

TOWARDS MORAL MEDIA:

CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVES ON THE EVOLVING LANDSCAPE OF MASS COMMUNICATION IN LIGHT OF JUBILEE 2025

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The global media landscape is undergoing a period of profound transformation, characterized by rapid technological advancements and pervasive digital interconnectivity. While contemporary mass communication offers unprecedented opportunities for reach and influence, it is increasingly challenged by ethical crises, including the proliferation of misinformation, societal polarization, sensationalism, and a decline in public trust. This paper investigates the intersection of Christian ethics, public theology, and digital media, proposing a framework for morally responsible communication practices informed by the core themes of the Roman Catholic Church's Jubilee Year 2025. Anchored in the scriptural and theological vision of Jubilee, understood as a time of renewal, reconciliation, and the cultivation of hope, this study applies Christian moral thought to address the pressing ethical dilemmas confronting mass communication today. Employing a multidisciplinary methodology that integrates theological analysis and comparative ethical critique, the research draws upon Church teachings, papal pronouncements, and observed media practices to construct a theologically grounded and practically applicable model of moral media engagement. Particular attention is devoted to the ethical implications of emerging digital trends, such as artificial intelligence, algorithmic influence, deepfakes, and the evolving dynamics of influencer culture. Through a critical analysis of some Christian media initiatives, this paper examines the extent to which faith-based communication endeavours reflect - or fail to reflect - Christian values of truth, human dignity, and service to marginalized communities. Ultimately, the study advocates for a Jubilee-inspired renewal of media culture, one that prioritizes the restoration of trust, fosters constructive dialogue, and re-envision communication as a vocation of hope. It concludes by articulating concrete ethical guidelines for communicators and outlining pathways for pastoral, academic, and institutional engagement aimed at fostering a more humane, morally grounded, and socially responsible media environment.

Introduction

In an age marked by digital saturation and rapid information flows, mass communication has become not merely a tool of influence but a primary architect of cultural, moral, and social consciousness. Media - whether institutional, digital, or grassroots - no longer passively reflects society; it actively forms the lenses through which reality is perceived and interpreted. Within this evolving landscape, Christian ethics offers a critical and constructive framework for evaluating the moral responsibilities of media practice.

This study examines the intersection of Christian moral thought and modern media through the framework of public theology, with a particular focus on the Roman Catholic Church's Jubilee Year 2025. Rooted in the biblical traditions of liberation and restoration, the Jubilee offers a theological and symbolic framework for societal renewal, calling communities to reconciliation, justice, and hope. When applied to the ethics of mass communication, the Jubilee becomes more than a liturgical event; it emerges as a vision for reforming media culture.

This paper aims to explore how Christian ethical perspectives, especially in the light of Jubilee 2025, can guide the formation of a moral media culture amid the challenges of digital transformation. It is a call to rethink not only what media does, but what media ought to be in a world longing for truth, trust, and ethical renewal. Through a synthesis of theological analysis and ethical critique, the study outlines practical guidelines for cultivating a moral media ethos attuned to truth, dignity, and the common good. The ethical dilemmas of contemporary media, ranging from disinformation and digital manipulation to populism and commodification, are brought to light. In doing so, it seeks to reimagine the vocation of media as a vehicle of truth-telling and social healing, resonating with the Christian call to be “salt of the earth and light of the world” (Matthew 5:13 - 14).

Rethinking Media at a Time of Ethical Crisis

In the 21st century, mass communication exerts an unprecedented influence on cultural values, public discourse, social behaviour and political consciousness. In a digitized and cyber-connected world, the power of media to shape societal narratives has grown rapidly. From news reporting and entertainment to political discourse and religious messaging, the media, especially in its digital and social forms, has a pervasive influence on how people perceive truth, reality, and morality. While technological advancements have brought

unforeseen speed and reach to communication, they have also ushered in complex ethical challenges that are increasingly difficult to navigate (John Paul II, 2000, 4). The document 'To Journalists on their Jubilee' mentions clearly the publication of 'Ethics in Communications' by the Pontifical Council for Social Communications.

Today's media landscape is marked by a crisis of credibility. The rise of social media has transformed every user into both a consumer and a potential publisher of content, leading to a flood of misinformation and disinformation that often spreads faster than verified facts. Platforms like Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), and TikTok are optimized for engagement, not accuracy, creating echo chambers and amplifying sensational or divisive content. The well-defined patterns designed by these platforms rewards emotional reactions over thoughtful discourse, making it harder for truth to stand out amidst the noise (The Church and Internet, 2002, 12).

Moreover, media business models, especially in commercial journalism, have increasingly prioritized profitability over public service. News is often tailored for clicks, not credibility; headlines are crafted to provoke, not to inform. This commodification of attention has led to a degradation of journalistic integrity, with ethical standards sacrificed in favour of speed, sensationalism, and being viral (Pope Francis, 2023a). Even traditional news outlets are pressured to adapt to the attention economy, often blurring the line between news and entertainment.

Adding to this complexity is the growing use of media as a tool for populism and ideological manipulation. In various parts of the world, political leaders and movements have co-opted media - particularly digital platforms - to shape narratives, marginalize dissent, and rally public support through polarizing rhetoric (Pope Francis, 2025). The media's potential to build bridges has instead been used, at times, to deepen societal divides, heightening mistrust and weakening democratic discourse (Ethics in Communications, 2000, 26).

In light of these concerns, Christian perspectives on media ethics offer a vital and often overlooked resource. Rooted in values such as truth, justice, human dignity, and reconciliation, Christian moral teaching invites both media producers and consumers to reflect more deeply on their responsibilities (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2015, 10). Public theology, which brings theological reflection into public life and societal issues, provides a framework for critically engaging with the media's role in shaping culture (Kim, 2015, 37).

Within this context, the Jubilee Year 2025, declared by the Roman Catholic Church, presents a timely moment for ethical reflection and renewal. Inspired by the biblical tradition of Jubilee - a time of liberation, forgiveness, and restoration - the Church invites the faithful to become agents of reconciliation and hope (Pope Francis, 2024a, 2). When applied to the realm of mass communication, the Jubilee themes urge us to reimagine media not merely as a tool for influence, but as a moral space where truth is honoured, relationships are healed, and the common good is pursued.

Public Theology and Mass Communication: A Framework for Christian Engagement

Public theology is a branch of theological reflection that seeks to engage religious thought with the broader societal context. It involves articulating faith-based perspectives on public issues, aiming to contribute to the common good in a pluralistic society. Stackhouse describes it as theology done by or for the public, or as it pertains to issues in the public sphere. The central concern of public theology is the application of faith to societal challenges and urgencies (Stackhouse, 2000, 59). In this view, public theology functions as an open newspaper: it makes accessible the mysteries of faith and moral wisdom to believers and non-believers alike. This approach emphasizes the moral responsibility of Christians to participate in public discourse, offering insights grounded in theological traditions. It encourages believers to act as prophetic witnesses, challenging societal injustices and advocating for ethical standards that reflect Christian values.

Public theology shares a close affinity with mass communication, as both aim to disseminate messages to a broad audience. Mass media, with its own mandate to inform and educate the public, shares this communicative vocation. Both aim to shape public consciousness and, when ethically guided, to elevate the moral discourse of society. The media serves as a conduit for information, shaping public opinion and cultural norms. Similarly, public theology seeks to make the mysteries of faith accessible to all, publicizing the nature of God, translating complex theological concepts into understandable language. This parallel underscores the potential for collaboration between theologians and media professionals in promoting ethical communication. According to De Wet (2010), prophetic public theology must include a vision of alternative community life, challenging dominant narratives and fostering renewal. By positioning Christian ethics as a guide for media behaviour, public theology offers a crucial counterbalance to the commercial and ideological currents of modern media (De Wet, 2014, 5).

In the context of the Catholic Church, documents such as '*Inter Mirifica*' highlights the importance of media in evangelization and moral formation (*Inter Mirifica*, 1963,16). The document emphasizes the need for media to uphold truth and promote values that align with human dignity

By integrating public theology with mass communication, Christians can engage more effectively with contemporary ethical challenges. This integration allows for a proactive approach in addressing issues such as misinformation, polarization, and the erosion of public trust. Through thoughtful engagement, public theology can contribute to the development of a moral media landscape that reflects the principles of truth, justice, and reconciliation.

Jubilee Year 2025: A Theological Context for Media Renewal

The Jubilee, as outlined in Leviticus 25, was a time of societal reset; the Jubilee tradition, rooted in biblical theology, serves as a profound framework for spiritual renewal and societal transformation. Originating from the Hebrew term *yobel* ('the blast of a horn', 'cry for joy'), the Jubilee was instituted in the Old Testament as a time of liberation, restoration, and proclamation of good news (Leviticus 25:10). The Jubilee Year openly called for the release of slaves, forgiveness of debts, and return of land, symbolizing a societal reset towards justice and equity. This tradition underscored the importance of hope and renewal in the community's life.

In the New Testament, Jesus embodies the Jubilee's spirit, proclaiming 'the year of the Lord's favour' (Luke 4:19), thus extending its significance to spiritual liberation and the advent of God's kingdom. The Catholic Church has continued this tradition, declaring Jubilee Years as periods of special grace, forgiveness, and renewal. Pope Francis, in his Bull of *Indiction Spes Non Confundit*, emphasizes hope as the central theme for the 2025 Jubilee, inviting the faithful to become 'pilgrims of hope' in a world fraught with challenges (Pope Francis, 2024b, 1). This hope must be translated into practice, especially in spaces such as media, which shape the cultural imagination and interpretation.

A moral media inspired by the Jubilee is one that heralds not despair but reconciliation; not division but unity; not falsehood but truth. The themes of reconciliation, renewal, and hope are particularly pertinent to the realm of mass communication. Modern media, while possessing the potential to disseminate uplifting and truthful narratives, often succumbs to sensationalism, misinformation, and negativity. This trend not only

distorts reality but also erodes public trust and fosters societal polarization. The Jubilee's call for renewal challenges media practitioners to reflect on their moral responsibilities and to prioritize content that fosters unity, truth, and hope. Mass media should be a platform for human flourishing, an agent of healing in a fractured world. Contemporary media, however, often serve as platforms for cynicism, exploitation, and division. To be Jubilee-oriented is to resist these trends and to become bearers of 'glad tidings' in both form and content.

Moreover, the Jubilee tradition's emphasis on proclaiming good news aligns with the fundamental purpose of mass media: to inform and uplift society. Just as the Jubilee heralded a time of joy and restoration, media outlets are called to highlight stories that inspire, educate, and promote the common good. By embracing the Jubilee's principles, media can transform into a conduit for positive change, countering the prevailing narratives of despair and division.

The Jubilee Year 2025 offers a timely opportunity for the media industry to undergo ethical reform, guided by the theological principles of reconciliation, renewal, and hope. By aligning media practices with these values, society can move towards a more truthful, just, and compassionate public discourse.

Christian Ethics and the Moral Dimensions of Mass Communication

Christian ethics, deeply rooted in the teachings of Scripture and the traditions of the Church, offers a comprehensive framework for evaluating the moral dimensions of mass communication. At its core, Christian morality is pro-truth, pro-life, pro-relationship, and pro-dignity. The principles of truth (John 8:32), justice (Isaiah 1:17), human dignity (Genesis 1:27), and reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18) are essential to an ethical media system. Central to this ethical perspective are the principles of truth, justice, human dignity, and reconciliation. These principles not only guide personal conduct but also inform the collective responsibilities of media institutions in shaping public discourse.

Truth: The Foundation of Ethical Communication

Truth is a fundamental tenet of Christian ethics, emphasizing honesty, transparency, and integrity in all forms of communication. The Catechism of the Catholic Church underscores the importance of truth-telling, stating that 'by the very nature of their profession, journalists have an obligation to serve the truth and not to offend against charity in disseminating information

(Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1997, 2497). In the context of mass media, this principle calls for accurate reporting, fact-checking, and a commitment to presenting information that reflects reality.

However, contemporary media landscapes often struggle with challenges such as misinformation, sensationalism, and the prioritization of speed over accuracy. These issues undermine public trust and distort the collective understanding of truth. Christian ethics urges media practitioners to resist these tendencies, advocating for a return to truthful and responsible journalism.

Justice: Advocating for Equity and Fairness

Justice, as a core Christian value, demands fairness, equity, and the protection of the marginalized. The social teaching of Catholic Church emphasizes that 'the pursuit of justice must be a fundamental norm of the state (Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, 2004, 203). In the realm of mass communication, this translates to equitable representation, giving voice to the voiceless, and challenging systemic injustices.

Media outlets have the power to shape societal narratives and influence public opinion. Therefore, they bear the responsibility of highlighting issues of social justice, exposing corruption, and promoting policies that advance the common good. Christian ethics calls on media professionals to use their platforms to advocate for justice and to challenge structures that perpetuate inequality.

Human Dignity: Respecting the Inherent Worth of Every Person

The principle of human dignity asserts that every individual is created in the image of God and possesses inherent worth. This belief is foundational to Christian ethics and informs the Church's approach to social issues. The Declaration of the Second Vatican Council *Dignitatis Humanae* affirms that all men are to be immune from coercion (*Dignitatis Humanae*, 1965, 2).

In mass communication, respecting human dignity involves portraying individuals and communities with accuracy, avoiding stereotypes, and refraining from content that dehumanizes or exploits. Media professionals are called to uphold the dignity of all persons, ensuring that their work contributes to a culture of respect and empathy.

Reconciliation: Healing Divisions and Promoting Unity

Reconciliation is a central theme in Christian theology, emphasizing the restoration of relationships and the healing of divisions. Paul writes about the ministry of reconciliation, stating that 'God has given us the ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18). In the context of mass media, this principle encourages content that fosters dialogue, understanding, and unity among diverse groups.

Modern media often amplifies polarization and conflict, contributing to societal fragmentation. Christian ethics challenges media practitioners to counteract these trends by promoting narratives that bridge divides, encourage empathy, and facilitate constructive conversations. By doing so, media can serve as a catalyst for reconciliation and social cohesion.

The Pro-Life, Pro-Relationship, and Pro-Human Stance of Christian Ethics

Christian ethics is inherently pro-life, advocating for the sanctity of life at all stages. It is pro-relationship, emphasizing the importance of community, family, and interpersonal connections. It is pro-human, championing the rights, dignity, and flourishing of every individual. These stances challenge media practices that devalue life, exploit relationships, or undermine human dignity.

Unfortunately, much of today's media is antithetical to these values. It often prioritizes profit over people, sensationalism over substance, and division over unity. Thieving on scandal, promoting materialism, and ignoring the needs of the poor and marginalized, the contemporary media tendencies are at odds with the ethical imperatives of Christianity. A Christian media ethic requires a radical reorientation towards these foundational values, recognizing the power of communication as a moral and spiritual vocation. By realigning media practices with Christian ethical principles, there is potential to transform mass communication into a force that upholds life, nurtures relationships, and honours the human person.

Contemporary Ethical Challenges in Media: A Christian Critique

As demonstrated, the contemporary media landscape is increasingly characterized by ethical disruptions that undermine foundational Christian principles such as truth, justice, human dignity, and reconciliation. Among the most urgent concerns are four interrelated phenomena - misinformation and disinformation, media polarization and the proliferation of echo chambers,

sensationalism coupled with the erosion of truth, and the rise of digital manipulation, particularly through the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in journalism. These challenges demand critical scrutiny through the moral lens of Christian ethics, which offers a theologically grounded framework for reorienting media practice toward the common good.

Misinformation and Disinformation

Misinformation refers to the unintentional spread of false information, while disinformation involves the deliberate dissemination of falsehoods to deceive or manipulate audiences. Both phenomena erode public trust and distort the collective understanding of truth. Pope Francis has condemned the spread of disinformation, likening it to a 'sin' and emphasizing that it 'diverts attention from real problems and leads to confusion' (Pope Francis, 2018, 4).

From a Christian ethical standpoint, the propagation of falsehoods violates the Eighth Commandment, 'You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour' (Exodus 20:16). The Catechism of the Catholic Church underscores the gravity of this sin, stating that 'a lie consists in speaking a falsehood with the intention of deceiving' and that it 'offends against the fundamental relation of man and of his word to the Lord' (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1997, 2482). The proliferation of digital platforms has aggravated the spread of misinformation and disinformation. For instance, during the COVID-19 pandemic, certain media outlets disseminated false information about the virus and vaccines, leading to public confusion and health risks. Such actions not only endanger lives but also contravene the Christian imperative to uphold truth and protect the vulnerable.

Media Polarization and Echo Chambers

Media polarization refers to the division of audiences into distinct ideological groups, often reinforced by echo chambers - environments where individuals are exposed only to information that confirms their existing beliefs. It has created isolated digital communities where people only encounter views that affirm their own biases. This phenomenon fosters division, hampers constructive dialogue, and undermines social cohesion. Christian ethics emphasizes the importance of unity and reconciliation (Ephesians 4:3). Media practices that worsen polarization run counter to this call for unity.

The growing reliance on algorithm-driven content curation in social media has significantly contributed to the formation of digital echo chambers - online spaces where users are primarily exposed to information that aligns with their

pre-existing beliefs. This narrowing of perspective reduces opportunities for meaningful engagement with diverse viewpoints and reinforces ideological, cultural, and religious biases. In the South Asian context, for instance, algorithmic filtering often amplifies religiously biased content, leading to the proliferation of Hindu, Islamic, and Buddhist echo chambers. These digital feed stores have, at times, intensified sectarian tensions, contributing to social unrest and undermining communal cohesion. Such fragmentation contradicts the Christian ethical imperative to seek truth, foster mutual understanding, and build bridges across divisions. In light of this, media professionals bear a moral responsibility to curate and disseminate content that reflects diverse perspectives, encourages interfaith dialogue, and contributes to the healing and unity of pluralistic societies.

Sensationalism and the Erosion of Truth

Sensationalism involves the use of shocking or exaggerated content to attract attention, often at the expense of accuracy and depth. This practice prioritizes entertainment over information, leading to the erosion of truth and public trust.

Christian ethics upholds the virtue of truthfulness. Sensationalist media, by distorting facts and amplifying trivialities, undermines this virtue. Moreover, it detracts from the media's role in informing the public and contributing to the common good.

A recent example of media sensationalism in India is the coverage following the April 22, 2025, terrorist attack in Pahalgam, Kashmir. The Indian media's response to this tragic incident, particularly from pro-government outlets, was marked by sensationalist and Islamophobic narratives which escalated communal tensions by making inflammatory statements, including calls for extreme measures against Pakistani nationals and Indian Muslims.

The commodification of attention has incentivized emotional manipulation and sensationalism degrades the dignity of subjects and misleads audiences. Such instances highlight the ethical responsibility of media to prioritize truth over sensational appeal.

Digital Manipulation and AI in Journalism: Ethical Challenges and Christian Imperatives

The integration of digital technologies and artificial intelligence (AI) has fundamentally reshaped journalistic practices, facilitating unprecedented speed in content creation and dissemination. While platforms like Magisterium AI - described as a leading Catholic AI offering instant, tradition-

rooted answers - promise enhanced access to trustworthy information, these advancements simultaneously introduce complex ethical challenges. The proliferation of AI-generated deepfakes, automated content, and sophisticated image manipulation techniques raises critical concerns about audience deception and the erosion of informational integrity.

Drawing from Christian ethical frameworks, there is need to argue for a responsible and discerning approach to technology, grounded in principles of stewardship and the promotion of human dignity. As the Catechism of the Catholic Church affirms, "Science and technology are precious resources when placed at the service of man and promote his integral development for the benefit of all" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1997, 2293). However, the misuse of these tools presents significant risks to individuals and societal well-being.

Media ethicist Alexander Filipović cautions against the emergence of a 'post-editorial society,' characterized by a diminished gatekeeping role for traditional editors and the unchecked dissemination of information (Filipović, 2021, 51). This evolving media landscape necessitates a renewed commitment to ethical standards in journalism, ensuring that technological innovations are harnessed to serve truth, transparency, and the common good, thereby fostering a more just and informed public sphere.

Emerging Trends in Digital Media and their Ethical Implications

The rapid evolution of digital media technologies - encompassing artificial intelligence, social media algorithms, deepfakes, and influencer culture - has introduced complex ethical challenges. These developments often conflict with Christian ethical principles, particularly concerning human dignity, truthfulness, and moral responsibility. Moreover, the pervasive use of media as a surface for unethical behaviours, including the propagation of sexually explicit content and the pursuit of popularity at the expense of truth, necessitates a critical examination through a Christian moral lens.

AI-Generated Content and the Erosion of Truth

AI technologies capable of producing text, images, and videos indistinguishable from human-created content have blurred the lines between reality and fabrication. The emergence of deepfakes - manipulated media that can depict individuals saying or doing things they never did - poses significant threats to truth and authenticity. Such technologies can be exploited to spread misinformation, damage reputations, and manipulate public opinion.

From a Christian ethical perspective, truth is paramount. The deliberate creation and dissemination of false information through AI-generated content completely eliminate truth and wear away the trust essential for societal cohesion.

Furthermore, the use of AI in generating deceptive content challenges the Christian understanding of human uniqueness and creativity, as humans are created in the image of God (*imago Dei*) (Genesis 1:27). The Lausanne Movement emphasizes that while AI can mimic human tasks, it lacks the spiritual dimension intrinsic to human beings, and thus, its use must be guided by ethical considerations that uphold human dignity.

Social Media Algorithms and Manipulation of Desires

Social media platforms use content-sorting rules to decide what users see. They employ automated systems designed to maximize user engagement, often by exploiting psychological vulnerabilities. These automated systems can lead users into echo chambers, reinforce biases, and prioritize sensational or emotionally charged content over factual information. Moreover, they can expose users to sexually explicit or morally questionable material, contributing to the normalization of such content.

Christian ethics calls for the cultivation of virtues such as self-control, purity, and the pursuit of truth (Philippians 4:8). The manipulation of user behaviour through automated systems undermines these virtues by encouraging impulsivity, lust, and the consumption of misleading information.

Deepfakes and the Undermining of Trust

Deepfake technology, which uses AI to create hyper-realistic but fake images, videos and audio recordings, poses significant ethical concerns. These fabricated media can be used to impersonate individuals, spread false information, and perpetrate fraud. The potential for deepfakes to disrupt democratic processes, defame individuals, and erode public trust is profound.

The Christian commitment to truth and integrity is fundamentally at odds with the deceptive nature of deepfakes. The use of deepfakes to deceive others constitutes a grave violation of this principle.

Influencer Culture and the Commodification of the Self

The rise of influencer culture, driven by social media platforms, has led to the commodification of personal identity and relationships. Individuals curate

their online personas to attract followers and monetize their presence, often prioritizing popularity over authenticity. This pursuit can lead to the promotion of materialism, vanity, and the objectification of the self and others.

Christian ethics emphasizes humility, authenticity, and the intrinsic worth of every person as created in God's image (Romans 12:2). The focus of the influencer culture on external validation and self-promotion runs counter to these values, potentially leading individuals away from a life centred on spiritual growth and service to others.

Media as a Cover for Immorality and the Promotion of Lust

Modern media often serves as a platform for the propagation of sexually explicit content and the normalization of lustful behaviour. This trend not only desensitizes audiences to immorality but also exploits human sexuality for profit, reducing individuals to mere objects of desire. Such representations can distort perceptions of healthy relationships and contribute to the degradation of societal moral standards.

Christian teachings uphold the sanctity of human sexuality within the context of marriage and emphasize the importance of chastity and respect for the human body. Jesus teaches that even looking at someone lustfully constitutes adultery in the heart (Matthew 5:28). The media's role in promoting lustful content directly contradicts these teachings and contributes to the moral decay of society.

Christian Ethical Responses and the Call for Moral Discernment

Amidst the mounting ethical challenges posed by today's digital media landscape, Christian ethics offers a comprehensive and theologically grounded framework for moral discernment and responsible engagement. At the heart of this framework lies the commitment to truth and authenticity - values that call for the creation and dissemination of content that upholds the inherent dignity of every person. This ethical commitment not only resists the distortion of facts and the manipulation of narratives but also affirms communication as a sacred vocation directed toward justice, reconciliation, and the common good.

Equally vital is the cultivation of digital literacy, particularly among younger generations who navigate a rapidly evolving media environment. Christian ethics encourages the development of critical thinking and moral awareness to evaluate online content, resist the lure of manipulative platforms, and engage constructively in the digital public sphere (IGI Global, 2022). This includes

challenging the passive consumption of information and instead fostering a reflective, virtue-based approach to media interaction—grounded in humility, self-control, and compassion.

A further imperative is the ethical development and regulation of emerging technologies. Christian thought urges collaboration between ethicists, technologists, and policymakers to ensure that innovations such as artificial intelligence and algorithmic systems remain human-centred, transparent, and oriented toward human flourishing (*Antiqua et Nova*, 2025,48). The deployment of technology must never come at the expense of truth, agency, or dignity, and thus requires ongoing ethical scrutiny guided by Christian moral reasoning.

Moreover, Christian ethics calls for a prophetic witness against the normalization of immorality in media, especially the exploitation of sexuality and the commodification of the human body. The increasing prevalence of sexually objectifying content and sensationalized reporting reflects a cultural drift from moral accountability. Faith communities must speak into this space with clarity and conviction, offering an alternative vision grounded in the sacredness of the person and the integrity of human relationships.

In this context, faith-based media initiatives stand out as hopeful signs of moral journalism, offering models of how Christian values can shape media practice in ethically responsible ways. Unlike much of mainstream media, which often prioritizes sensationalism over substance, several Christian media platforms strive to uphold the ideals of truth, justice, and human dignity.

Vatican News exemplifies this commitment by consistently delivering ethical, globally-minded journalism aligned with Catholic social teaching. Pope Francis has emphasized the vocation of journalists as 'builders of peace', entrusted with the delicate task of fostering understanding rather than division. Similarly, Salt + Light Media, a Canadian Catholic media apostolate, creatively integrates the Gospel with contemporary storytelling, addressing complex political and cultural issues through a lens of hope and compassion. EWTN (Eternal Word Television Network), while widely influential, reflects the challenges faced by religious broadcasting when theological fidelity intersects with political ideology. Pope Francis has notably critiqued elements of its programming for contributing to ecclesial division and fostering ideological partisanship (Pope Francis, 2023b).

At a grassroots level, digital outreach initiatives such as those supported by the Lausanne Movement are pioneering relational, community-driven forms of media evangelization. These movements often avoid institutional

entanglements and instead prioritize authenticity, dialogue, and prophetic engagement with digital culture.

Together, these faith-based efforts provide meaningful counter-narratives to the ethical shortcomings of mainstream media, where the unchecked spread of misinformation, ideological polarization, and commercial sensationalism have eroded public trust and journalistic integrity. Christian ethics, in contrast, offers a moral compass oriented toward truth-telling, solidarity, and the building of genuine community. In doing so, it challenges both individuals and institutions to envision and enact a media culture that reflects the values of the Gospel and contributes to the healing of a fragmented world.

Towards a Moral Media: Proposing Guidelines for Ethical Christian Communication

In the contemporary media landscape, characterized by rapid technological advancements and pervasive digital platforms, the imperative for ethical communication grounded in Christian values has never been more pressing. Drawing from theological insights and addressing current challenges, this section proposes actionable guidelines for fostering a moral media environment that is greener, positive, optimistic, and oriented towards the marginalized.

Upholding Truth and Authenticity

Central to Christian ethics is the commitment to truth. Media practitioners are called to resist the allure of sensationalism and instead prioritize accurate, comprehensive reporting. Pope Francis emphasizes that communication should be 'an instrument for building, not for destroying; for meeting, not for clashing; for dialoguing, not for monologizing' (Pope Francis, 2023b). This entails rigorous fact-checking, transparency in sourcing, and a dedication to presenting nuanced perspectives.

Promoting Human Dignity and Solidarity

Christian communication must affirm the inherent dignity of every individual. Media content should avoid dehumanizing language and imagery, instead highlighting stories that foster empathy and solidarity. The Pontifical Council for Social Communications asserts that media should 'help people live well and function as persons in community' encouraging mutual responsibility and respect (Ethics in Communications, 2000, 30).

Advocating for the Marginalized

A moral media prioritizes the voices of the marginalized, ensuring their stories are heard and their issues addressed. This aligns with the Church's preferential option for the poor and vulnerable. By amplifying underrepresented perspectives, media can challenge systemic injustices and promote inclusivity.

Embracing Environmental Responsibility

In response to ecological crises, media organizations are encouraged to adopt sustainable practices and promote environmental stewardship. Pope Francis's encyclical *Laudato Si* calls for an 'integral ecology' that recognizes the interconnectedness of social and environmental issues (*Laudato Si*, 2015, 37). Media can contribute by raising awareness about environmental challenges and modelling eco-friendly 'green media' operations.

Encouraging Hope and Positivity

Amidst prevalent narratives of despair, Christian communication should offer messages of hope and resilience. By focusing on stories of compassion, innovation, and positive change, media can inspire constructive engagement and foster a culture of optimism.

Navigating Technological Ethics

The rise of artificial intelligence and digital manipulation presents ethical dilemmas in media production. The Vatican warns that AI has 'the shadow of evil' in its potential to spread misinformation and undermine societal foundations (Vatican News, 2025). Media professionals must critically assess the use of emerging technologies, ensuring they serve the common good and uphold ethical standards.

Fostering Media Literacy and Education

Empowering audiences with media literacy is essential for discerning consumption. Educational initiatives should aim to develop critical thinking skills, enabling individuals to navigate complex media environments responsibly. The Church advocates for media education that forms 'standards of good taste and truthful moral judgment' (Ethics in Communications, 2000, 33).

By integrating these guidelines, media can evolve into a force that reflects Christian ethical principles, promoting truth, dignity, and hope. Such a moral media landscape not only counters prevailing negativities but also contributes to the flourishing of a just and compassionate society.

Integrating the Jubilee Vision: Reconciliation and Renewal in the Media Sphere

The Jubilee Year, rooted in biblical tradition, is a time of restoration, forgiveness, and hope. In Leviticus 25, the Jubilee is proclaimed as a period for releasing debts, freeing captives, and allowing the land to rest - a holistic renewal of society. Pope Francis, in the Bull of Indiction for the Jubilee Year 2025, titled *Spes Non Confundit* (Hope Does Not Disappoint), emphasizes that hope is the central message of the coming Jubilee, encouraging the faithful to be 'Pilgrims of Hope' in a world fraught with challenges (Pope Francis, 2024b, 1)

Applying the Jubilee themes to the media sphere involves a transformative approach that seeks to restore trust, promote dialogue, and foster healing in a divided world.

Restoring Trust through Truthful Communication

The media holds significant power in shaping public perception. However, the proliferation of misinformation and sensationalism has eroded public trust. In the spirit of the Jubilee, media practitioners are called to a renewed commitment to truthfulness, ensuring that their work contributes to the common good and fosters trust within society.

Promoting Dialogue and Understanding

The Jubilee calls for the healing of relationships and the building of a more just society. Media can play a crucial role in this by facilitating constructive dialogue and understanding among diverse groups. Pope John Paul II, in his apostolic letter *Il Rapido Sviluppo*, highlights the media's capacity to promote dialogue and cooperation, stating that the media aid the Church in spreading the Gospel and religious values, promoting dialogue and cooperation, and defending the moral and ethical principles (Pope John Paul II, 2005, 2).

Fostering Healing in a Divided World

The modern media landscape often reflects and amplifies societal divisions. The Jubilee's emphasis on forgiveness and renewal offers a framework for media to become agents of healing. This involves moving away from polarizing content and towards narratives that highlight shared human experiences and the possibility of redemption.

The Church's teaching encourages media to help people live well and function as persons in community, promoting mutual responsibility and respect. By embracing this vision, media can contribute to the healing of societal wounds and the building of a more compassionate world.

Reintegrating the Proclamation of Good News

At its core, the term 'gospel' means 'good news'. The original purpose of mass media, especially within a Christian context, is to disseminate messages that uplift, inform, and inspire. The Church has long recognized the potential of media to evangelize and spread the message of salvation. Pope Paul VI emphasized that the Church would feel guilty before the Lord if it failed to use the media for evangelization (Pope Paul VI, 1975, 45).

In the Jubilee context, media are called to return to this foundational purpose of proclaiming messages of hope, love, and truth that resonate with the human spirit and reflect the divine message.

Conclusion: Reimagining the Role of Christian Ethics in the Future of Media

This paper has sought to examine how Christian ethics, anchored in the principles of truth, justice, human dignity, and reconciliation, can provide a transformative vision for mass communication in a fragmented and technologically driven world. Grounded in the themes of the Jubilee Year 2025 proclaimed by Pope Francis - reconciliation, renewal, and hope - the study has highlighted how faith-based moral vision can counter the ethical crisis gripping contemporary media.

One of the central findings is that current media practices, particularly in the global South Asian context, often fall short of this ethical vision. Church-owned and Christian media outlets, while rooted in a spiritual mission, frequently align themselves with institutional power structures. Rather than speaking prophetically on behalf of the poor and voiceless, many platforms resort to glorifying ecclesial hierarchies and political elites, using ornate language and visual opulence that often mask the deeper needs of society (Diosnel, 1994, 52). This tendency reflects a distortion of the Church's communicative vocation - a retreat from the margins to the mainstream.

As Pope Francis strongly states, 'The Church is not an NGO', but rather 'a field hospital after battle' (Pope Francis, 2013). The implication for Church-based media is clear: they must recover their prophetic role and resist the temptation to curry favour with powerful figures at the expense of truth and social

responsibility. The preferential option for the poor, a core principle of Catholic Social Teaching (Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 2004), must animate both content and editorial practice.

Furthermore, the study has demonstrated that emerging digital trends - AI content, algorithmic biases, deepfakes, and influencer cultures - present new ethical frontiers that Christian media must navigate. Without a renewed theological and moral framework, there is a risk that even Church media will be swept into the vortex of popularity-driven and profit-oriented journalism, compromising the gospel imperative of truth and justice.

To counter prevailing ethical distortions in media, a moral media must be reimagined as greener, advocating for ecological responsibility and sustainable digital practices; more optimistic, highlighting narratives of hope, resilience, and healing; more inclusive, centering marginalized voices rather than institutional prestige; and more prophetic, challenging unjust power structures and offering Gospel-rooted alternatives.

In light of this vision, several strategic recommendations emerge. Future research should explore the theological and ethical dimensions of AI and algorithmic bias in communication. Media literacy programmes must be implemented within ecclesial institutions to cultivate discerning and ethically grounded media engagement. Pastoral initiatives should encourage grassroots and community-based storytelling that reflects Jubilee themes of reconciliation and renewal. Finally, ecclesial oversight must ensure that Church media remains accountable to its evangelical mission, proclaiming good news to the poor (Luke 4:18) and resisting complicity with power.

The Jubilee Year 2025 is more than a symbolic observance; it is a timely invitation to reform Christian media from within. It calls for a shift from prestige to prophetic witness, from popularity to truth, and from media as control to media as communion. Christian communicators are thus summoned not to echo authority, but to become heralds of justice, mercy, and hope in a fractured world.

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