

Tv evangelism



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The paper "Rise of Televangelism Rise and its Influence" is a brilliant example of an essay on religion and theology. Spiritual leaders have explored several different options in trying to reach out to the world and spread the gospel to people spread across geographical, social and political boundaries. One common option used by spiritual leaders and more so evangelists is through television evangelism. Televangelism refers to any religious message transmitted through any recent form of communication but describes more specifically television and radio ministries. This paper will discuss the development of televangelism and factors that have led to its rising popularity across the world. Rise of Televangelism Rise and its Influence

Television evangelism, also known as televangelism, began as an unusual phenomenon in the United States of America. The invention of TV evangelism ushered a new age in the 1950s of evangelicalism which was known as the self-proclaimed electronic church. A Roman Catholic archbishop, Fulton Sheen, was the pioneer television preacher and he successfully started televangelism in 1951. Fulton would win many awards for his program which was first aired in 1951 and featured dominantly on TV until the 1960s. Later, Oral Robert, another pioneer of the television evangelism, was able to reach 80% of the potential television evangelism audience in 1957, which was the largest show of the time.

The number of TV stations in the US had reached 48 by 1948 and media was widely deregulated by a government with regard to featuring spiritual programs in public media. Interest in televangelism grew so much that by 1955, approximately two-thirds of households in the nation had televisions. These statistics continued to rise up to a point ninety-nine percent of the

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total households in the country possessed at least a TV; some households had two or even more.

With time the new phenomenon began to spread to distant places as a direct result of the large number of people that we're able to buy the television set. Also, more people joined in the pool of those who volunteered to provide the necessary funding for the programs. This powerful medium drew the attention of the people soon after the Second World War.

Continued Expansion

The internationalization and globalization of broadcasting and communication networks have made it possible for televangelists to capture a wider audience. Two channels that have featured prominently in this respect include the God channel and the Trinity Broadcasting Networks. In Brazil and many African countries, domestic televangelism is on the rise. In many cases, the televangelists also served as ministers or pastors in their private churches with a large number of followers being their TV audiences although others exclusively worked virtually.

The messages preached have mainly been appealing, spiritually uplifting and emotionally touching to a point of capturing a fast-growing audience. In fact, television evangelists such as Oral Roberts among others attracted millions upon millions of viewers who sent cheques and electronic money transfers to fund their ministries.

Yet another factor that drew people to participate as audiences to televangelists was their ability to perform miracles and preternatural acts. For example, the miracle of healing drew the sick while prayers for financial breakthroughs were appealing to those in financial distress. In the long run, the viewers supported the ministry in almost every endeavor; from

amusement parks to far-flung missionary services. However, few evangelists managed to move from radio to television broadcasting since television evangelism was notably more expensive and demanding in the earlier days.

Advantages of Television Evangelism

Though many televangelists' claims of about their audiences have sometimes been inflated, televangelists have attracted enough viewers. The huge audience has contributed to their building of comfortable niches that have significantly influenced the views of society on religion much as their teachings impacted people's interpretations of the bible and their views on religious matters⁴.

Even though the messages preached sometimes need crucial assessment to pass the viability test, still a large number of people have come to know of the existence of the word of God and the need to follow Christianity.

Television evangelism has in this respect helped to spread the gospel to many people. The effect of televangelism has been felt even in marginalized areas where preaching Christianity seemed almost impossible.

Disadvantages of Televangelism

Certain events which began in 1987 have posed a serious threat to televangelism. For instance, it was revealed that renowned televangelist Jim Bakker's engaged in adultery, homosexuality and financial irregularities⁵.

This has greatly affected the ability of televangelists to maintain the comfortable niche they previously cut as they are under constant watch today than ever. In some cases, viewers have lost faith in God and their religious beliefs as a direct result of the negative characters of some evangelists. Many evangelists have been accused of enriching themselves at the expense of their flock⁶.

Yet again there are those who may not be able to interpret the message being preached by looking at the television. That is, they cannot integrate mental discussion with dialogue and images and therefore just look at the images. There are many people, especially in poor countries, who cannot be reached through televangelism because they cannot afford television sets or have no access to electric power. This significantly limits their reach to a wider audience.

In addition, television evangelism proves a bit more difficult for the unqualified evangelicals to venture into since the costs were extremely high and their ministerial styles could not fit well to this new medium.

Conclusion

Television evangelism has been the main way of spreading the gospel to the masses. Ever since it was first practiced, the practice has continued to grow with people from different countries enjoying sermons in the comfort of their homes, and offices. While the practice has several advantages, it is similarly associated with numerous disadvantages.