

<p>Philosophy of Religion (Christianity) 12. Religion and the media</p> <p>Forms of media</p> <p>Media is anything which is used for communicating with other people. This might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Television and Radio • Videos/DVDs • CDs and MP3s • Newspapers and Magazines • Books • Posters and Advertisements • Internet and Social Networking • Dance and Drama <p>This unit of work looks at how Christians respond to the use of media. Some Christians embrace the media and see it as a useful tool for evangelism. Other Christians are concerned about the negative effects of media especially on traditional family values.</p> <p>Television</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Television continues to influence society. • Many Christians are concerned with the influence television has on family life. • Families no longer eat together at the table. • Families are more likely to sit together watching television programmes. • Increasingly families no longer watch television together as each family member is likely to have a television set in their own room. • Parents have little control over what their children watch and when they watch it. • Christians are also concerned with the content of programmes which might be against Christian values. • Soaps such as Hollyoaks, Eastenders and Coronation Street often tackle morally sensitive issues such as homosexuality, premarital sex, adultery, abortion and euthanasia. • Christians might be concerned about how these morally sensitive issues are dealt with. • Some Christians are concerned with television advertisement as they might encourage greed and materialism especially among the young. • Many Christians may see television as having a very positive influence especially when educational documentaries are broadcast. • Some Christians would see it as being very important to follow the news and be aware of things that are happening in the world today. <p>Christian Television</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a legal requirement for the BBC and ITV to broadcast a certain amount of religious programmes. • 'Songs of Praise' is a BBC Television religious programme based around Christian hymns. • It began in October 1961 and is the longest-running programme of its kind. • It is the most-watched British religious television programme. • Digital television has allowed Church groups to broadcast their own programmes. • There has been an increase in the UK of American style 'Televangelist' such as Revelation TV and God TV. • Televangelists in America have been criticised in the past for the way it encourages people to make donations to the TV stations. <p>Own point of view and different points of views</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In order to get full marks on the last 12 mark question it is necessary to give another point of view, your own point of view as well as references to Christianity in your answer. • Islam has very strict rules about the depiction of the prophet Muhammad. In the film 'Mohammad, Messenger of God'(1976) (sometimes referred to as simply 'The Message') the life of Muhammad was told without actually showing him. • Many Muslims were offended with the publication of Salman Rushdie's 'The Satanic Verses' in 1988. • More recently Muslims have been offended with the publication of cartoons of the prophet Muhammad in Danish newspapers. 	<p>Influence on lifestyles</p> <p>Many Christians are concerned about the influence media has on lifestyles particularly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marriage and divorce • Sexual relationships and affairs • Alcohol (some Christians are 'teetotal') • Drugs <p>Jesus in Film</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There have been many films which have depicted the life of Jesus. • Franco Zeffirelli's film 'Jesus of Nazareth' (1977) was endorsed by the Pope as suitable viewing for Christians during Eastertide. • Some Christians are concerned with the way Jesus is often depicted in films, sometimes they are concerned that Jesus is portrayed as being too human. • Many Christians were offended by Monty Python's 'Life of Brian' (1979) which they saw as being blasphemous. • 'The Last Temptation of Christ' (1988) was criticised because it suggested that Jesus might have given into temptation and married Mary Magdalene rather than dying on the cross. • Mel Gibson's film 'The Passion of the Christ' (2004) was unusual as it was recorded entirely in Aramaic, Jesus' original language. It was criticised because its crucifixion scenes were too graphic. <p>Music</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some Christians are concerned that the lyrics to contemporary music are contrary to Christian values especially with regards to sex. • A significant proportion of contemporary music has parental advisory warnings. • Some Christians believe it is important to have alternative Christian music. • William Booth the founder of the Salvation Army is often credited with saying, 'Why should the devil have all the best tunes.' • St Augustine of Hippo thought that music could be used in Christian worship saying, "He who sings once, prays twice." • Biblical stories have been the subject of musicals e.g. 'Joseph and the Technicolor Dream Coat', 'Godspell' and 'Jesus Christ Superstar'. <p>Evangelism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Evangelise' literally means 'to spread the good news'. • Christianity is a proselytising religion i.e. it goes out to make converts. • Jesus commissioned his followers to make more disciples: <p>"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Matthew 28:18-20</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many Christians see the use of media as a useful tool in spreading the Gospel message, preaching and teaching. • Many Christian denominations have their own newspaper, website and media office. • Many Christians are beginning to use social media to promote their message e.g. the pope's official Twitter account is @pontifex. • Some Christians such as the Amish prefer to keep themselves to themselves and do not use or follow media. 	<p>Violence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many Christians are concerned about the level of violence in film and on television. • In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus told his disciples that: <p>"You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment." Matthew 5:21-22</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many Christians would argue that depictions of acts of violence are contrary to the values of the Gospel. <p>Pornography</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pornography is the explicit description or showing of sexual activity with the purpose of bringing about sexual arousal in its audience. • Pornography has become more readily available in recent years first with the development of VHS in the late 1970s, DVDs in the 1990s and then the growth of the internet. • There is much debate about the harmful effects of pornography particularly on the young and impressionable. • Some people argue that it encourages particularly young men to objectify women making it difficult to form future meaningful relationships. • Most Christians believe pornography is wrong. They believe that sex is something special which should only take place in a loving relationship between a husband and wife. • In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus taught that even thinking about a person lustfully is wrong: <p>"But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart." Matthew 5:28</p> <p>Censorship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Censorship is the suppression of speech or other public communication which may be considered objectionable, harmful, sensitive, politically incorrect or inconvenient as determined by a government, media outlet or other controlling body. • Censorship might take the form of suppressing all or part of a play, film or book which is thought to be offensive. <p>Freedom of Speech</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freedom of speech is the right to say what you think without being censored. • Freedom of speech is often suppressed under totalitarian regimes. • Martin Niemoller reflected upon the importance of speaking out against injustice in light of the Nazi regime in the 1930s: <p>"First they came for the Jews And I did not speak out Because I was not a Jew. Then they came for the Communists And I did not speak out Because I was not a Communist Then they came for the trade unionists And I did not speak out Because I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for me And there was no one left To speak out for me."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Universal Declaration of Human Rights upholds freedom of speech and expression. • Some Christians might agree with freedom of speech as it allows them to openly preach the Gospel. • Some Christians might be concerned that freedom of speech allows people to make statements which might be considered blasphemous. • Most Christians would agree with freedom of speech providing it is used responsibly and does not offend. • Up until 2008 blasphemy was a criminal offence.
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