

24/7 News

I have Google alerts set to make me aware of the latest news stories as they are breaking. With mobile phones and internet we are never more than a couple of clicks away from what the media is bombarding us with. So it is all too easy to be desensitized to the human suffering depicted so graphically in the headlines. One of the films which has had the biggest impact on me in recent years is City of God

24/7 news broadcasting
real-time footage
from behind enemy lines
podcasts downloaded
to view at convenience
web-blogs offering instant comment
from Joe public
mobile phones bleep
with the latest news bulletin
the signs of the times.

So much devastating news
so many real life tragedies
so much intrusion into personal stories
so little respect for human dignity
an overwhelming flow of pain
a tidal wave of need
an unheard clamour of injustice
the occasional feel good story
to give us a glimmer of hope
the signs of the times.

An overload of information
a din of words and pictures
each trying to make an impact
to captivate our attention
so we don't flick channels
of switch off and complain of compassion fatigue
we become de-sensitised
numb to the pain depicted on our screens
unable to ask the unasked questions
the signs of the times.

The signs of the times
are real life people
grandparents, mothers, fathers
children and grandchildren
cites, towns and villages
homes filled with colour
and the knickknacks we can't throw away
laughter and tears
joy and pain
birth and death.

God of all time
help us to read the signs of the times
to feel the emotions of human stories
the pain of family lives torn apart
the horror and ugliness of conflict
the joy of creativity and achievement
the hope of birth and children playing
the laughter and celebration of a beautiful world
we pray for the people behind the media attention
help us to not only read but to feel, the signs of the times.

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