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The Gospel and Mass Communication

MARTIN E. MARTY

The gospel reaches men in the context of community, and it shapes community. It takes the form of a mission which aims at reconciliation with God (II Cor. 5:18 ff.), at forgiveness of sins and abolition of godlessness. But salvation, *sotéria*, must also be understood as *shalom* in the Old Testament sense. This does not mean merely salvation of the soul, individual rescue from the evil world, comfort for the troubled conscience, but also the realization of the eschatological *hope of justice*, the *humanizing* of man, the *socializing* of humanity, *peace* for all creation.¹

The gospel and its mission are effected in a world which they do not have to themselves. Others also build community by offering *sotéria* and *shalóm*. In our time the mass communicators are decisive, and those who care both for gospel and world have to come to some sort of understanding of communication.

I

The gospel reaches men "in the context of community." In the Large Catechism Luther speaks of the social character of the salvation-reality. The Holy Spirit *first* leads us into his holy community, placing us upon the bosom of the church, where he preaches to us and brings us to Christ. . . . He has a unique community

¹ Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope: On the Ground and the Implications of a Christian Eschatology*, trans. James W. Leitch (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), p. 329.

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in the world. It is the mother that begets and bears every Christian through the Word of God. . . . I was brought to it by the Holy Spirit and incorporated into it through the fact that I have heard and still hear God's Word, which is the first step in entering it. . . . For this purpose he has appointed a community on earth, through which he speaks and does all his work.²

The context of community means, then, that God expresses His promises in part by creating a people where there had been no people. The gospel comes to men in the recall of the experience of an ancient people, in the flow of a traditional people, and in the promise of an eschatological "New People." Scripture and tradition were born in the community and are shaped by people even as they shape people.

Such a view of the gospel, community, and communication-implications accords with views of man which see all his experience as being social. Primary in this understanding is communication by words, signs, gestures, images, symbols, acts, and events. These are non-sense, they do not communicate if there is not social experience. Society has no memory; it cannot, like the individual, "stop to think," so it consults custodians of the tradition or Scriptures. It lives in the present through interaction of persons and in response to symbols. It moves toward the future in the light of promise, a promise that is intel-

² Theodore G. Tappert, ed. *The Book of Concord* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), pp. 415—19. Italics mine.

ligible only through social reality, through community. No words, language, images, or models come to people without conditioning based on past social interaction. The church knows this, and communicators know this, but thought on how the two relate is still in a primitive stage.

The church does not have all communication to itself. None of its words are exempt from coloration by experience outside the ecclesia. Its language is tainted and enriched by the language mass communicators use. The social world, then, includes a pluralism of communities; in the modern world many have come to conceive of the complex of the social world as fundamentally secular-worldly; the church represents in the present, in that case, only a subcommunity, a partial shaping element.

The mass communicator knows that man lives in a world of symbols. Reality is organized for the viewer of television through a disciplined set of signals having to do with basic needs. He would be maddened in a world of flux if a sort of pre-fabricated world were not presented him in the form of celebrities, ritual acts (like half time during televised football games), ministering to his necessities through brand names, and stylized codes of violence and goodness.

We cannot picture a man making up his mind, "starting from scratch," as it were, whenever he confronts the media and their signals. He is already partially shaped by society when he does so. Thomas Luckmann, relying on Emile Durkheim's picture of *homo duplex* and George Herbert Mead's theory of the social origin of self, reminds us:

Whereas the individual had been generally viewed as something that is in-

dubitably given, combining with others to form "society" — the explanatory principle for that combination being contract, power, social "instinct" and so forth — both Durkheim and Mead posit society as given, either as "fact" or "process," and find in it the necessary condition for individuation and the emergence of Self, respectively.³

What is posited as a theory of social order by Durkheim, Mead, and Luckmann is stated as a fact of Christian experience by the apostles and by Luther. If man is shaped by community, if gospel comes in context of community, if Christians and other communicators compete in and for community, then it is important to understand something of the ways in which the symbols of social life and salvation in church or world are communicated.

Man creates or responds to significant symbols; these create the order he needs. Thus the pericopes of the church year, the propers of the liturgy, the stylized acts of Christian ritual, and even the formalities of the preaching act help provide symbolic order, the organization of flux, of the random and the haphazard which threaten man. He experiences acceptance, faces doubt, overcomes threat through symbolic presentation of reality. On the highest level

every hierarchy of values, ranks, principles, or roles reaches an "ultimate" legitimation in some kind of "god-term." These god-terms are expressed in religious sub-communities. In religion we do not simply pray, we pray in certain images of social order ("Our Father which are in heaven . . .").

³ Thomas Luckmann, *The Invisible Religion*. (New York: Macmillan, 1967), p. 19.

It is important not to confuse various symbolic languages. "They" stands for the whole community of which mass communicators and Christians in search of the world speak. "We" represents those who manipulate symbols, determine shaping signals, or serve to guard the conscience of the community. The two come together in mass communications, whether of the Christian gospel or good news about a new detergent. In addition to these, another language of the pronoun, "Thou" language, represents the significant other person, intimately known through dialog in face-to-face, person-to-person groups in an area partially exempt from intrusion on the part of mass media of communications.

We-They people use different images of order than do I-Thou people, but both have their ultimate grounding in nature, man, society, language, and God. These images are mediated through ritual, a ritual based on a "belief in a firmly fixed future"; for Christians this is the language of promise associated with the gospel.

Religious communication is a major element in all talk of social integration. Religious groups seek consensus; they call people to a specific interpretation of *sôtéria* and *shalôm*. They promote fellowship among those who share the interpretation. "The social expression of religious experience is always both positive and negative; there is a negative, destructive, disintegrating influence, and there is a positive, cohesive, integrating influence." The same is true of the expression of other communicated appeals, whether these be quasi-religious or by intention secular.⁴

⁴ See Hugh Dalziel Duncan, *Symbols in Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), pp. 66, 72, 93, 98, 100, 116, 124, 217, 221.

These introductory words carry an implied polemic; they appear over against other views. We have stressed that gospel involves both transcendent and immanent matters, over against those who would restrict it either to salvation of souls out of the world or to realizing of God's way in the day-to-day world. Over against those who picture a place for individualism in the Christian scheme we have set the biblical, Lutheran, and theoretical assertions about the priority of sociality and community. ("He first brings us into his holy community.") But having stressed priority of the social, it was important to see that social life is expressed through symbols and, finally, that Christians do not have the realm of social communication to themselves. They have allies and competitors.

In recent years three partly conflicting theories of community, symbol, and communication have come to the fore whenever *mass* media ("We-They," not "I-Thou"; the public, not the intimately interpersonal) are discussed. A canvass of the three will show something of problem and something of possibility in each. None will be presented as demonstrable truth about things as they are; they will be regarded as nothing more than theories, themselves symbols which will help us organize complex realities and come toward understandings that may be helpful in interpreting and spreading the gospel.

II

The first of these is what I will call the catholic interpretation of communications media and their effects. By "catholic" I mean something embracing, affirming, pos-

itive, and substantive about symbolic communication through media as they are and as they are coming to be. This theory is not given first of all to describing the perils of mass media, protesting against their misuse of persons, nature, and history, or calling forth from men prophetic opposition to and rigorous restraint against the media.

Rather, it sees the media as introducers of a whole new age of human history. The best-known prophet who is announcing the age is Marshall McLuhan. Despite the apparently deliberate obscurity and paradoxicality of his expression and despite the hazards of faddishness, it has become difficult to speak about media theory without reference to him. McLuhan has exploited his age's awe in the face of scientific discovery, especially as it affects the technical instruments for mass communication. This school, in effect, asks the public to stop worrying and start enjoying scientific developments. Not only whatever will be, but whatever is, is right because it is inevitable. The logic of technological development allows for no choice but assent.

In the realm of the arts this approach to the media has become critical of criticism; here again, whatever is, is right. Visitors to Montreal's Expo '67 saw a working out of this noncritical approach to media and arts; high brow and low-brow cultures merged. Good art (by conventional standards) was juxtaposed uncritically with "pop" and "op" and other ephemeral expressions. The effect of such an approach is to make room for sensation in the form of "happenings." Those exposed are invited to be devotees in an all-enveloping shrine.

McLuhan himself has denigrated the content of communication to the point of condensing his thought into an unquestioned axiom or aphorism: "The medium is the message." The nature of television or radio, not its substance, shapes culture.

In McLuhan's millennial vision the world has moved into an electronic epoch, one which displaces the life-styles of all earlier eras. The electronic age has brought man, as it were, back to beginnings: he is once again a tribal villager, but now he lives in a "global village." The media (especially television) have given people new sensation, new awareness, new experience: they seek and have found immediacy. This makes them impatient with sequential rational explanation, discursive argument, or linear exposition. In the new age, for example, oldsters may still ask someone who went to church, "What did he say today?" Those under 30, the participants in the millennium, speak for man of the future when they ask, "What happened at church today?"

The McLuhan devotees, therefore, attack the alphabet, print, and books because these were developed along with old Western-rational modes of logical thinking. The Electronic Age "now brings oral and tribal ear-culture to the literate West [whose] electric technology now begins to translate the visual or eye man back into the tribal and oral pattern with its seamless web of kinship and interdependence."⁵

While the reference to this embracing-affirmative view as being catholic should not be understood as relating specifically to Roman Catholicism, it can be noted that

⁵ Quoted in Raymond Rosenthal, ed. *McLuhan: Pro and Con* (New York: Funk and Wagnall, 1968), p. 31.

the kinetic-media prophets often suggest that Protestantism is so bound with obsolete linear-Western thought (and the printed page) that it is doomed. Roman Catholicism, devoted more to ritual happenings, presumably might be more ready to survive. Numbers of leaders in this approach, among them McLuhan himself and Jesuits like Walter Ong and John M. Culkin, are Roman Catholics. Many of them have been influenced by Jesuit Father Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's concept of our planet's evolving a "noosphere," a further development of human consciousness into a "noospheric brain, the organ of collective human thought." Others have seen parallels to Gnosticism, to the Pauline concept of *plérôma*, to the Hegelian world-spirit, or the Plotinian world-soul. Poets of such visions do not invite understanding so much as acceptance of them.

Faddism aside, it is clear that mass communications have reshaped culture in ways so obvious that they do not need further documentation. Whether or not they will lead to a new development in man, they have led to an evolution in culture-consciousness; they have stimulated new ways of thinking, new sensory awareness, and have led to the development of new kinds of community.

In this vision the media offer something positive for those who would propagate the gospel. The one world to which the cosmic Christian vision points is now a practicable possibility. Earth can be seen as a single small spaceship, full of destiny. Technology can be seen as an extension of man's dominion over creation and of the lordship of Christ. God's creatures have been given enjoyment, relief from care, oppor-

tunities to be understanding and to be brothers to each other.

Negatively, the catholic pro-media anti-criticism view is full of hazards for Christians. In a sense it offers community based on what Bonhoeffer called in the theological sphere "cheap grace." There is no standard of admission to the new millennium, the new paradise. The only sin, one assumes, is non-recognition of the McLuhanite approach to understanding or acceptance; but even the resistant and recalcitrant types will succumb eventually because mass media determine all of the lives of all men. This community without standards, without commitments, without disciplines, leads one to ask: "If everything is grace, is anything grace?" It is clear that the media-millennium has brought as many problems for man as it has solved.

Worst of all, the pop approach associated in the media with McLuhan, in criticism with Susan Sontag, and in psychology with Norman O. Brown, who advocates regress to childish "polymorphous perversity" in sexuality and treatment of the body, trivializes the message of the gospel. True, the medium relates closely to the message in the Christian sphere. When the church itself is a corrupt, implausible medium, its message is compromised. But it does have a message which defines, limits, judges, speaks of *krisis*, discriminates, builds community over against false community or noncommunity. People who have built no resistance against the trivializing aspects of mass communications (and especially those who have made an ideology which celebrates the trivial or the non-critical) can hardly be expected to rouse their atrophied decision-making powers to take seriously the response to the message

of judgment and grace, the cost of discipleship.

III

A second interpretation of the world of media can be called the Marxist-protestant vision. Just as the affirmative catholic approach has nothing to do with Roman Catholicism as a churchly reality, so this protestant view is not descriptive of or confined to the Protestant Church. Protestantism is so culturally accommodated that it is as open to the trivializing effect of the medium-is-the-message as any other communion or subgroup of the global village.

Rather, protestant here relates to what Paul Tillich called the "protestant principle of prophetic criticism and revolt" against all human resolution. It is born of a desire to transcend commitments to the present moment, to be wary of confusing image with reality, to be skeptical and suspicious of those constructs on which one depends most himself, even if this be his own nation, church, or family. I have linked this critical, *krisis*-oriented understanding with the word Marxist, not because those who advocate it are members of the communist ecclesia but because a number of critics who do have quasi-Marxist orientations have applied their principle of protest to the way media are supported, directed, and focused in the Western world.

This vision is in many ways a polar opposite to the McLuhan-Catholic-affirmative view of the media. The affirmative view accepts the uncritical, the trivializing aspects of the media world. The protestant vision points out that these trivializing elements are designed by exploitative elites, notably capitalist leaders, to subjugate people or to buy off discontent.

What is meant can be made clear by reference to the American black urban ghettos. Why has there not been more revolution? Why have the millions of American poor not been more organized as a class to express discontent? One major element, though not the only element, has been the ubiquitous television set. It offers to each ghetto family the same Oldsmobiles and fur coats that are offered to exurbanites. It makes promises of the good life and assumes its presence. The media world in a capitalist-commercial-advertising society offers salvation by "buying off discontent." (It does, *pace* McLuhan, help develop some critical standards. We are told that when there is looting during ghetto riots, people know which brand of Scotch, perfume, watch, or color television to loot!)

So far as the middle classes are concerned, elites help them to entrench themselves further. The media, which could serve to bring the reality of a restless, hungry, or despairing world into the living room, ordinarily bring soap-opera salvation, prime-time serials, a blur of music, or soft-edged magazine or newspaper stories. The starving Biafran children have their story told in such a way that the accounts are dispersed with plush advertisements in *Life* or *The New Yorker*. One is subtly reassured that all is all right in the end.

Among the sometimes Marxist and always protestant interpreters of the Western half of the global village are men like Dwight Macdonald in the United States or Christopher Ricks, Raymond Williams, Richard Hoggart, and Brian Wicker in England. Christopher Ricks has spoken up for the message and "proves" his point—

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in ways that McLuhanites have to understand: McLuhan's

indifference to "message" is as stultifying as the old indifference to everything but message. The media, after all, are *both* the subrational or subliminal massage, *and* their contents or programming. One parlor game makes the point: you phone McLuhan "collect," and when he answers the phone you say, "This is the message" and replace the receiver.⁶

The Marxist-protestant spokesmen are not indifferent to media, but they concentrate on the motivations and techniques of those who man them. A group of British Roman Catholic Marxists who issued the famous "Slant" manifesto have been most protestant about the power orientation of media in a commercial society. They advocate a high-quality Christian liturgy as Brian Wicker did in *Culture and Liturgy*,⁷ an art of high standard as the only kind of expression compatible with Christianity, and a sustained criticism of the message which comes over the media as well as of the communicators.

Of course the arts have their particular place in capitalist society, but as an escape from living, not a model for it; they provide a means of relaxation, a harmless entertainment for men whose real concern is with profit. The socialist [on the other hand sees that] the arts express the kind of creative human energy which we want to see actively embodied in the structures and relationships of a whole society; they offer a prototype for feelings and values and kinds of relatedness, as the liturgy does—and like the liturgy they cannot

⁶ Rosenthal, p. 103.

⁷ New York: Sheed and Ward, 1937.

be seen as existing in themselves, but only as transforming forces in a society.⁸

Arts and media are closely connected; film, radio, television, magazines, books, and newspapers mediate most visual and aural (to say nothing of literary) art to most people in the world of mass communications. Therefore one protests against the media in the advertisers' world:

The quality of our common life is shaped to a great extent by the mass-media, which are the official arts of modern industrial society, but we all know that much of the work of these media is trivial, debasing and harmful. It is not enough, however, to campaign for cleaner television: we must recognize the root causes of this cultural trivialisation, and we find them in the capitalistic structure of the mass-media themselves. The media are dominated by capitalist ideology: they are business concerns . . . [they] must reach as large an audience as possible, as quickly as possible, and to do this they appeal deliberately to the lowest common denominator of taste . . . by taking advantage of uneducated taste, they confirm people in their superficial responses and prohibit the growth of any genuine response altogether.⁹

Again:

Christians have a particular interest in the movement toward a cultured society, because critical and imaginative sensitivity is implicit in the whole process of responding to and becoming part of the Christian faith and the liturgy; to be a Christian involves being cultured, in a basic sense of the term, open to all kinds of life and capable of full and critical response.¹⁰

⁸ Adrian Cunningham, Terry Eagleton, et al., *Catholics and the Left* (Springfield, Ill.: Templegate, 1967), p. 33.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

One can arrive at the protestant view on other grounds than those which stress the exploitative and trivializing context of media. He can be merely puritan, rejecting the sensual or time-wasting elements of media. He can use a demonological view, seeing the media as extensions not of man but of the devil. But it is hard to picture one propounding the gospel against the background of judgment with all seriousness without confronting the trivializing, debasing, or dehumanizing potential.

The Christian proclaimer stresses the urgency of life; he must resist whatever leads to atrophy of the critical faculties. He also depicts the *shalôm* which the gospel brings as a realm of the good and the beautiful and thus will advocate something similar to what the "Slant" manifesto authors describe as the culture for Christians and the whole of society.

IV

Many a reader may have found himself agreeing with both the affirmative and the negative, the embracing and the rejecting views. A third option, less well known but to me more convincing, is one which discriminates within the world of the media. It stresses the contexts in which media reach people and defines the aspects of life reached by media. One way of dealing with the double-sidedness of the media is to take the bifocal view described by William Stephenson in *The Play Theory of Mass Communication*.¹¹

Stephenson asks us to note two areas of life. One is a community built on "social control." It is the area of work, pain, culture building, involvement. It seeks to pro-

duce high-intensity response, to develop consensus, shared vision, a kind of conformity, a creed. It is most effective in producing men's inner belief systems since it deals with ego-enhancing or ego-threatening worlds. The mass media have limited effectiveness in the area of social control. One's root experiences, his childhood traumas and joys, his family life, intimate and interpersonal zones of communication are determinative. To take but one example: A child may watch 50 television dramas which describe divorce in non-disapproving terms. They will all be cancelled in his mind if suddenly the potential of divorce between his parents threatens his ego and its security. Religion, for the most part, derives from and supports the area of "social control."

Another area, which Stephenson describes as one of "convergent selectivity" (I would say, it ministers to an ad hoc, random, pick-up-and-drop congregation), is the less intimate community built by mass communications. Here not the ego but the self is involved; not inner belief systems but manners, tastes, opinions, notions, and fads emerge. This orbit has to do more with play, pleasure, casual relations; it is content without a high degree of consensus and asks for lower levels of response.

A television advertiser asks for viewers of a football game but does not and dare not solicit support for one side. He may be part of a network which gives a graveyard hour to "public service time" and allows for religion on it, but he does not and cannot advocate one religion over another. He asks allegiance to a pantheon of celebrities, but he must be content to see his congregation being fickle about these

¹¹ Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1966.

ephemeral heroes; he is. The media, in short, dominate in this "outer zone" of convergent selectivity.

Step on an elevator any morning and one will find a community or a congregation shaped by last night's newspaper or television program. The elevator conductor, the charwoman, the idea man, and the corporation executive are reduced to equal competence as they comment on the world of professional football players, the morals of the jet set, the competence of Frank Sinatra, the fashions of Barbra Streisand. The Marxists will fume and the protestants will protest at the level of community, but they can see that some kind of community has been created by people who select and converge on certain media offerings. It is easy to see that the modern city would be more brutal and less humane if even this measure of psychic intercourse were not generated.

Stephenson's discriminating and bifocal vision is supported in countless empirical studies. Why have the messages of the media or the media-as-message not simply overwhelmed all men? Since they usually proclaim "another gospel," why have not all succumbed? How are so many able to live in both realms, in range of both gospels, yet without denying the Christian message? For this I like to invoke John "Crosby's Law," which contends that

the more important the subject is, the less influence the guy with the mike has. In matters of the most profound importance to the individual — say, religion — I doubt that the Murrows, or Godfreys, the Winchells or anyone else could sway a single soul a single inch.¹²

¹² Joseph T. Klapper, *The Effects of Mass Communication* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1960), p. 45. See Chapter ii, "Reinforcement,

The studies have shown that the media are better at confirming than converting in areas of ego control. This fact, frustrating to radio evangelists and television apologists for one or another of the religious visions, is comforting to those who minister to individuals and congregations. They know that the media tend more to reinforce existing views than to convert "from scratch," all things being equal. Media deal with opinions, attitudes, notions, fashions, manners more than they do with the profoundest beliefs, the *Gestalt* of grace. Conversion can occur in the midst of a revolution, when "everything is up for grabs."

Illustrations abound. In 1968 the Democratic Convention at Chicago was upstaged on television by what has been described as the revolt of the discontented or the police riot. Picture a living-room situation: those who were already converted to "law and order," a repressive society, a position which allows for little or no dissent, which found beards repulsive and the generation gap threatening, found their view reinforced by the television portrayals of police action. Those who were already mistrustful of police (ghetto residents, college rebels), those who were in their deepest ego involvements against "the establishment" — one thinks of young men facing draft and death in a war they believe to be pointless or immoral — found their prior views confirmed and reinforced by what they saw on the media. Those converted to a political figure who brings out visceral responses (say, George Wallace, Ronald Reagan, or Stokely Car-

Minor Change, and Related Phenomena," for substantiation and theoretical formulation of this point of view.

michael) will be more drawn to any of these after media exposure in the same living room with "anti" people who are more anti after the confrontation.

Not that there cannot be brainwash, big lie, wearing down, or mutational conversion. We are speaking of ordinary use of media in ordinary circumstances.

We have canvassed three views. The first tends to celebrate the media, to minimize the message. The second will tend to criticize the media, to maximize the message, and to concentrate on the context. The third discriminates and notes the areas in which media have great impact as well as those where they have minor effect.

V

The Christian lives in a world wherein the gifts of the mass media ought to be obvious. He has had hours of innocent enjoyment, has been able to become aware of a world of despair and hope, has become a richer, fuller person. He can interpret the media as gifts of God and can celebrate their achievements and effects. He also lives in a world wherein the curses of the mass media ought also to be obvious. He has faced the banality, tawdriness, and manipulation of the media; he has seen how they can obscure a world of need and portray a world of illusion and dehumanizing fantasy. He can hardly say no to either the celebrative or the critical approaches.

There are good reasons for finding the discriminating bifocal vision more fruitful for understanding and employing media. I will be programmatic about the implications of this third interpretation.

The Christian can improve "the game" being played by the media. In Christian

language, play areas of life are also serious, and he will take part in developing a better audience for better media. Church bulletins advise their members of the hours of banal and inferior religious radio or television shows or books and magazine articles. They could do a greater service by helping stimulate an audience for better "secular" programming or publishing. Otherwise they contribute to the problem, not the solution. Ministers may help reduce the potential for discrimination, definition, and decision—and then get up in the pulpit and ask people whose critical faculties are dead to decide in the affairs of the Kingdom and the gospel. It cannot be pulled off psychologically.

Christians, knowing that media do deal with images for the formation of opinions, can work to improve the image of the church. This does not mean that they need slick and glib public relations to promote a phony and hypocritical image. They do have to work for reform of the church so that when the media are drawn to call attention to it the true purposes of the church stand out.

They can learn from the media where the areas of despair and hope are located; they can observe from gifted and well-supported analysts what are the areas to which Christians also must minister.

Christians can "get there first" if they are good at developing personal and familial life, in converting and forming belief, ego, interpersonality. Joseph Goebbels, a man who knew how to use the media to negative effect, once said, "Whoever says the first word to the world is always right." He knew that communication is effective in forming opinion on new issues in new

contexts and that the early-expressed view may tend to occupy the high ground against later challenges. Christians will want to speak the first word to the person — in more intimate congregations and communities — to establish a high ground against the brainwashings of the Goebbelses or the blandishments of establishments in the advertising world. The quality of the person and the community prior to and apart from mass communications are of primary concern.

In stressing the confirming-not-convert-

ing viewpoint, I am well aware that the spiritual life can be nicked-and-dimed to death, that beliefs can die the death of a thousand notional or attitudinal qualifications. It is equally true that a thousand positive images can help lead to ego change and conversion. Therefore the church that has such a stake in interpreting the world of media so that it can minister to persons and form community will be alert to the task of studying symbols of communication so that it can also employ them well.