

The Age of Media

It's not going to occur.

It's not a future event.

We live in **the Age of Media.**

There are two or more high-tech devices in every home in the United States. All of the devices listed on the right, and the information sources the devices operate through, are called "high-tech media." The use of high-tech media is now how things are done—how business is conducted, as well as how we go about interacting and communicating with each other on a daily basis.

Every hot-button issue facing the nation and/or the world—from abortion to health care to foreign political revolutions—are quickly reported on and openly discussed via local television and radio, and social media sources (i.e., Twitter, Facebook, Linked In, Yahoo! and Google News). Citizens all over the world freely speak out and have a voice in all types of worldwide matters. A single person's impression of a single event is frequently shared with millions of other persons; it can be a picture or an article or a simple tweet... opinions are shared as if they were facts.

Christians have to question what God thinks of all of this.

No wonder what He thinks...because the scriptures provide the insight as to what the use of this marvelous technology truly means to God. Christians have to ask themselves: How do we feel about all of this? Is it harmful or at least potentially harmful? Is there some way it can be used to advance the cause of Christ? **The WordArtists™** believe they have the answer.

The Far-Reaching Arm of Media

Just as the corner store morphed into Walmarts, high-tech media has morphed into its own culture. Whether young or old, male or female, rich or poor, American citizens or not—the majority of people have become depend upon high-tech media devices.



**HD TVs, camcorders,
XM radios,
E-Commerce
websites,
CDs/ DVDs,
DVR players,
Tibo recorders,
hand-held tablets,
mobile /cell phones,
holograms, internet
news, podcasts
and YouTube TV
shows.**

The distinction should be made that some technology is progressive and very much an important aid to society, however, others are not. For example, bi-lateral ultrasounds that allow visual scans of human organs and video input that can be seen in the remotest parts of the world, are very helpful devices. Some high-tech devices are not necessary, but are popular despite their costs: for example, seventy-foot wide high-definition television sets with 3-D capabilities which also allow the viewing of internet connections or lap-top computers that weigh less than a pound but has a trillion bytes of hard disk space.

There are some analysis who say President Barak Obama won election to the highest office in the land through his campaign's use of **social media** not by hitting the campaign trail. Seventy percent of Americans self-report being chiefly social media communicators, meaning that they would rather talk via cell phones or be texted to as their main form of communicating with others. Many, many Americans no longer make grueling road trips to gather around Grandma's dining room table at Thanksgiving. They can eat at the restaurant of their choice, as they share the day with other relatives via **Skype** or **Facetime** or some other video chat software.

Hi-Tech media allows us to accomplish our daily living or business tasks faster and with greater ease. In fact, most devices are no longer considered luxuries or optional gadgets because these tools (and toys) allow us to participate in the convenience-driven way things are done in today's fast-paced society.

The Case for Media

More than a tool to assist with getting things done, today's media is an **opinion leader**. People think they know things about other people based on sound bites from the news. The stories and circumstances of lives are decided by forces outside of the story—largely due to the use of media. A change in the narrative, the establishment of a platform, the giving of a voice, can be easily and quickly accomplished through media. Far too many times in recent years Americans have tried legal cases, judged political debates, and expounded on the fairness of law in *the court of public opinion*... all accomplished through the media before the attorneys try the case or the jury renders its verdict.

The technologies producing and using images (i.e., TVs, DVDs, internet shows) are not only the most popular, they are extremely powerful influencers. The images reproduced and communicated through high-tech media are not only instant (quick, fast), they are *long lasting*. Images and reports can be maintained and shown repeatedly, as in the case of high profile news coverage and political ads and television commercials. The images and reports are believable and accepted as facts because viewers are able to “see for themselves” almost as soon as the event occurred. As a result, technology has been developed into specific media (software applications) that facilitates the mobile transmission of information and images (pictures): *Twitter, iPhone, Smart phones, Instagram's, YouTube* and more. This type of media is called **social media**, and because it is **mobile**, information and images can be sent from anywhere to almost anywhere at any time of the day.

While media is an influencer of people, it cannot immediately be assumed that this influence is for the good—always. Sometimes it appears American media is trying hard to become a tool belonging to only a certain group of Americans, mainly those capitalist and corporation businesses seeking and/or selling information (as fast as it can be produced.) The use of media, however, remains a valuable tool to lead, guide, motivate people, and accomplish business transactions—even for the church.

Who Speaks for God?

The major industry within the media culture is broadcasting. It has been described as the fastest growing and most lucrative business in the world. And, it is through broadcasting that high-tech media has been able to penetrate the Christian church, and take Christianity into its culture. There now exists Christian television and Public Broadcasting Stations offering a number of informational and entertaining shows that provide the Christian worldview. Daystar, The Christian Television Network, The Word are but a few of the television stations owned by American Christians featuring news shows, talk shows, along with faith-based movies that rival those shown in public theaters.

Today, thousands of Gospel ministers are using technology to outreach and are reaching more people with a message in a 21-minute broadcast than can be done by traveling around the world for years. Their messages are appearing in downloadable podcasts, eBooks and audio books. Christian books and videos are *not* disappearing along with bookstores and newspaper companies. They are appearing in record number in other formats (i.e., DVDs, eBooks, online subscription newsletters and bibles on cell phones).

A guest on the John Ankerberg television show reported that when traveling to the bush country of Sudan, there in the middle of the arid grassland stood a hut with an antenna-receiver on top. Inside the hut sat a functioning rabbit-ear television set powered by a generator. The village's favorite TV shows were those of Joyce Meyers and Joel Osteen. John Ankerberg, host of the show, said, "Currently, two-point-two (2.2) billion people in 206 countries have the capacity to tune into a broadcast signal (emanating from the USA) that carries the Word of God."

Thanks to the many varied technologies of media, it is now possible to read, hear and *see the Word of God* in many different formats and languages from almost anywhere in the world. While many urban rumors have linked modern technology to "Big Brother" and the "mark of the Beast," one can comfortably credit the technology as being *allowed by God and used for His purposes*. It is true; God did not create the high-level technologies. But He allows them and has used them for His good. Thanks to that special way of His, God has lead His people to use each modern media format to make His Holy Word available. . .and all is working together to fulfill the Great Commission to "go into all the world and preach the Gospel".

What does God really think?

Modern media itself is not a problem—not even to God. There is little negative that can be said about hi-tech media if one thinks of modern media only in terms of the impressiveness of the phenomena of technology, television, movies, video games, computers, cell phones, tablets and a few other more minor devices...all add to the convenience and quality of the daily life we enjoy. However, far too many of the **practices of the media culture** using those devices are in opposition to what God would have man do or the way God wants man to live—and that is an offense to God. It is the way media is used that makes Christian believers recognize it as a force of evil.

Today's media has a powerful capacity. Its impact is powerful enough to out-reach to the whole of planet Earth. With the right people using the media and directing its uses towards positive practices, it is a good thing. But today's media devices are creating images, programs, and events which satan uses to influence the thoughts and perspectives of people concerning standards of good and evil. Once again it must be said--who and how the media is being used is of the utmost important because technology's *powerful outreach capacity is impacting the world*. It not happening at a later time to come...it is happening right now.

Broadcasting as satan's Greatest Tool

Today's use of technological media brings us in touch with cultures beyond our own. Through a PBS documentary on the World Channel we learn what life is like for Jewish Ethiopians. Through digital radio we hear the lovely lyrics of a Japanese lullaby that we later use at a baby shower for the pastor's wife. Far too frequently, however, being put in touch with the information from other cultures is not a good thing.

The evil portrayed in today's modern society comes to us through the secular programming of television, movies, video games, computers, and a few other more minor devices. The new cultures and the information exchanged many times work to empower the struggle between good and evil. Even photographs and drawings can easily be tools of satan uses to present evil concepts and twisted truths, not to mention serve as a means of temptation. Sometimes the media intentionally makes the evil conveniently accessible through the internet (pornography, gambling and occult websites) and sometimes it provides a place of platform for beliefs that go against God's Word (i.e. Gay Rights, strange religions, info on terrorist organizations). Whether or not we agree with the new information or culture, the information is out there...it is there functioning to influence someone—maybe not you—but someone.

The scriptures don't say, but they don't have to...**the world of entertainment**, which is the largest part of the broadcasting industry, is the greatest tool in satan's arsenal for these end times. Video screens on television, computers, or the big screen of movie theaters not only vividly present concepts and viewpoints by vivid and colorful images that are accompanied by the powerful

element of speech. Information that is both seen and heard at the same time is certain to be internalized by the audience. Seeing and hearing information over and over again firmly instills it in the mind. Entertainment is successful with providing its audience with experiences which enter the human mind through two of the human body's "gates": the eye gate and the ear gate.

The high-tech form of electronic and mechanical inventions are able to convey to the people of this world the ideas and concepts of both good and evil in a wide-scale scope never before accomplished, and in a way that the information is quickly and long-lastingly internalized. In the Garden of Eden, a form of twisted truth was presented to a single human being. Today, courtesy of high-tech media, the twisted truth is being presented to the entire world—only faster, and often times represented as fact or freedom of expression.

The significance of speech

While there are many new high-tech gadgets, it is mainly four innovations that have the power to do the work of the enemy and to spread evil. These devices can be separated out from all the others, and recognized for their true value, due to the automaton's ability "to speak". In the 13th chapter of the Book of Revelation, the description of the End Times warns us of the advent of a truly evil presence on Earth. This presence is described as the **Image of the Beast**. The essential elements required in order to recognize the Beast is that it will be man-made and have the ability to speak. The Image of the Beast which is invented by the people of earth, has a singular qualification which separates it from most forms of photography and drawings. In Revelation 13 we see that the two qualities of this Beast are that it is both presented as an image, and also that it speaks. Televisions, movies, computers and video games have this quality of construction.

The image of the Beast is a tool which was not created by satan directly. Revelation 13 clearly explains that it is the people of the earth who create the image, and that this image speaks. Television and movies are the main forms of devices which mankind has created in this world which have the quality of speech. Television and movies have graphic images, and they also have the ability to convey the spoken word.

Initially, all images of mankind were created without the ability to convey speech. The first moving graphic images which could also speak were called the "talkies." When the first talking movies came out, people flocked to the movie houses for this *new form of entertainment*. Of course, the eventual inventions of technology caused this form of speaking imagery to evolve into our current day forms of television, movies, and computer graphics. It is used everywhere... from the classroom to the Sunday School to the halls on Capital Hill in Washington D.C.

The WordArtists™ Response

The Bible is clear in its presentation about the facts of what happened in the Garden when Eve was deceived with lies. A thoughtful study of the account shows that the destruction of her understanding of the truth was responsible for weakening her resolve. It is no different for us today. It is the lies of Satan, lies that enter into man's heart through the gates, which erode mankind's understanding of truth. Through seeing and listening to the lies, doubt is introduced into the true word of God.

But God—as always, God has not left us without hope. Real hope. God has raised up the Church...Christians have the ability to make sure the right people use the available high-technology, and to use it in a way that will *make God smile*. The Body of Christ, some 2.5 billion people known as the Church, has many members; members with the skill and know-how to establish the Christian perspective as a world viewpoint and to compete with the world take-over the enemy has launched through the entertainment industry.

America's media culture is in great conflict, with that conflict including Christian television. Most people think the culture war exist only between public secular television and paid TV (which can host whatever it wants) as they battle for ratings. But there is also the great disconnect occurring within Christian television that has shown itself to be a "silent" battleground. Christian television isn't producing shows that engage people in following Jesus. The current line-up of television evangelism shows mainly provide opportunities for people to follow the mega churches' leaders and prosperity teaching; with the apparent trend being to feature the church leaders' family as a singing group...with commercials added in to sell the family's music CDs or the leader's latest book.

In an August 19, 2013 TCT News reported it was said that Rick Santorum, without sacrificing his position in government, has turned his focus to the movie industry in an effort to help sustain the United States as a culture that embraces Judeo-Christian values. Santorum is quoted as saying, "We have to engage as much as the other side." He and other supporters have established Echolight Movies to provide more Christian bible-based movie entertainment.

Movies like the Chronicles of Nardia remind us of God's presence in the daily affairs of the world. Recently, March 2014, the movie Son of God was released. Two weeks later it was declared a box office hit and the media began to analyze why. They decided the movie was the

Gallup 2014 Annual

≠ Values & Belief Poll

As every May since 2001, this poll was conducted by telephone on a random sample of 1,028 adults in all 50 states plus the District of Columbia.

75% of Americans think the Bible is the word of God.

50% of Americans are Protestants.

28% of Americans say the Bible should be taken literally.

47% believe the Bible is inspired by God but is open to interpretation.

21% says the Bible is an ancient book of fables, legends, history and moral precepts recorded by man.

42% of Americans are creationists.

58% say Gay and Lesbian relationships are morally acceptable. (Up 18% from 40 percent in 2001.)

70% of Americans are pro-choice, believing the matter of abortion is between a woman and God.

“new” Jesus movie. In 1974, a movie was produced about the life of Jesus Christ, a movie that holds the highest grossing record of all movies of all time—yet is seldom spoken of as such. The late 60’s and early 70’s America went through what some have termed the Jesus Movement: there were not only movies, but plays and radio shows, in addition to print books...all about the Lord.

Written Word’s WordArtists™ understand that in this day and age of animation, if spreading the good news of the Gospel is to mean anything to today’s youth (the Global Millennium) or to those people who have yet to come to know Jesus, it will have to be done through the broadcasting technology and social media. **WordArtists** assert that this generation must see what is being taught to them. It must be modeled. Broadcasting, social media and community theater provide venues through which Christians can compete with the negative forces, and put memorable Godly images into the minds of innocent or the non-believer. Our representation will make it easier to accept the teachings of Jesus Christ.

And so—**WordArtists** work to make sure the images children, youth and those searching for answers see are the kind of images the Lord wants them to see. Drama, film, music and Christian worshipper leaders are involved in the battle to lead souls to Christ through the use of high-tech media.

The Case for Christian Drama

If we want to see something different on the TV or at the movies or in the other forms of media (internet news, paid TV), we have to support the something different and use our voice to promote it.

Written Word’s Dazzle Christian Drama training prepares people of all ages (children, pre-teens, teens and adults) to perform on stage or in videos and film, and does so while placing Christ’s standards and message at the center of training. An often overlooked positive outcome of drama training is that it is an effective strategy for attracting new members—and their families—to church where the relationship-building process can begin.

Written Word’s Creative Cluster Community provides guidance, collaboration opportunities, and support to emerging and established individuals seeking training as Christian writers, Gospel music songwriters, drama and/or speaking ministries, actors and playwrights. The Creative Clusters serve as incubators for literary endeavors where new ideas can be stimulated and nurtured among a cross-section of talented like-minded Christians.

In conclusion—**WordArtists** believe these skills have the ability to disrupt the wiles of the enemy. Technology and talent are weapons of warfare, instruments of good. They can be effectively used to strike fear in the enemy because they work to displace his favorite weapon—discouragement. They provide the Holy Spirit with an opportunity to move in a person’s life, to give renewed energy (life), and to minister to the person. These instruments allow God to show up.