

IS TELEVISION HARMFUL? (1976)

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Television has a tremendous effect on our lives. Some spend hours watching and listening to it and their minds are absorbed by it. It does influence our thinking and behaviour.

For the Christian, if television principles are contrary to Biblical principles then it could encourage an ungodly life.

Should television be used just as an instrument for good? No, since the audiences want something more and television companies must pander to people's taste to receive the financial awards. To only produce wholesome programmes would not be convenient.

What is clear is that sin is glorified on the television. Satan has control over this medium. Many programmes indulge in sinful activity such as fornication, adultery, petting, lying, swearing and foul language, stealing, murder, robbery and rape. These are all negative and pessimistic matters.

Television, and the cinema, endorses evil.

We are 'up in arms' when the air we breathe is polluted and the water we drink is polluted and yet we allow our minds to be polluted by the television and the cinema.

Violence can trigger us to commit violence. Many crimes are inspired by television programmes. Television causes people to be less sensitive to the pain and suffering of others or create fear in viewers. It does encourage some people to behave aggressively because they see and hear it on television.

Television encourages unhealthy habits such as smoking, drinking, drug addiction, adultery and disrespect. It causes laziness and viewers becoming overweight. It certainly encourages bad speech and foul language.

There are people who watch television for hours every day and I am told that some never turn their television off.

Some people on benefits can afford cigarettes and alcohol and a state of the art television but will not find a job and some have encouraged their children to steal food as they cannot afford it. Fags and booze come first!

One does not want to be a snob, hating those of a so-called lower class, but it is annoying that many who receive benefits, which we, who are at work pay for, do nothing to help themselves.

But to put the other side; some people are very lonely and the television is often their only company. When some people are ill they depend on the television.

Aged people are ignored to the point of great unfairness. It is one of the social ills of our time.

Some television can be informative and very beneficial. Travel and geographical programmes are two examples. Science programmes can be very biased and there is an increase in programmes which criticise faith including the Christian faith.

Of course, people are entitled to their opinions and have every right to express them but I would suggest that balanced programmes are fairer and should allow people to make up their own minds.

The fact that 15 million people watch a soap opera does not mean it is a good programme. There are programmes that have little or no value which people enjoy and must suggest the old adage that little things please little minds.

As in my article on violence, I have to express again that I cannot understand why people find violence satisfying and good entertainment. Some people like graphic horror. Obviously, it is what audiences want and it must tell us something about the state of society today.

Video games are becoming increasing violent. Why?

Nor can I understand how people can do nothing but watch television all day or even spend hours watching it. The television does the thinking for them and all their judgements and conclusions are by proxy. Some people even believe that all that is said on television is both true and accurate.

It will be said that what people watch is entirely up to them and nobody else's business and that is right. But, equally, television does affect people and is very harmful to many. It is easy to say that people should not watch matters that are harmful and they have the power to turn programmes off and be selective. True, but often a programme begins innocently and develops into being outrageous and natural curiosity prevents people abandoning the programme.

All these comments refer to the cinema as well and the evil influences it has on some people.

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