western countries. If media becomes the deciding and controlling force in food, clothes, language, faith etc. that reveals the culture.

Immorality, relativity in the field of values, sexual chaos, undue influence of advertisements etc.- factors that destroy man's sense of morality- are related to media.

Today's media culture helps more to cater the savage in man rather than to awaken the divine in him.

### **How to Evaluate Media?**

No one can deny the place and importance of media in human life. But it is not necessary that the ideas presented by media be acceptable. It imparts ideas, which develop human mind and enrich human imagination. At the same time it spreads dirty wicked ideas that make human mind impure. Cinemas, dramas and other visual arts produced only for financial gain. Literary products like novels, stories etc, cable T.V that presents audio-visual possibilities with all its fascinations, mobile phones with all its perfection of modern technology, and internet lead astray not only youth and children but also elders. Media also becomes a means to develop certain trends like practice of violence, craze for liquor, immorality, gloom, tendency for suicide sexual anarchy etc.

In this context, we must approach media critically. People living in audio-video media culture should know how to discern, which is good, which is bad. For a Christian, the measuring rod to discern evil and good is very clear. We must reject media presentations, which do not go along with Christian values. And we should persuade other people who have values to reject such things. Parents, Pastors, teachers and social reformers have the duty to give a clear idea and awareness of what they must see, hear and read.

Another danger we face in the audio-video culture is the slavery to media. Television, Internet etc. steal a lot of our valuable time. However useful the programmes in the television be, spending much time before T.V setting aside study, work, prayer etc. will lead to failure in life.

Even when we keep away from evil media, we cannot ignore the emotional influence of media. Hence the community must take care to develop suitable literature and art based on the principle of conquering evil with good, helpful to man's soul and integral development. It can support and sustain morality. Its goal must be the glory of God and the good of man. Hence it is the duty of the church to encourage noble workers of art and literature and to spread them.

### **Media and Social Commitment**

Since human mind is mostly influenced by media today, its social commitment is something very important. Hence those who work in the field of media should be careful in the following things:

1. Media should be ready to withdraw from programmes and explanations unsuited to the morality of that community. If it cannot be evaded, keep modesty and control.
2. Persuade people and awaken their consciousness and organize them against superstitions, evil practices, communal violence and cruelty.
3. Arouse the consciousness of man against widespread corruptions of all kinds.
4. Regain morality lost by the excessive influence of consumerism.
5. Media should stand for the conscience of the society rather than being the defenders of certain vested interests.
6. Media should give emphasis to create a counter-culture leading to proper sense of values.
7. Media must be capable to present truth factually and lead the country to goodness and prosperity.

### **How to Use Media?**

The right and noble vision is not to avoid media as a problem but consider and make use of it as a great source of infinite possibilities. The Decree on 'Social Communications and Media' of II<sup>nd</sup> Vatican Council term the discoveries and inventions in the technical fields as God's blessings. "Proper use of media will be a precious wealth for humanity. They provide man entertainment and knowledge. They will be very useful in the proclamation of God's Kingdom." (Inter Mirifica-2). Hence our creative approach should be not that of keeping away but entering and using it. We need education and discretion to discern and imbibe or absorb what is good and useful. Running away from media will make one narrow-minded and keep one away from the indices of the times. "All the children of the church, with unity and enthusiasm, should strive to use mass media effectively in all fields of missionary activities as time and circumstances demands" (Inter-Mirifica-2). Pope Benedict XVI teaches through the Mass Media message in 2008 that all possible means to teach the voice of the word of the Lord and His face everywhere should be encouraged.

It is worth thinking how to use media that influence man's emotional core in ways, which are based on values. Mass Media contributes very positively in enlightening religious beliefs, developing noble thoughts and views and facilitating evangelization. The first proclamation of faith and its deepening is impossible without media. If media is not used effectively as a power to make human effort more perfect, Church will have to admit her fault before the Lord. Church has to preach the message from the top of the house through them, which she ought to have." (EN .45).

We can make use of newspaper, magazines, radio, television, cinema, internet, mobile phone etc as a means for proclamation of the Gospel and for the consolation of human beings. It is the need of the day, need of the church to encourage media, which contains values that develop man culturally and spiritually. Then media will become a means to nourish Christian life.

### **I. Find out the Answers**

1. What are the goals of Mass Media?
2. What are the unhealthy tendencies of our communities due to the undue and excessive use of Mass Media?
3. What are the things we have to bear in mind while properly evaluating media?
4. What are the things we have to do to make media develop social commitment?
5. How can we use media for evangelization?

### **II. Let us Discuss**

1. Media opens before man a wide world of knowledge. What can you do to use it creatively?
2. It is a naked truth that attractive fascinating media arts make us their slaves. As a Christian how can you face this challenge?

### **III. Activity**

I will see only television programmes of good standard.

### **IV. Let us Enlighten our Hearts**

“Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation” (Mk. 16:15).