

6/3/04

JASON HAMILTON (1)

Dear Sir/Madam,

in response to your review I am writing to you about my own thoughts on the 'future of the BBC' -

In the past I have always valued the impartiality of the BBC especially over sensitive issues (Race, Religion, world news) etc To some degree I still do so, but now I rate the BBC evening news and Radio news no more than the other TV and radio programmes. I especially am disappointed in the way and subjects of their news programmes eg I used to 'swear by' the impartiality and objectivity of Radio 4 news and 'PM' in particular. Again I find increasingly the tendency towards "sensational" issues, sexual scandals, murder investigations etc, while these are indeed "news" items, I find there is a 'tabloid' 'gossipy' sense to the 'PM' programme and TV news programmes so that less and less do I value their (unspoken) opinions and supposed objectivity and find that there is a definite 'political correctness' which

excludes often the very people and news stories which I for one want to hear more of (eg. more world events) objectively covered. Recently I was quite sickened by the coverage of the new ^{US Presidential} Democrat candidate Kerry. Nearly everyone covered talked of how much 'potential' he had, his friends spoke, his 'good election' chances etc. Over the same period of time, any mention of Bush was at best cynical and brief. Is this objectivity??

Sometimes I enjoy '5-hiz' since it seems to allow for more genuine debate as opposed to ^{the} 'mask' of integrity which I find in so much of the ^{other} BBC news reporting.

It is good that there are more coloured ethnic minorities represented on the ~~staff~~ / presenters of the BBC, but again these too can be 'masks' of integrity if there is no real representation and quality coverage given to those social groupings - groupings that are not politically in vogue at the minute

I was again quite sickened by the recent 'Gilligan' controversy in which the head of the BBC stepped down. I heard presenters on TV and radio outraged that the Government should 'dare' to challenge the workings of this 'bastion of free speech' when I as a practising (Catholic) Christian find that whenever my beliefs are presented it is either a reporter telling us how ill the Pope is; a Panorama programme 'Sex and the Holy City' as the BBC's offering on the issue of AID's proliferation which was the most frighteningly biased (again under the 'mask' of objectivity) programme I have yet seen, or a ~~seemingly~~ 'Christian' series done by a seemingly free-lance Anglican vicar who portrays mere of his own and (yes other peoples) doubts, ^{Church} un-belief scandals, and so on than any of the ^{positive} 'truths' (yes there are in fact many positive and amazing stories, miracles which have been medically verified) of our faith that we as Christians are proud to believe in. Perhaps 'Popetown', the threatened new

Cartoon on the Vatican sums up the way the BBC regards the Catholic Church and thereafter any Christian or Religious group who holds values which differ from the rest of society?

I hope that in this review you will listen to the growing numbers of Catholics, Christians and other Religious groups who feel increasingly unrepresented and slandered by the BBC. I find it very sad and increasingly scary. eg. Lets see the BBC give Pro-life groups a real chance to express their arguments, lets see young Christians and especially young Catholics and Priests and Bishops given quality time on TV and radio without the doctoring and selective reporting and a... they seem to receive so often now.

Enough of these 'taken' Christian offerings - if C.S. Lewis, J.R. Tolkien, G.K. Chesterton, and indeed many the Great Britons we are so ready to quote (selectively) from today, were still alive I somehow doubt

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whether they would be very impressed by the objectivity or impartiality of the BBC today.

How should the BBC be accountable you ask? By listening to the opinions of Catholics, Hindus, Atheists, Evangelical Christians and giving them as fair a chance to 'dictate' the programmes on the BBC as much as you do the rest of society.

By not doing so, you are being as 'racist' and biased towards us as institutions used to be towards coloured people in the past.

I'm sorry if this all sounds terribly negative - I guess it's because I used to value the BBC so highly in the past and find the subtle change so worrying for the future of

'Free speech'. On a more positive note -

- I do enjoy much of the 6.30 Comedy on Radio 4 still !! Also, the nature programmes

and the Simpsons! Apart from that I now prefer Christian radio and TV as I know many of my friends do. About 30 of my friends no longer watch TV (ie pay their license) and this number is growing. Thankyou for your time and patience!

Yours Sincerely

John Hamilton

APPENDIX

Please note - I think I was venting a lot of frustration over the BBC's increasingly ^{unChristian and} anti-Christian ethos, but ^{in my main letter} I (as a Christian and a Catholic) do enjoy many of your radio programmes such as the Comedy, 'Just a Minute', 'From our own Correspondent', the 'disability' programming, historical stories etc. all of which I find excellent! I also thoroughly enjoy some of our local BBC programmes 'Give my head Peace', recent Comedy and the Radio Ulster programmes for example.

As Catholics, we believe that God works through everything that is good, loving, positive, uplifting and like, St. Woddy says - everything that's beautiful! - Again within the boundaries of the 'natural-law' (ie. the unspoken code of morality which is common to all people of Goodwill.)

With this in mind, I would love to see more of the quality, objective, good natured

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programmes the BBC is capable of producing.
Surely these sitcoms, Soaps and drama series about
murders and adultery, swindling and crime are
merely feeding this negativity and cynicism which is
robbing every household with a TV of the peace,
hope, joy and love which everyone knows are the
things which make life worth living!

Thanks again for your time and patience
Yours Sincerely, Jason Hamilton