

TANGAZA COLLEGE
CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA

FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

**VIDEO INFLUENCE ON YOUTH CULTURE AND MORALITY:
A PRELIMINARY STUDY IN KIBERA SLUM OF NAIROBI.**

An Essay Submitted In Partial Fulfilment Of the Requirements for the Bachelor
of arts in Religious Studies

BY

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this is my original work. It has not been submitted to any College or University for academic credit. All the information from different sources has been duly acknowledged.

Student

Signature Jeffrey Atika
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Date 7/02/2001

This work has been presented for examination with my approval as the Supervisor

Supervisor

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Sr. Paola Moggi, CMS.

Date 7 / 02 / 2001

DEDICATION

To all the young people in Nairobi, all pastoral youth ministers, my parents and brothers and sisters, my Dominican brothers and Sr. Paola Moggi who sacrificed a lot to seeing me through this work.

Acknowledgment

I would like to express my profound gratitude to God, my parents, teachers, benefactors and all the people who have been instrumental to making this Essay a reality. I am very grateful for the help and support and humble time of work which I received from my brothers at St. Dominic's House. I wish to thank my student master, Fr. Kieran Healy, OP who helped me a lot with proofreading, criticism and several clarifications. I also wish to thank Fr. Edd Gorman, OP, Fr. Maurice Schepers, OP, Fr. Emmanuel Bertrand, OP and Fr. Dominic Izzo, OP. They also supported me and helped me with proofreading and corrections.

Sr. Paola Moggi, a lecturer and the head of Social Communication Department at Tangaza College supervised me in putting the whole work together. I am very grateful for all her continual moral support and encouragement. I am also very grateful for the help I received from Mrs. Immacolata Nyaga, a parishioner from Guadalupe Church. She helped me with the distribution of the questionnaires. Also, she introduced me to the Parish Priest of Guadalupe Parish the first time I was planning to begin this work. Thanks to Mrs. Nyaga and her family.

I also owe many thanks to Fr. Romano of Guadalupe Church and Fr. Roberto of Christ the King Church. Thanks also to the Catechists. They introduced me to their various Small Christian Communities where I visited. Thanks also to Nobert Lesa of Don Bosco, Maurice Awity of Consolata Missionaries, Wilfred of the Society of African Missions, Virginia Mbugua and Caroline Wanjiku.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION: MASS MEDIA AND SOCIETY

“There has been worldwide revolution in the perception of moral values in recent years, involving profound changes in the way people think and act. The communication media have played, and continue to play a major role in this process of individual and social change as they introduce and reflect new attitudes and lifestyles . . . Some of this change has been for the better . . . Many . . . , however, have been for worse.”¹

The positive influence of mass media on society

Researchers on the mass media have found that, since they reach many people scattered in different places of the society, they are used to spread and support propaganda of democratic and social reform movements, to promote national and world unity, to teach, and to pass on information to people. For example, “safe sex campaigns, promoted by AIDS crisis have used the mass media to discourage promiscuity, unprotected intercourse and high risk sexual practices.”² Also, the communication media are used positively for social entertainment of people in the society. They bring people together in the society during social time. Hence, “The mass media can enrich society by disseminating the best of human creativity, including great literature, music and art.”³ They also can be a source of awareness of history and of the current affairs.

¹ Pontifical Council for Social Communications, “Pornography and Violence in the Communications Media: A Pastoral Response,” May, 7, 1989 in Church and Social Communication: Basic Documents, 2nd Edition, ed. by Frans-Josef Eilers, (Manila: Logos Publications, 1997), p.140.

² John Vivian, The Media of Mass Communication, Fourth edition, (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1991), p. 447.

³ Ibid., p 417

The negative influence of mass media on society

Negatively, according to researchers, mass media spread the dominant ideology. For example, they express and support uncritically the values of western way of life. In this perspective, according to researchers, mass media may contribute to lack of attachment to one's community and cultural values. They replace human culture with mass culture in the society. "Indeed, we may speak of a "new culture" created by modern communications, which affects everyone, particularly the younger generation, and is itself largely the result of technological advances which have created "new ways of communicating with new languages, new techniques and a new psychology" (cf. *Redemptoris Missio*, 37)."⁴ According to McQuail, "... it is the particular ideas and values conveyed by the media which are seen as the primary causes of social change."⁵ From this point of view, mass media may manipulate people negatively by injecting their messages into the audience so that the audience may do what the media wants to be done. This "... influence is thought to work through individual motivations and actions."⁶ Therefore, in some cases, the "... media messages directly and measurably affect people's behavior."⁷ They may be manipulative and oppressive of people's behavior and knowledge.

⁴ John Paul II, "Videocassettes and Audiocassettes in the Formation of Culture and of Conscience," 1993 in Church and Social Communication: Basic Documents, 2nd Edition, ed, by Frans-Josef Eilers, (Manila: Logos Publications, 1997) p. 298.

⁵ Denis McQuail, Mass Communication Theory Introduction, Third Edition, (London: Sage Publications, 1983), p. 62.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Shirley Biagi, Media Impact: An Introduction To Mass Media, (Belmont, CA, USA: Wadsworth Publishing, Co, 1999), p. 271.

Statement Problem

As regards the negative influence of mass media on culture and behavior in Nairobi, “the most gullible group is the youth”⁸ because, they are looking for identity and role models in life. As a result, today in Nairobi City, some young people are torn between two competing cultures: Kenyan and Western. A clear evidence of this may be found in the manner of clothing, styles of walking and ways of speaking. It is startling that some young people in Nairobi cannot speak convincingly in either Swahili, the national language, or in their native languages. If you ask some about their native languages, the simplest answer you may get is “We don’t know it quite well.” Instead, they speak a mixture of English and Swahili. In addition to this complexity of language, today some teenagers in Nairobi want to speak as if they were born in America or Europe.

Besides language, bouncing styles of walking are becoming common on the streets as a new fashion among some Nairobi youth. You meet with young women on the streets, some are wearing miniskirts or tight trousers, and others are almost half naked. “In fact, one can obviously see goose bumps all over the body . . . ”⁹ You meet with young men, some put on earrings and even they braid their hair like women.

⁸ Aloys O. Ojore, Problems of the Youth in Africa: Implication for Religious Vocation, (Nairobi: Foto Form Ltd, 2000), p 72.

⁹ Ibid., p. 20.

Above all, some “Youth are not willing to listen to anybody or to accept advice from their elders in the society. They feel that they know better than their parents, so they do whatever they like.”¹⁰ “The identity crisis can be said to be the cause of practically all the problems affecting the youth. The rebellion and disobedience against authority, and in particular their parents, is not so much to defy them but a search for their own identity and autonomy.”¹¹ For example, today some of the young people in Nairobi want to be left free to go to discos at night to enjoy music and conversation with their friends. Others want to use drugs. Also, criminal and sexual activities such as rape and incest inflicted upon some of the young people in Nairobi are no longer news.

In addition, some teenagers in Nairobi are increasingly becoming involved in abortion, prostitution, mugging, smuggling and car hijacking. Such behavior reveals that moral and some good traditional African values have lost their influence on some of the teenagers living in Nairobi City. As Ojore writes, “Unrealistic self perception and confusion of identity may include not only rebellions, but also deviant, delinquent and self-destructive tendencies.”¹²

Working Hypothesis, Aim And Why The Topic

Our working hypothesis is that some of the delinquent and self-destructive tendencies among some of the young people in Nairobi may be as a result of mass media revelations because, “Too often, we

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 18.

¹¹ Adam K. A Chepkwony, “The Youth: A Challenge To The Church In Africa Today.” AFER 38 (1996): 27.

¹² Aloys O. Ojore, op. cit., p.18.

have to watch social communications used to contradict or corrupt the fundamental values of human life.”¹³ Thus, the major aim of this study is to answer two questions:

- i. How does the use of one of the media, namely, videos, influence culture and moral behavior of some young people today?
- ii. How can pastoral youth ministers use videos effectively to develop moral awareness in young people and to nurse self esteem and appreciation of African culture?

We are interested in answering this last question because, “...the question confronting the Church today is not any longer whether the man on the street can grasp a religious message, but on how to employ the communication media so as to let him have the full impact of the gospel message.”¹⁴

Our inspiration for this topic Video influence on youth culture and moral behavior was out of personal experience in Nairobi today. In some of our encounters with young people we got some sense that some have lost the appreciation of moral values and African culture. Our assumption has been that some of the loss may be due to media influence. Therefore, we picked the topic hoping that it is very practical and addressing a situation that is relevant and current.

¹³ United States Catholic Conference, Communications: A Pastoral Instruction on the Media, Public Opinion and Human Progress, (Washington, D.C: 1971), p. 2.

¹⁴ John Paul II, “Religion in the Mass Media,” 1989 in Church and Social Communication. Basic Documents, 2nd Edition, ed, by Frans-Josef Eilers, (Manila: Logos Publications, 1997), p 289.

Research Methodology

To provide adequate answers to our two questions, we have done a preliminary study focusing on Kibera Slum of Nairobi City which is an area of social crises, and where people from various cultural backgrounds in Kenya are living.

In our research method, we are using the term youth or young people to encompass people between ages 12-25 years because it is the age when most young people are still searching for their identity in life, and are easily influenced by media revelations because they want to identify themselves with what they get from the mass media. The Pontifical Council for Social Communications has observed that, "Frequent exposure to violence in the media can be confusing to children who may not be able to distinguish readily between fantasy and reality. At a later stage, violence in the media can condition impressionable persons, especially those who are young to regard this as normal and acceptable behavior suitable for imitation."¹⁵

We found out that Kibera slum is too big for us to carry out a random research in our short period of time. Consequently, we have only conducted a research with a convenience sampling through Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Adams Arcade and Christ the King Parish in Laini Saba. We have administered a questionnaire only to Catholic youth from the two parishes since our pastoral concern focuses mainly on them.

¹⁵ Pontifical Council For Social Communications, "Pornography and violence in the Communications Media A Pastoral Response, "May 7 1989 in Church and Social Communications: Basic Documents, 2nd Edition, ed, by Frans-Josef Eilers, (Manila:Logos Publications, 1997), p. 142.

In addition to the questionnaire we also obtained some of the information through oral interviews. We have interviewed some teenagers from the Parishes. We have also conducted some interviews with the pastors and catechists. Through visits to some Small Christian Communities, we also conducted interviews with some parents, business people and some video show kiosk owners. Outside of Kibera, we have also conducted interviews with Fr. Quinn of Ukweli videos productions and with some of the staff members. We taped all our interviews.

We made a written questionnaire comprising of thirteen questions which we distributed 100 copies to be answered by Catholic youth from Kibera. We used the Parish youth groups to distribute our questionnaire to Kibera Catholic youth. Our preference for a convenience sampling study was mainly for pastoral concern and focus. In deepening our study, we have used some information from relevant written sources: books, articles from newspapers and magazines, and relevant Church documents.

The Structure of the Essay

Our study is divided into four chapters. The first chapter is a detailed description of Kibera Slum itself: the location, size and population, and the environment and lifestyle. After this detailed description of the site, chapter two describes how videos are used in Kibera. The third chapter is a presentation of both the positive and negative effects of videos on some young people in Kibera. Based on these findings, the fourth chapter suggests various ways in which pastoral youth ministers may effectively use videos in youth ministries to boost moral awareness in Christian youth and to develop their love and appreciation of African culture and self esteem. We are specifically concerned with Christian youth because, they " . . . are called . . . to overcome evil with good (Rom 12:21), . . .

Christians have a “good news” to tell . . . We tell it first by the witness of our lives . . . We are expected to be like a city on a hill, like a lamp on a lamp stand, visible to all, our light shining like a beacon signaling the safe channel to a peaceful haven (Mt 5:13-14).”¹⁶ Finally, in our conclusion, to support our suggestions for the use of videos in youth ministry, we have included the Church’s teaching on the use of mass media.

¹⁶ John Paul II, “The Proclamation of Christ’s Message in the Communications Media,” 1992. in Church and Social Communication: Basic Documents, 2nd Edition, ed, by Frans-Josef Eilers, (Manila Logos Publications, 1997), 296.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0. KIBERA SLUM OF NAIROBI: DESCRIPTION

Introduction

“Kenya is a country with a population of about 33 million people . . . situated in East Africa,”¹⁷ and Nairobi is the capital city with a population of about six million people. “Every day its population has an average increase of 500 people, half of whom are migrants from all over the country.”¹⁸ Some of the migrants work in the city center in government offices or in various business shops which are mostly owned by Asians. Some other people without jobs sell different items like second hand clothes, food stuffs and electronics both on the streets and in open markets. There are also other people who work in different industries in the industrial area. But also, there are many people who are unemployed. Given this situation, Nairobi has experienced a rapid expansion of slum areas and slum population. There are many slums but the main ones are Kawangware, Kangemi, Kibera, Mathare, Korogocho, Kariobangi and Mukuru.

Since the focus of our study is on Kibera Slum, this section describes its location, size and population, environment and lifestyle. The information is based on pertinent documents and on my personal observation.

¹⁷ Kenya Episcopal Conference, Social Communication Commission, “K.C.S Strategic Plan for the year 2000,” (Nairobi, Kenya 2000), p. 1.

¹⁸ Ibid

1.1. The location, size and population of Kibera Slum

Kibera Slum is located in the south eastern sector of the city of Nairobi. It is the largest of all the Nairobi slums. It is in the Kibera / Woodley location of Kibera division. The members of the Kibera Infrastructure Project (KIP) and the Kibera Urban Environmental Sanitation Pilot (KUESP) planning group reported in their 1997 research that: "...Kibera . . . is home to a quarter of Nairobi's population-estimated at about 500,000 people with a physical area of not more than 250 hectares, Kibera has a density of more than 2,000 people per hectare . . ." ¹⁹ It has two sub-locations: Kibera and Woodley. Kibera sub-location is divided into thirteen villages, ten of which are real slums and the remaining four have modern houses and infrastructure. The slum villages are: Makina, Kianda, Gatwikira, Kisumu Ndogo, Kambi Muru, Laini Saba, Silanga, Mashimoni, Mama Okinda, Komreli, Soweto, Lindi and Raila.

1.2. Environment and Lifestyle in Kibera slum

Makina village is the focal point of Kibera sub-location because Kibera law courts, KANU headquarters and the bus stop serving all other villages in Kibera are situated here. The houses are relatively large and well spaced. Some of them are made of mud outside and plastered inside. Most of the rooms are 10 by 10 feet for a family of three to ten children. There are few schools and places of worship. Also, there are many commercial activities such as selling of grains, vegetables from small open air markets, and selling of traditional and modern beer.

¹⁹ KIP / KUESP Preparatory Group, "Draft Proposal Kibera Infrastructure Project: Urban Environmental Sanitation Pilot Project." (Nairobi: 1997), p. 1.

In the other villages such as Gatwikira, Lindi, Silanga and Soweto, houses are temporary and built close to each other. There is sewage flowing all over, and there is heavy drinking of traditional beer. There are many shops and water “kiosks” which are scattered through the villages mainly along the streets. Most of the streets have no electricity and are impassable by vehicles.

Of all the villages, Laini Saba is the biggest village in Kibera. Here the houses are very small with a very dense population. The dominant tribe living there are the Kamba people. These people live about five to eight people in one single room of 10 feet by 8 feet. They are mostly men who have left their families in the rural areas or young migrants who have come to look for jobs. Many commercial activities take place along the railway line where there is an open market. The area is littered with garbage. Most of the houses are made of mud and roofed with either corrugated iron sheets or polyethylene paper. They are squeezed next to each other. In most places garbage is heaped and left to rot around the houses, and human waste sewage is found everywhere on the narrow streets. There are no pit latrines in most places, and where they are available, they are used by many people. The (KIP and KUESP) planning group also made a similar observation that: “Between 50% and 94% of households do not have access to adequate sanitation; most rely on the “wrap and throw” method . . . Latrines are shared by as many as 150 persons . . . ”²⁰ In places where there are no pit latrines, people use open spaces around their small houses.

The majority of the people are unemployed or are simply semi skilled casual workers supplying labor to nearby industries and commercial areas of the city. Most of them cannot afford to pay school fees

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

for their children or even provide for the basic needs of their family. As a result, many young people have dropped out of school and live in great poverty. For example, in many families people eat only one meal a day and in some other families on many days there is no food at all. Immacolata Nyaga has noted that: "The slum child has only one meal in a day . . ." ²¹ As a result, many of the children in Kibera Slum are malnourished. Some of these children run away from their families and go to live on the streets of Nairobi where they live a life of begging. The girls engage in either commercial sex in order to earn a living or they enter into early marriages which after a short time breakdown, and most of these girls begin prostitution. Other youth, who have completed basic education or even colleges but lack employment, get themselves involved in various crimes. Mugging and robbery is common in Kibera. In fact, "the consequence . . . has made many youth to deviate from the normal to the abnormal." ²²

1.3 Conclusion

The context of our study is wide and complex, and there are admittedly many social and environmental factors like urbanization, poverty, drug abuse and addiction, unemployment, insecurity contributing to the moral and cultural crisis among the young people in Kibera. The assumption in this study is that the use of some videos might be one of the factors contributing to the moral and cultural crises among the Kibera youth. Chapter two is based on this assumption.

²¹ Immacolata Nyaga , "The Life Changes of A Slum Child and How Potential He/She Can Be To The Country If Given Proper Advice, Care and Guidance: A Seminar for the youth living in the slum area of Kibera, prepared for Dr. Pauline," (August 5 - 10, 1997), p. 8.

* Immacolata Nyaga is a Social Health care. She is a worker for Nairobi City Council. She is responsible for the health affairs in Kibera slum.

²² Ibid., p. 7

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 THE USE OF VIDEOS IN KIBERA: ANALYSIS

Introduction

In this section we focus on the use of videos in Kibera. Do most youth in Kibera watch videos? What kind of videos do they prefer to watch? For how long do they watch? Why? What time do they watch and where?

To answer these questions, we distributed 100 questionnaires to Kibera youth at Guadalupe Parish and at Christ the King Parish in Laini Saba. Based on the 85 responses we received from the returned questionnaires, we learned that young people in Kibera are exposed to videos either in their homes or in the small video show kiosks.

Additional to our questionnaire, we carried out oral interviews with some parishioners both in the parishes and in some Small Christian Communities. We also visited some video show rooms and spoke to some owners. We also questioned some residents in the area. Therefore, in this section, we will look at how teenagers in Kibera are exposed to videos both at home and in video show rooms.

2.1. Kibera youth and the exposure to videos at home

Watching of videos in Kibera is more “a kiosk” type of activity, than a family one. From the survey, overall 30% of youth, and only 21% from Makina Village indicated that they watch videos at home because they have video facilities. 55% from Laini Saba, Silanga, Gatwikira, Kisumu Ndogo and

Raila villages noted that they watch videos from video show kiosks because they do not have video facilities at home. Mr. Boniface Oyugi, the Catechist at Christ the King Parish told us that very few people in Kibera have video facilities because they are expensive. But many are now buying the black and white Great wall televisions from Dubai because they are cheap. Only people with businesses like shop kiosks, butcheries and slaughter houses can afford to buy second hand video facilities. These can be purchased from merchants who sell stolen goods²³ But mainly, in Nairobi, “VCRS are sold by authorized dealers in local electrical and television shops . . . The average price . . . would be 20,000-25,000 Kenyan Shillings . . .”²⁴ They are very expensive in the shops.

Fr. Romano, the Parish Priest, has found that tapes watched by most young people at homes with video facilities are music and action tapes which parents buy for their children. The youth also borrow other videos from friends to watch at home, and they even buy others for themselves because there are many video merchants and video libraries in Kibera. This would be based on the fact that “video cassettes are a growing up phenomenon in Kenya . . . Library cassettes are obtained through duplication of master tapes. Illegal recordings of television programs are imported from the UK and Arab States.”²⁵ Most of these copied video tapes are sold for 50 to 200 Kenyan Shillings.

²³ Boniface Oyugi, Catechist of Christ The King Church, “Availability of video facilities in Kibera Slum,” interviewed by author, tape recording, 21 October 2000, Kibera, Laini Saba.

²⁴ Manuel Alvarado, Video Worldwide, (London John Libbey, 1998), p. 260.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 261.

The majority of the youth from Makina Village who have video facilities at home watch videos mostly during day time because most of them are idle. They watch videos to pass time at home during the day when their parents are gone out for businesses or casual jobs in town.²⁶ For Ojore: “There is no doubt that many of our youth are corrupted right at home. They have uncaring parents who are busy making money in order to make their children comfortable, but they do not care to check what their children watch . . . at home.”²⁷ In our questionnaire, only 16% of those with video facilities at home indicated that they liked to watch action, horror, comedy, love stories and music videos both during the day and at night. One parent confided that her children at home spent more time watching television and videos. What gets in their way is the electricity shortage because of rationing. If there is electricity, during weekends and vacations when the children are not going to school, they watch videos the whole day and even go to bed late in the middle of the night.²⁸

2.2. Kibera youth and the exposure to videos in the video show kiosks

There are hundreds of small video show kiosks in Kibera Slum. On a visit to one video show kiosk room, the owner told us that most show kiosks in Kibera operate from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. During the daytime, the majority of the customers who watch videos are idle young men or adults aged between 10 and 25. These are young men who are unemployed and have either not gone to

²⁶ Peter Lula, Naomi Kanja, Rose Bwire and Eric Ochola, Youth Members at Guadalupe Church, “Watching of videos,” interviewed by author, tape recording, 17 September 2000, Guadalupe Church, Adams.

²⁷ Aloys O. Ojore, *op. cit.* p. 26.

²⁸ Patrick Wambua, A member of St. Charles Lwanga Small Christian Community, “Watching of videos,” interviewed by author, tape recording, 12 December 2000, Kibera, Laini Saba

school or have dropped out of schools. He added that even “Matatu” touts, (the public vehicle touts) come when they are off duty to pass time and also some employed men on their way back from work in the evening. The normal charge per person is Kshs 10, but on weekdays, during daytime some kiosk owners charge Kshs 5 because there are usually fewer customers, about 15 to 20 people. Some of the customers spend part of the day looking for casual jobs or doing private business. In the evening and on weekends, the operators charge Kshs10 because there are more customers, usually as many as 30. In case of a football match some show kiosk owners charge as much as Kshs 15 or 20 because they know many youth and even adults like to come to watch football.²⁹

In a visit to various video show kiosks, we found that, “the viewer sits in a darkened auditorium . . . of a movie house,”³⁰ and in every video show kiosk of Kibera there is a young man employed to show videos to the customers. Before showing a video, he plays either Reggae or Congolese (Ndombolo) video music for 10 to 15 minutes to entertain the customers. Kiosk owners collect money at the door from incoming customers during that time. We found out that most of the videos shown are not master tapes, but duplicates from America, China, Hong Kong, India, England and Japan with an English sound track.

Like Nosa Owens, we also found that in most of the videos, the “popular themes which recur are sex, infidelity, fraud, violence, intrigue, conflict and other subjects which are designed to entertain, excite,

²⁹ Francis Kimani, Kiosk owner, “Watching of videos,” interviewed by author, tape recording, 13 September 2000, Kibera, Silanga

³⁰ John Vivian, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

provide escapism and appeal to the emotions.”³¹ It is rare to find educative videos. The only educative videos we found are documentaries on animals. Customers watch them only if they are free. But if they are asked to pay, most customers resist and they just simply walk out of the show room. Therefore, in order to promote the video business, we found that the owners need to meet the taste of the customers. “The bottom line is commercial appeal and profit.”³² If the videos are not entertaining, the kiosk operators in Kibera suffer.

Since most of the viewers are not familiar with English, therefore, when a video show begins, the young presenters lower the audio volume and translate the words for the viewers into both Swahili and Sheng. They speak loudly and rapidly in an amplifier. They even use complex words in Sheng to explain events of the show to the viewers. If a movie reaches a violent scene, where the actors are fighting, the one showing the movie tries to portray the scene by shouting loudly into the microphone “X is beating Y.” They exaggerate the violence in most of the movies until the viewers get so excited that they cheer the winning actor. In most of the video show kiosks in Kibera, a lot of noise can be heard coming out of video show rooms when an action movie is being shown. In most of the kiosks, a video of this type takes either two or two and a half hours.

A business woman outside one of the video show kiosks, confided that there are times when a sign is posted by kiosk owners that some videos are not suitable for children less than 16 years, but when boys of 12 years and even girls of eight to 11 years pay the required money, they go inside to watch

³¹ Nosa Owens-Ibie, “How Video films developed in Nigeria,” (1998), pp. 41-42.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 42

those videos. The owners of the kiosks are more interested in money than in the welfare of the children.³³ Shorter and Onyancha have also stated that:

“...a quick visit to the show rooms of our cities and towns, reveal that the majority of those who visit these rooms are children and the youth . . . There is no age restriction to bar children . . . some as young as ten years or even less, are thus exposed to all the violence and eroticism contained in these videos.”³⁴

2.3. Conclusion

From our preliminary study, the use of videos in Kibera is not completely a new thing even though it is a slum. A good number of young people seem to be exposed both at home and in video show rooms to bad videos that portray evil messages of “. . . nasties with strong emphasis on violence and pornography . . .”³⁵

“Pornography in the media is understood as a violation, through the use of audio visual techniques, of the right to privacy of the human body in its male or female nature, or a violation which reduces the human body to an anonymous object of misuse for the purpose of gratifying concupiscence; violence in the media may be understood especially in this context-as a presentation designed to appeal to base human instincts of actions contrary to the dignity of the person and depicting intense physical force exercised in a deeply offensive and often passionate manner.”³⁶

³³ Maria Waweru, Resident of Laini Saba and Vegetable seller, “Watching of videos,” interviewed by author, tape recording, 26 October 2000, Kibera, Laini Saba.

³⁴ Alyward Shorter and Edwin Onyancha, Secularism In Africa: A Case Study: Nairobi City, (Nairobi: Paulines Publication, 1996), pp. 80-81.

³⁵ Aloys O Ojore, op. cit., p. 72.

³⁶ Pontifical Council for Social Communications, “Pornography and Violence in the Communications Media: A Pastoral Response,” May 7 1989, in Church and Social Communication: Basic Documents, 2nd Edition, ed. by Frans-Josef Eilers, (Manila: Logos Publications, 1997), p. 141.

Thus, since “ . . . it has been observed that this powerful tool can be used, . . . to corrupt the many unsuspecting African youth,”³⁷ it will be interesting to look at the impact of videos on the youth of Kibera.

³⁷ Aloys O. Ojore, op. cit., p. 72.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0. THE IMPACT OF VIDEOS ON KIBERA YOUTH

Introduction

In the previous chapter we have seen how the youth in Kibera are exposed to videos. In this third chapter, we will analyze both the positive and negative effects of videos on the Kibera youth. Our attention will first be on the positive impact and then on the negative. We have obtained our information mainly through visits to some of the Small Christian Communities in Kibera, where we interviewed some of the leaders and parents. We will support some of their observations with what other scholars have written on media impact.

3.1. The positive impact of videos on Kibera youth

A good number of youth in Kibera Slum have not gone to school or have dropped out of school, and are unemployed. Thus, according to one kiosk owner, by operating video kiosk business throughout the day, they keep some of the idle youth busy during the day instead of just sitting around.³⁸ When we spoke to some of the youth at Christ the King parish, they told us that when they go to watch videos in kiosks they have an opportunity to meet and socialize with other youth. Sometimes they can make good friends. Besides socializing, watching videos in video kiosks keeps the majority of

³⁸ Charles Mutua, Kiosk owner, "Video Impact," interviewed by author, tape recording, 16 October 2000, Kibera, Laini Saba.

the youth both happy and entertained.³⁹ In responding to why watching videos is good, in our questionnaire, the majority of the youth wrote that videos are entertaining, educational and expanding one's personal horizon. They also bring happiness and help one relax and avoid boredom⁴⁰ We have also found that video kiosk business in Kibera at least gives opportunity to youth with no video facilities at home to watch movies. Also, it gives employment to some of the unemployed youth.

3.2 The negative impact of videos on Kibera youth

Videos, or "... films have exposed children to drugs, sex and violence."⁴¹ In a discussion with some parents in one of the Small Christian Communities, one parent commented that if you meet young boys in Kibera, they are not boys. They are like "Chokoras," (bin scavengers) in Nairobi because when you meet them they want to show that they can do those things they have seen happening in videos. For example, you even hear a very young boy telling you that "You can do nothing to me I know karate," because that is what they have been watching on videos. If it comes to stealing and snatching, and even to smoking and drinking, some of the boys go out to steal and to snatch from other people, and even to smoke and drink imitating the styles they see in videos. Even when they see someone with braided hair or rastas in a video, they also braid their hair and even make rastas. Most of the time they do not know the meaning and even the origin of that style. They want to walk

³⁹ Edwin Mbatsi, Olivia Ouma, Kennedy Mbeki, Paul Njaki, Members of St. Charles Lwanga Community, "Video impact," interviewed by author, tape recording, 12 December 2000, Kibera, Laini Saba.

⁴⁰ Catholic Youth of Guadalupe Church, various responses, "Video Impact," interviewed by author, questionnaires, 12 October 2000, Guadalupe Church, Adams.

⁴¹ British Board of Film Classification on Viewer, "For and against Violence in Films," in Sunday Daily Nation, (September, 24, 2000), p 15.

bouncing like people in videos, to put on clothes like them, and to speak like them.⁴² “The youth often want to dress like their . . . film stars . . . in strange attire . . . They even give each other strange nicknames such as terrorist, gangster, rasters etc ”⁴³ Therefore, maybe it could be true that “. . . certain mass communication media encourage deviant behavior by youth who imitate actions of characters.”⁴⁴ “This imitation called role modeling, even includes speech mannerism from whoever is hip at the moment . . . ”⁴⁵ Most child behavior and actions seem to be controlled by what they see in the videos. Hence, it may “As happens with all media of social communication, the cinema . . . can oppress freedom . . . when it distorts the truth . . . and when it presents itself as the mirror of negative types of behavior, using scenes of violence and sex offensive to human dignity and tending to excite violent emotions to stimulate the attention of the viewer . . . The attitude of those harmful effects which can be read about each day in the pages of the Newspapers cannot be defined as free artistic expressions,”⁴⁶ because they are somehow controlled in behavior and actions by what they see in videos.

⁴² Paul Mulabu, A resident and leader of St. Monica Christian Community, “Video Impact,” interviewed by author, tape recording, 8 October 2000, Kibera, Lindi.

⁴³ Aloys O. Ojore, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

⁴⁵ John Vivian, *op. cit.*, p. 396.

⁴⁶ John Paul II, “Cinema: Communicator of Culture and of Values,” 1995 in Church and Social Communication: Basic Documents, 2nd Edition, ed, by Frans-Josef Eilers, (Manila: Logos Publications, 1997), p. 305.

In Kibera, “film also plays the role of stereotypes . . . The impression which viewers develop about a people and their cultural values . . .”⁴⁷ Recounting the early days in Laini Saba, Fr. Roberto of Christ the King Parish was one evening walking back from town when he came across young boys playing football in one of the fields. On seeing him, the boys abandoned the ball and ran toward him calling loudly, “Mzungu, Mzungu,” a Swahili word for European. As he shook hand with some of them, some spoke to him in broken English asking to be taught Karate. Others were even demonstrating Karate to him assuming that he knew it since he was a white man.⁴⁸ This reminds me of my childhood when I used to think that all the Masai people were very traditional because of how they were portrayed in pictures and on television. But when I came to Nairobi and met different Masai people, I discovered that not all of them were traditional. It was just a stereotype I had developed about the Masai people and their culture.

According to Alice Wairimu, those who show and translate the videos to the youth in video show rooms cause a great deal of harm. They come up with a different Sheng and the young boys copy that Sheng. When they come to talk to you, they speak something which you cannot understand. This language isolates them from the dominant culture causing problems in education and employment. Frequently they come up with new words from the video shows, and if someone tells them that they do not understand the meaning of a word, they will abuse you with Sheng words such as “ngamwe,” which means you are stupid. Sheng is a mixture of English and Swahili, but you cannot understand

⁴⁷ Nosa Owens-Ibe, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

⁴⁸ Fr. Roberto, “Video Impact,” interviewed by author, tape recording, 27 November 2000, Christ the King Parish, Laini Saba

what they are saying.⁴⁹

As regards the impact of video kiosks on young women in Kibera, some of the young girls who go to the video kiosks are from 12 to 15 years of age. Some of the men who work in the video kiosks, and some of the clients take these young girls inside the video kiosks and buy them sodas and traditional beer in order to have sex with them. Even some young boys who have money take some of the girls and pay for them to go into the video rooms. After the movie, you find them walking with the girls holding hands in pairs and even kissing in public. Therefore, this is the place where many young girls get sexually transmitted diseases. If they get pregnant, they return home and begin to disturb their parents and refuse to go to school.

According to Mr. Ogola, these young girls have parents who are strict but they sneak from home to go to watch videos, and if their parents question them, they run away from home and then look for any young boy who has a small house and they stay with the boy for about a week. When a week is over, they look for another boy. A parent can fail to locate a daughter for as long as a month because she is living with different boys. The parent does not know where the girl is, and the boy is only interested in having sex with the girl, they do not realize they are spoiling each other. The girl may discover she is pregnant or the boy that he has a sexual disease.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Alice Wairimu, A member St. Monica Christian Community, "Video Impact," Interviewed by author, tape recording, 8 October 2000, Kibera, Mashimoni.

⁵⁰ Francis Ogola, A member of St. Kizito Christian Community, "Video Impact," Interviewed by author, tape recording, 25 October 2000, Kibera, Silanga.

In regard to young adults, another resident member in Laini Saba told us that not all the young adult men who enter the video kiosks come there for the sake of watching videos. Some of them are men who have committed crimes during the night and they just come into the video kiosks to hide. They fear to stay in their houses because they know they may be caught by the police. These men stay in the video kiosks the whole day watching violent and horror videos from which some may copy and imitate advanced skills of stealing and killing. Late in the evening and at night, they are the same people who go to steal and kill people in the slum. Apart from hiding, we were told that some of the men also come to sell bhang, (cannabis) and Chang'aa, (steamed alcohol) to the young boys who come to watch videos in the kiosks because they know that the kiosk rooms are dark and nobody can discover them.”⁵¹

3.3. Conclusion

As Ojore has put it, “We must stress that the mass media can influence society either positively or negatively.”⁵² But stressing the negative influence of videos on the moral behavior and culture of some of the Kibera youth, if some young people are frequently exposed to violent and pornographic videos, this videos can at times contribute to their indiscipline, increased violence and crime rates, disobedience, cultural identity crises, immorality and drug abuse Hence, some “moral problems may at times arise in productions that deal with evil.”⁵³ because some young people find role models in such evil productions and they end up imitating them. “It has been said that there can be a psychological link between pornography and sadistic violence, and some pornography is itself overtly

⁵¹ Maria Waweru, op. cit.

⁵² Aloys O Ojore, op. cit., p. 72.

⁵³ United States Catholic Conference, op. cit., p 18.

violent in theme and content. Those who view or read such material run the risk of carrying over such attitudes and behavior into their own relationships and can come to lack reverence and respect for others as precious children of God and as brothers and sisters in the same human family.”⁵⁴ But “Most advocates of the carthartic effect claim that individuals who see violent activity are stimulated to fantasy violence which drains off latent tendencies toward real-life violence.”⁵⁵

No matter which point of view, if we relate our analysis of video influence on Kibera youth to one African saying which states that, “*Two baboons that enter in a maize plantation at the same time do not all come out satisfied,*” then we conclude that not all young people in Kibera who are exposed to bad videos are influenced by them in the same way. “Most of the latest studies of the media’s role have continued to reinforce the concept that different people in different environments react to the media differently.”⁵⁶ Some young people can be influenced very fast with some bad videos than others due to age difference, bad social and family background, and the level of education. For Shirley Biagi, “Whether the effect will hold only for the most susceptible individuals (e.g, boys from disadvantaged homes or whether it will hold for a wider range of youngsters, obviously depends in part upon the measure being used...The occurrence of serious violent or criminal acts result from

⁵⁴ Pontifical Council for Social Communication, “Pornography and Violence in the Communications Media: A Pastoral Response,” May 7, 1989 in Church and Social Communication: Basic Documents, 2nd Edition, ed, by Frans-Josef Eilers, (Manila: Logos Publications, 1997), p. 142.

⁵⁵ John Vivian, op. cit., p. 400.

⁵⁶ Shirley Biagi, op. cit., p 275

several forces at once.”⁵⁷

Since “Christians . . . are called to do much more;...to overcome evil with good (cf. Rom. 12:21).”⁵⁸

Therefore, how can pastoral youth ministers use videos in the Church Community in Kibera to promote moral awareness in the Christian youth and encourage their love and appreciation of African culture and self esteem? This will be the focus of the closing chapter.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 273.

⁵⁸ John Paul II, “Message for 26th World Communications,” AFER 34 (1992): 131.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 CHURCH AND VIDEO YOUTH MINISTRY IN KIBERA

Introduction

Having seen how the use of some types of videos in Kibera may contribute to some of the moral and cultural decline among some young people, in this chapter we are concerned with various ways in which pastoral youth ministers may effectively use videos in a Church setting. "The Catholic Church . . . believes that its task involves employing the means of social communication to announce the good news of salvation and to teach men how to use them properly."⁵⁹ We ". . . have the task of instructing and directing the faithful how to use these media in a way that will ensure their own salvation and perfection and that of mankind."⁶⁰ We are going to suggest some possible ways of using videos effectively to promote moral awareness in Kibera youth and to foster self esteem and appreciation of African culture. We will build our thesis from the Church's teaching on mass media, and information from interviews and written sources. At the outset, however, we need first to understand three things:

- i. Why videos may be suitable in Church Ministry for promoting in young people a moral conscience and for fostering their love and appreciation of African culture and self esteem.
- ii. Prerequisites for Church pastoral youth ministers in using videos.

⁵⁹ Sacred Synod, "Decree On The Means of Social Communication," (Inter Mirifica, 4 December 1963) in Vatican Collection Vol 1: Vatican Council II: The Conciliar And Post Conciliar Documents, ed. by Austin Flannery(Northport, New York: Costillio Publishing Co, 1975), p. 284.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 285.

iii. How Ukweli Video Productions in Nairobi-Kenya uses videos in Church
Ministry

4.1. Why videos may be suitable in Church Ministry for promoting in young people moral conscience and for fostering their love and appreciation of African culture and self esteem.

The "...Videocassettes..,with their relatively modest cost and simplicity of operation, have particular advantages in teaching . . ." ⁶¹ With videos, any recorded lesson may be repeated or played back. Hence, learners may repeat lessons and listen to them closely at their own time and pace. For John Paul II, "the . . . videocassettes have made it possible for us to have at hand and easily transport unlimited numbers of programs in voice and vision, whether for instructions or entertainment . . ." ⁶²

It may be also easy for people to follow lessons on videos even if they are not formally educated because video images are produced to attract and inform people. Therefore, they can be understood by people who even have little formal education. Watching of videos is not like attending a speculative lecture in a classroom or reading of a book which requires only people with formal education.

⁶¹ John Paul II, "Guide to the Training of Future Priests concerning the Instruments of Social Communication," 1986 in Church and Social Communication: Basic Documents, 2nd Edition, ed, by Frans-Josef Eilers, (Manila: Logos Publications, 1997), p. 191.

⁶² John Paul II, "Videocassettes and Audio cassettes in the Formation of Culture and of Conscience," 1993 in Church and Social Communication: Basic Documents, 2nd Edition, ed, by Frans-Josef Eilers, (Manila: Logos Publications, 1997), p. 299.

With a good choice of images and presentation, videos can appeal to many people compared to abstract work which may not have images to relate to. For example, in the effort to fight the spread of HIV / AIDS pandemic in Kenya, President Moi recommended “. . . that . . . visual aids depicting real life cases and their extreme severity would register in people’s minds the seriousness of the disaster.”⁶³

Also, videos may be suitable for promoting moral conscience on sensitive and delicate topics, especially biological details, personal or medical details because they may be left with families to be watched in the privacy of the home without embarrassment in the presence of an outsider. Also, it may be possible with low-cost videos to use local dialects and idioms because, videos may be focused on specific subject or areas. Hence, they may be a resource for very local cultures.

4.2. Prerequisites for Church pastoral youth ministers in using videos.

For video youth ministries it is important first to know and understand some of the moral problems encountered by the young people. Pastoral youth ministers can do this by initiating and forming strong youth groups on both junior and senior levels in places of pastoral placements so as to have direct contact with them and to establish a positive relationship. In this contact, we encourage young people: “Do not be afraid or shy to speak... These are the people specially called by God to be the spiritual leaders of the faithful. Feel free to ask them any questions or confusion you have concerning your faith. Try to get involved in Church activities, e.g., serving during mass, join a Church group

⁶³ PPS, “Use Cinema for Aids Education, Says Moi ” in The Daily Nation, (December 24, 2000), p 2.

(e.g. youth, choir), and so forth.”⁶⁴ A good contact and relationship may be helpful for pastoral youth agents to know and understand some of the problems encountered by the young people and the right kind of videos to select for them.

4.2.1 How Ukweli Video Productions in Nairobi-Kenya uses videos in Church Ministry.

Ukweli Video Productions has several religious and educational videocassettes that contain useful information about faith. According to Fr. Richard Quinn, the founder and director,* ⁶⁵ they “ . . . have video tapes for almost every occasion: AIDS, counseling, sacred dancing, stories of faith, youth, family, drugs and alcoholism, environment, bible, life of Christ, creation, Golf, etc.”⁶⁶

They have also done different programs in the following areas:

- i. Catholic answers: Produced to answer areas of Catholic faith which are constantly being challenged. They have answered the following questions:
 - (a) Baptism (By immersion in water only?)
 - (b) Should infants be baptized?
 - (c) Why do we confess to priests and not to God directly?
- ii. Youth: They have different programs to encourage and educate youth in their spiritual

⁶⁴ Wanjiru Githongo, “Understanding your Faith,” in Ukweli Video Productions, (2000), p. 3.

* “...the name Ukweli video is a Swahili word meaning “true.” The late Jomo Kenyatta while addressing his audiences often asked them, Is it true or false, Ukweli au Uongo. They would shout back - True. This rung in my ears. I wanted my audience to say the same.”

⁶⁶ Richard J. Quinn, “The Electronic Media and Catholic Evangelization,” (July 24th, 1995), p. 2.

growth, using examples of other youth activities elsewhere. These educate young people on different ways to live out their faith.

iii. They also have some productions that discuss salvation such as “Je umeokoka?”

They provide these videos to help parish priests, teachers, catechists, families or individuals gain a deeper understanding and a wider vision of Christian teaching. Some of their educative videos on *Human sexuality* are from abroad. Others like, *Keep it real: Traditional family values*, *Please do not kill me*, *Suffering alcoholism: Karanja*, and *Give me a chance to live* are locally made. In these videos, according to Fr. Quinn, they encourage artists, musicians, catechists, teachers to preach through their God-given talents. They have done three programs on Christian art, two cultural productions, others on various development projects to show that Ukweli is interested in the total man.⁶⁷ Apart from their local productions, they also have a library equipped with Western modern videos and journals.

4.2.2 How pastoral youth ministers can use videos effectively to raise a moral conscience in the Christian youth of Kibera and develop their love and appreciation of African culture and self esteem.

“The Church feels obliged to offer, above all to young people, that spiritual and moral help without which it becomes almost impossible to function in a worthwhile manner. It must take concrete steps,

⁶⁷ Richard J. Quinn, “Watching of Videos,” interviewed by author, tape recording, 22 December 2000, Ukweli Videos, Westland.

where necessary, with suitable initiatives of support and encouragement.”⁶⁸ In this regard, in video youth ministry, pastoral youth ministers can take concrete steps in the following areas:

I. The selection of ready made videos and documentaries: Criteria

a). Educative

For Church video ministries, the videos and documentaries selected for young people must be educative videos which address current problems. For example, we can select educative videos on HIV/AIDS, alcoholism and drug addiction, premarital sex and abortion, broken relationships and human conflict. We can also select Christian videos teaching about Christian faith, documentaries of Christians who once led immoral lives giving testimony of their experiences and conversion.

b). Entertaining and appealing

The educational videos selected for young people should be humorous and entertaining. According to Fr. Martin Kivuva of Ukweli Videos, they “ . . . make common issues both interesting and relevant for the particular audience through good dramatization.”⁶⁹ Hence, we can select educational drama or comedy videos of dramatized plays, poetry, songs and dances, riddles, proverbs, stories made in teenagers language such as Sheng.

⁶⁸ John Paul II, “Cinema: Communicator of Culture and of Values,” 1995 in Church and Social Communication: Basic Documents, 2nd Edition, ed, by Frans-Josef Eilers, (Manila: Logos Publications, 1997), p. 307.

⁶⁹ Martin Kivuva, “I Work in the Video Ministry,” in Africa: St. Patrick’s Missions, (Jan/Feb, 2000), p. 20.

c). Local and relevant

Locally produced educative videos and documentaries that depict the situation of the youth might be good for giving moral message. Thus, for example, we can select videos depicting some local young people suffering from HIV/AIDS Virus on account of prostitution and sexual misconduct, or of youth who have messed up their lives through abortion, alcoholism and drug addiction, disobedience and lack of discipline. Young people may learn more from such ready made local videos which deal with issues which are relevant for them because they can relate themselves to what they see and they may be more attentive to watch what they are familiar within their local environment. Accordingly, as suggested by the Magisterium, “The media should be used effectively in the effort to promote human and religious progress . . . But . . . the films chosen must be suited to the cultural traditions of the local population.”⁷⁰ Very often, most of the videos watched by the young people in Nairobi are produced outside their culture.

II. The production of local videos : Criteria

a). Involve the young people themselves

As Ojore’s point of view, “The African youth should not use non-African models as a measure of what is good. African authenticity should be taught to our students. There is no reason why a beautiful face must be a European with blond hair. Our youth feel inadequate and therefore rush into

⁷⁰ Pontifical Council for the Instruments of Social Communication “Pastoral Instruction on the Means of Social Communication,” (Communio et Progressio, 29 Jan 1971) in Vatican Collection Vol 1: Vatican Council II: The Conciliar And Post Conciliar Documents , ed. by Austin Flannery(Northport, New York: Costillio Publishing Co, 1975), p. 340.

aping foreign practices.”⁷¹ We can make videos locally by getting the youth and encouraging them to identify problems in the location and act out solutions through stories that use African cultural-religious songs and dances, stories, proverbs, or riddles. In his article, *I Work in the Video Ministry*, Fr. Martin Kivuva writes this about the Ukweli Video productions:

“We follow the lives of people . . . who are doing exciting things, and document their work as an example of what can be done. We did a video on the Trappist Monks in Kipkelion in Kericho Diocese entitled *Monks Speak Out*. It gave a good picture of a monk, his prayer life and place of contemplative prayer in the Church. It is of interest . . . particularly to young people who might feel drawn to that style of life . . . We did a video called *Philomena* about a woman who wished to be a religious Sister but was obliged to marry. She became a very good wife and mother and was very active in the Church. She was one of the first women to stand up in the community and preach before Vatican II. Now she is in charge of a little outstation . . . As well as picking up stories like this, we produce programmes requested by other people. A group of young people came to ask for a programme on AIDS awareness. They were members of a choir and all were HIV positive, except the choir master. They composed songs to tell people to watch out: *Our time is gone; don't mess up your life in the way we have.*”⁷²

A “village drama has been used successfully in Burkina Faso to tackle sensitive issue of family planning . . . The plays use metaphor to distance audiences from their immediate situation and to see their problems from a new perspective . . . The genre promotes change in villages without destroying the fabric of the village social system”⁷³ “Ugboajah, the key proponent of this position extolled the value of Africa’s rich cultural and performance tradition. He noted that songs, dances, dramas, drumming, story telling, and proverbs are all powerful modes of communication useful in spreading

⁷¹ Aloys O. Ojore, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

⁷² Martin Kivuva, *op. cit.*, pp. 20-21.

⁷³ Louise M. Bourgault, *Mass Media in Sub-Saharan Africa*, (Bloomington, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995), p. 253.

information.”⁷⁴ The role taken in a drama may also help the youth to reshape or reform. “The therapeutic value of “role playing” as a problems-solving tool is well known in western psychological therapeutic circles.”⁷⁵ Thus, even getting the youth to take part in producing videos may help them to appropriate the values portrayed

b). Produce videos that answer questions asked by young people

We can produce local videos for teaching young people by planning youth conventions such as seminars and workshops in parishes and pastoral centers and then invite experts such as teachers, lawyers, psychologists, doctors, people who have gone through dramatic experiences to talk on various issues such as abortion, human rights, drug abuse and alcoholism, premarital sex and sexually transmitted diseases. Afterwards, we can let the youth ask questions and make videos that portray the dialogue. These may be simple videos giving simple answers to some of the questions young people are asking. Good editing will be the key to producing such effective teaching videos. We can use the videos to teach other youth. Shirley Biagi thinks that, “Children who watch . . . “pro-social” programs . . . are more likely to act responsibly.”⁷⁶

c). Produce local videos that are exciting and entertaining

Youth today want exciting and entertaining videos. They may easily get bored with things that appear dull. Therefore, in our productions, we need also to know and include things that excite and entertain

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 251.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p.253.

⁷⁶ Shirley Biagi, *op. cit.*, p. 275

young people today. For example, in dramatizations, we can have youth propose moral solutions in a song using a popular Reggae tune. Alternatively, we can also have youth stage a play or song using language preferred by the majority of the teenagers. For example, they can use their Sheng language. In Kenya, Manuel Alvarado has found in his studies that, "... because most of the imported cassettes are in English and Hindi, fears have been expressed that video will downgrade Kiswahili and the Kenyan national languages."⁷⁷ According to Fr. Richard Quinn, language is a problem for them at Ukweli. It is difficult to know which language to produce a video in. Most educated people like videos in English. However, Ukweli produces videos in both English and Swahili. To make videos in tribal languages is difficult and expensive because in Kenya there are very many tribes.⁷⁸

In a dramatization of an issue, we can also encourage the young people to be open to use words which they like to hear. For example, if they are addressing sexual issues, we can encourage them to be open to use idiomatic language for sex without circumlocution. We can also get the youth to sing, dance and perform their dramas using local costumes and musical instruments. For example, youth can perform traditional songs and dances, and imitate local styles of clothing.

III. The Presentation and Watching of Videos: Criteria

a). Needs a Good Presenter

In a participatory video youth ministry, a good pastoral presenter needs to schedule with the young

⁷⁷ Manuel Alvarado, *op. cit.*, p. 262.

⁷⁸ Richard J. Quinn, "Watching of Videos," interviewed by author, tape recording, 22 December 2000, Ukweli videos.

people when to watch a video. For example, a good pastoral presenter may schedule with the youth to watch some of the videos during catechism classes or during seminars, workshops and youth rallies in the parishes or youth centers. But the presenter must watch the video ahead of time before presenting it to the group. As Fr. Quinn writes, “The video itself needs a good teacher and presenter . . . prepare yourself by watching the video one or two times taking notes. Show it by segments if it is recorded that way. Or introduce it, then show the whole video and have discussion on it after the show.”⁷⁹ A good presenter needs to sit and watch with the youth the selected video, and afterwards facilitate a discussion.

While watching the video, a good presenter should avoid heavy handed pedagogy. For example, to point out explicitly to teenagers while watching a video that ‘this and that’ is bad. It is better for a good pastoral video presenter to leave the youth to discover the message in a video for themselves.

“Christ, we remember, forced his teaching on no one. He presented it to all without exclusion but left each one free to respond to his invitation. This is the pattern which we, his disciples, follow.”⁸⁰

Hence, to know the youth’s response to a video, after watching, we can divide into groups and share with each other what we have learned from the video. Pope John Paul II encourages that: “It is also very useful especially for young people to organize film circles where with the guidance of qualified persons, they may learn to express themselves and to listen to others, in a constructive and serene

⁷⁹ Richard J. Quinn, *op. cit.*, p.2.

⁸⁰ John Paul II, “Message for 26th World Communications Day.” In: *op. cit.*, p. 132.

exchange of opinion.”⁸¹

Thus, after facilitating a discussion on a video, we can ask each teenager to express what he or she has learned. In this way we will be teaching moral values not from our own point of view, but “... we leave to them the right to embrace it if it convinces them.”⁸²

Giving the ministry a spiritual approach, a good pastoral video presenter needs to help the young people to know and understand the difference between watching in a video show room and watching an educative video in the Church because, “...the Church binds itself simply to keep on ceaselessly recalling, ...the values which constitute the grandeur of the human being. But . . . this cannot be assimilated and put into action in the concrete, if the spiritual life of the human being is forgotten.”⁸³ Thus, a good pastoral video presenter must add the spiritual dimension to the video ministry. For example, before showing a video, a good pastoral video facilitator can begin with a prayer and a Scripture sharing. Also, after facilitating discussion on a video, a good presenter can lead the youth each to come up with his or her spontaneous prayer at the end of the discussion in order to reinforce or give thanks for the spiritual truth that has been learned.

⁸¹John Paul II, “Cinema: Communicator of Culture and of Values,” 1995, in Church and Social Communication: Basic Documents, 2nd Edition, ed, by Frans-Josef Eilers, (Manila: Logos Publications, 1997), p. 307.

⁸² John Paul II, “Message for 26th World Communications Day” in: op. cit., p. 132.

⁸³ John Paul II, “Guide to the Training of Future Priests Concerning The Instruments of Social Communication,” 1986 in Church and Social Communication: Basic Documents, 2nd Edition, ed, by Frans-Josef Eilers, (Manila: Logos Publications, 1997), p. 287.

b). Needs respect of young people's tastes

A good pastoral video presenter must keep in mind that just knowing the type of videos to choose for the youth does not mean we have to force them to watch only what we know and want. Young people have their own interests and tastes which need to be respected. "The Church insists on respect for all human beings without exception in their quest for answers to the deepest questions of their lives, and respect for the action of the spirit, already mysteriously present in every human heart (cf. *Redemptoris Missio*, 29)."⁸⁴

c). Needs prior preparation of the viewers

According to Fr Quinn, before showing a video to young people, we have to prepare them first by speaking to their spirit and by letting them know that God loves them. We have to tell them, that God made them because of love, and that we want to show them other productions that can make them more loving. We have to let them know that there is no love in violent and pornographic videos they like to watch. We have to show them the other side⁸⁵ It may be helpful that a good presenter does not disclose in advance to them the kind of video they are to watch. Rather, it may interest teenagers to watch a video which they have no idea about. But in preparing teenagers for a video, a good pastoral video presenter can begin with some sort of talk on a moral issue such as alcoholism and drug addiction or violence and crime so that the young people first familiarize themselves with a given topic, then afterwards watch a video on the theme. In this way, we are not just imposing on them to

⁸⁴ John Paul II, "Message for 26th World Communications Day," *AFER* 34 (1994): p. 132.

⁸⁵ Richard J. Quinn, "Production of Videos," interviewed by author, tape recording, 22 December 2000, Ukweli videos, Wasteland

watch something they do not know, but we prepare them first.

On the other hand, in order to enable young people to appreciate moral and African cultural values in videos, good pastoral video ministers can plan sessions where young people can learn how to watch videos critically. We can do this by selecting some African dramatized videos addressing a hidden moral problem indirectly and then watch the videos with the youth and analyze them together. The American Catholic Conference recommend in its Pastoral Instruction on the Media that for, "Recipients . . . Everything possible should be done . . . so they will be able to interpret their message accurately to reap their benefit in full and play their part in the life of society."⁸⁶ We need to teach young people how to use their imaginations to grasp the meaning and values of the images, gestures, symbols, fashions, words and phrases used in videos.

In Tangaza college we had an elective course in our theology program, 'Religion goes to the Movies.' In this course we learned techniques and ways of watching and analyzing films. We learned how important it is to analyze critically the value of symbols, language, pictures, images, words and phrases used in films by actors as a way of grasping the full message in a film show. We can adopt this kind of approach, to teach and train the young people how to critically watch and analyze all the contents in a video: Language, pictures and images. Pope John Paul II encourages that:

"In order to be sure that the messages that the cinema might offer for the human and spiritual growth of those who use it are fully understood, it is also important to take care of the education of viewers in the language of film which often departs from the direct representation of reality in order to use systems of symbols not always easy to comprehend. It is very useful when, even in school, teachers devote attention to this

⁸⁶ United States Catholic Conference, op. cit., p 5.

problem, sensitizing the students to images and gradually developing their critical attitude towards an idiom that is by now an integral part of our culture . . . ”⁸⁷

IV. Spreading out video ministry: Criteria

Just as “President Moi advised that cinema shows be taken to all market centers countrywide to be able to reach as many people as possible with the vital information on the Aids pandemic,”⁸⁸ we have three ways by which we may spread out our video ministry besides confining to Church compounds.

a). Setting up small video libraries

One way would be to set up small video libraries in the Parishes or Youth Centers for home and parish use. This may provide an opportunity to others who do not come to the Churches to see and enjoy some very good videos. Edward Nyakundi, a staff member at Ukweli video told us that his first responsibility at Ukweli involved going around the Parishes in Nairobi to see whether they were able to establish and develop parish libraries that are also oriented toward the youth. We can introduce a system whereby the borrowers of the Parish or Center videos can pay a little fee so that we can be able to purchase more new videos for the library.

b). Networking with other Christian Churches

We can visit schools, churches and other learning institutions in the neighborhood and plan with the leaders of these institutions how to reach the youth. By adopting this model, we may promote the ecumenical spirit in the Church because, we will not only be reaching Catholic youth but also young

⁸⁷ John Paul II, “Cinema: Communicator of Culture and of Values,” 1995, in Church and Social Communication: Basic Documents, 2nd Edition, ed, by Frans-Josef Eilers, (Manila: Logos Publications, 1997), p. 306.

⁸⁸ PPS, “Use Cinema for Aids education, says Moi,” in op_cit., p. 2.

people from different religions and backgrounds. We can select some key young men and women to help us take the educative videos to the neighboring Schools and Churches. It is the Pope's "... ardent wish that the Catholic and Christian networks ... collaborate constructively with cultural communications network of every land, overcoming a preoccupation with competition in view of the ultimate good which comes from the message of religion."⁸⁹

c). Airing some videos on local TV stations

We can have some of our local-made videos aired on some television stations. We learned from Fr. Quinn that some television broadcasting companies come to request some of the Ukweli videos to air them on their stations. So far, they have had their videos aired on both KTN and KBC television stations. Fr. Kivuva writes, "Many of our videos are broadcast on TV, some in Kenya, Zambia, Tanzania, Uganda and more recently, in Malawi. Our most successful production to date for TV was *Karanja*, a documentary dramatizing the abuse of alcohol. It came out very appropriately at Christmas time. The feedback was overwhelming. We get presenters from the local TV stations and they have been very successful and popular."⁹⁰ Normally, when they give out a video to a broadcasting company, they give it free of charge, and in turn, the company does not ask for any fee in order to air an educative program. Therefore, there is no reason why we should not adopt this approach to spread out our video ministry. Since a good number of people in Kibera Slum own the black and white television sets, by airing some of these videos on a television station, we may reach

⁸⁹ John Paul II, "Religion in the Mass Media," 1989, in Church and Social Communication: Basic Documents, 2nd Edition, ed, by Frans-Josef Eilers, (Manila: Logos Publications, 1997), p. 290.

⁹⁰ Martin Kivuva, op. cit., p. 21.

the majority of the young people with no video facilities at home.

4.2.3. Conclusion

We have suggested how pastoral youth ministers may use videos to promote moral awareness in young people and to foster their love and appreciation of African culture and self esteem.

As regards our thesis, we can conclude that if concrete steps are taken by responsible people in the society, then videos may be used positively as effective medium for educating young people today on various current social issues. In such video youth ministry, pastoral youth leaders need to create personal and healthy relationships with young people and seek to understand them. They can expose and propose to young people good educative and appealing videos that address current moral issues. The Church leaders need to learn how to use the local resources to appeal to young people. They need to choose preferably videos related to the local situation. They need to involve the young people in the choice respecting their tastes and freedom without imposing ideas on them. They also need to train young people how to watch videos critically by analyzing the content. They need to adopt an ecumenical approach in order to promote the common good of the society.

There are concrete steps we can adopt in the Church to make good use of mass media for teaching both young people and even adults. All this draws us to our final and general conclusion and recommendations for the future on the use of the mass media in our ministry.

GENERAL CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In introducing this topic, 'video influence on youth culture and moral behavior,' we begun with a general scholarly assessment of both the positive and negative impact of mass media on society. Afterwards we stressed the negative impact because, "It is obvious that there has been a decline in moral standards in many areas of life today and ... It is easy to find evidence of this decline in all the means of social communication"⁹¹ However, for us we were interested only in video, to assess how this medium affects teenagers culture and behavior. Magesa has also observed that.

"The Video machine has affected everything among a big segment of African population: from the attitude of shame attached to the black colour of one's skin and texture of one's hair, through sexual behaviour and even orientation, to attitude towards one's elders and ancestors. What the TV / video has done in a decade to alienate Africa from itself is probably worse than what colonialism did in the same area in more than a century."⁹²

According to John Vivian, "Throughout their history, movies have been scrutinized by moralists who fear their influence."⁹³ We focused our preliminary research assessment to Kibera slum of Nairobi.

In this research we answered the following questions: Do most youth in Kibera watch videos? What kind of videos do they prefer to watch? For how long do they watch? Why? What time do they watch and where?

The answers to the later questions led us further to assess what impact the video exposure had on some of the youth. Based on the assessment we discovered that some teenagers were negatively

⁹¹ United States Catholic Conference, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

⁹² Laurenti Magesa, "Africa's Struggle For Self-Definition During A Time Of Globalization: Significance of naming one's reality," *AFER*, 40 (1985): 325.

⁹³ John Vivian, *op. cit.*, p. 156

influenced basically because of varying factors of age, video content, time and place of exposure. At the end of the assessment, due to our pastoral concern we suggested various ways that can be adapted by pastoral youth ministers to use the same medium efficiently in promoting moral awareness, self esteem and appreciation of African culture in young people.

Basing ourselves on the findings of our study, we come up with the following general concluding points on mass media influence before our final recommendations:

A. We reject the extreme view that puts the blame for all the moral decline and cultural crises in the world today unilaterally on the means of social communication because of several reasons:

- i. If we take up this position, then we risk regarding these means of social communication as evil. Rather, in line with Church teaching, we see “. . . these media as “gifts of God . . .”⁹⁴ Therefore, as gifts of God the means of social communication are generally not bad in themselves but it is some of the bad messages of violence, crime, pornography and drugs that they offer which are bad and which are to be rejected.
- ii. Some of the bad degrading messages we get in the mass media are inserted in by producers and directors who can be said to be the root cause of the bad influence of communication media in today’s society. Hence, we reject as Pope Pius XII once rejected that, “All evil . . . which is opposed to right moral principles, cannot have its origin in . . . the techniques themselves which are precious gifts. It can be only from the fact that man, endowed as he is

⁹⁴ Pontifical Council for the Instruments of Social Communication, “Pastoral Instruction on the Means of Social Communication,” (Communio et Progressio, 29 Jan 1971) in *op. cit.*, p. 293.

with free will can abuse those gifts . . . by committing and multiplying evil and thus associating himself with God's enemy; the prince of darkness."⁹⁵

- iii. There are other many factors that may contribute to the decline of a culture and of morality in some young people other than the mass media. For example, today we can attribute some of the problems and changes in culture and moral behavior to urbanization, family problems and breakdowns, poverty, drug abuse and addiction, rural-urban migration, etc.
- iv. Since it is the receivers of the mass media messages who make judgements on what they do with media messages, thus, they can be said to be the ones responsible for their own cultural changes and actions.

B. Based on our preceding rejection and reasons, we support the moderate view that video is not the root cause of culture and moral decline, but it only contributes to the decline by taking from other cultures bad information or messages whose content is degrading and then disseminates them and stimulates or encourages the viewers to imitate and to follow what they have viewed. In this way we may agree with Ojore's point of view that:

"Mass media seems to influence and affect the youth in two main ways: The first is that certain content might overstimulate the audience as through scenes of violence, sex and passion. Secondly, that certain mass communication media encourage deviant

⁹⁵ Pius XII, "Miranda Prorsus: Encyclical Letter on Motion Pictures; Radio and Television," 1957, in Church and Social Communication: Basic Documents, 2nd Edition, ed, by Frans-Josef Eilers, (Manila: Logos Publications, 1997), p. 32.

behavior by youth who imitate actions of characters...When our TV screens and movies showing in our urban centers portray dishonest businessmen and women with loose morals as the most successful people, then we can be sure that we are on a sure path of destruction”⁹⁶

Because of their ability to disseminate messages very fast to many people, the mass media can be easily used to corrupt many unsuspecting African youth. Through them people of bad will can easily spread any kind of ill messages. Therefore, we would like to caution our African audiences, especially the young people because, “...children are...susceptible to violence on television and the movies and imitate media violence in their own lives.”⁹⁷ We would like to caution the young people with C. W du Toit’s words that.

“In Europe and America, in the name of freedom, many people have significantly lost sensitivity to certain dimensions of the meaning and value of human life. “Freedom” . . . it has become a vicious demon, manifesting itself through . . . social ills - pornography, prostitution, abortion, drug addiction, homosexuality, and so forth. These ills are being exported to Africa . . . in the name of “freedom.” Africans must guard and fight against such aberrations, if they are to maintain their identity. Africans must have the guts to be themselves by guarding their cultural, and . . . their human values”⁹⁸

Video companies may exploit the innocence of inexperienced viewers and corrupt them with themes that are artistically and morally inferior. Therefore, young people must always be careful.

⁹⁶ Aloys O. Ojore, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

⁹⁷ John Vivian, *op. cit.*, p. 399.

⁹⁸ M. Svarevashe, “Marxism vs Christianity in Africa,” *AFER* 41 (1999):138.

- C. Having presented the preceding conclusions, we now make the following recommendations:
- i. We recommend that the young people should not follow the mass media blindly because, the motives of the messages offered are ambivalent. Therefore, the young people must be helped by adults to become more critical and selective about what they, hear, read and watch.
 - ii. We recommend that African parents to establish good relationship with their children and to spare time to socialize with them and also to be mindful of their duty to control the TV programs which their children watch, publications and the like which jeopardize faith and good morals. They should ensure that unacceptable material never cross the threshold of their homes and their children do not encounter them elsewhere.
 - iii. As theologians and students of social communications, we proposed several concrete steps to adapt in using videos for promotion of moral awareness and love and appreciation of African culture and self esteem. Based on the steps we proposed, we recommend that young men and women formed for priesthood and religious life in the present-day world should be trained in social communications because as it has been observed, “There has never been an age so much influenced and literally controlled by the mass media as our own.”⁹⁹ As these technologies advance their influence on our contemporary society, they may be the most effective way for evangelizing the modern world. “If students for the priesthood and religious training wish to be part of the modern life and also to be at all effective in their apostolate, they should know how the media work upon the fabric of society also the

⁹⁹ Aloys O. Ojore, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

technique of their use.”¹⁰⁰ Thanks to Tangaza College, we have received this opportunity. We hope to use this knowledge in our future Church ministry, and we encourage that the social communication departments in Seminary training Centers be given full support to develop in all areas of modern communication.

- iv. Finally, though we are concerned with safeguarding our African values, we recommend to the young people to be also open minded to discern other good values from other cultures of the world. It is not wrong to learn from different cultures. “Cultural openness requires getting to know not only one’s own group, but also that of the other. It is an open relationship with the other which ... can provide identity. In a dynamic relationship with people of other cultures, one can discover the identity of one’s own group, while self-centered isolation can lead to stagnation.”¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ Franz-Josef Eilers, *op. cit.*, p. 183.

¹⁰¹ C.W. du Toit, “Open vs Particular Culture-Biased Christianity,” *AFER* 41 (1999) p. 124.

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APPENDIX

Questionnaire

A. GENERAL QUESTIONS

Tick what applies to you only.

I live in Makina/ Kianda/ Gatwikira/ Kisumu Ndogo/ Kambi Muru/ Laini Saba/ Silanga

I am ___ years old

I am Male ___ Female ___

I am single ___ Married ___

Size of family (number of people in family) _____

Parents a live? Mother: Yes / No Father Yes / No

I am a student Yes / No

I am Employed ___ Not Employed _____

B. VIDEO CASSETTES AND OTHER MEDIA AVAILABLE

1. Watch video cassettes. Yes ___ No ___

2. I watch video cassettes from home _____ From Video houses _____

3. We have video machine at home Yes ___ No _____

4. What kind of videos do you like to watch?

5. Why do you like to watch these type of videos?

6. I watch video cassettes at night _____ during the Day _____

7. We have radio at home Yes _____ No _____

8. Why do you listen to
Radio? _____

9. Do you read Newspapers or Magazines? Yes / No

10. Why do you read Newspapers or
Magazines? _____

12. What kind of Magazines or Newspapers do you
like? _____

13. What things do you like to see in a
Magazine? _____

