

**Mass Media  
for Better or Worse**

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**1993**

## Mass Media: For Better or Worse

### I. Introduction

Development of enmity in Cold War preparation led to the greatest ever threat to Life on Earth short of a Galactic accident - Nuclear Omnicide.<sup>1</sup> Courageous activism of inspired groups and individuals and the Grace of God helped avert the ultimate disaster.

In the same period, Mass Media still continue to undergo profound changes which may affect the rights and responsibilities of people throughout the world.

This is an exploration of some issues of public concern with implications for freedom, responsibility and democratic maturity.

In her "Agenda for the Future" Salvation Army General Eva Burrows wrote:

**Section 4. To emphasize the Christian ethic as the significant influence in establishing a moral society:**

*To understand the powerful influence of the media and their impact on social values. To see how The Salvation Army can more effectively utilize the media in its mission, and at the same time alert salvationists to their right to challenge the often misleading and harmful presentations of violence and the so called 'good life'.<sup>2</sup>*

### II. Image

Visions and their symbolic representation as words, icons and images are a part of life. Imagery and visualization are key motivators. Symbols can be models of thinking and patterns for behavior. "Where there is no vision the people perish, but he that keepeth the Law, happy is he."<sup>3</sup>

Heaven and Hell have equivalents in all cultures.<sup>4</sup> Like the donkey we may spend our days between the carrot and the stick. Lifetime experience can provide holistic insight but "In much wisdom is much suffering, and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow."<sup>5</sup> Parables and folklore are images with purpose.

Dreams can have great import and their interpretation was the prerogative of royal advisers (Daniel) and modern psychiatrists. Likewise, all products of mind, person and culture are windows of the soul, sometimes with capacity for influence.

People have always been influenced by visions - The Holy City, Heaven on Earth, Hell on Earth, World Socialism, Deutschland Uber Alles, Greater Serbia etc. Vision can people to great achievements and wonders - The Great Pyramid and the 1968 Moon Landing.

McLuhan claims that modern media developments are changing Western script oriented mentality (left brain) prevalent since Plato and Aristotle into a right hemisphere dominant mode he calls global robotism.<sup>6</sup>

### III. Reality

This 20th century is already blighted with more than 167,000,000 political deaths, many ascribable to "class or ethnic cleansing." This is more than the world total of previous carnage in this Century of Megadeath.<sup>7</sup>

There is a relationship between a reality and the images it generates. Serious problems may develop when infectious images of a corrupted reality are projected. Tolstoy said

<sup>1</sup> Trust, Deterrence and Nuclear Omnicide, A Galnick, Political Psychology, V9,N1,p175-188, 1988, "The destruction of life would be so complete that only the term nuclear omnicide would be applicable."

<sup>2</sup> Agenda for the Future #4, General Eva Burrows, The Salvation Army Handbook, 1988.

<sup>3</sup> Proverbs, 29:18.

<sup>4</sup> Heaven, Earth and Hell: Reflections on Mentality, AR Wilcock, 1993.

<sup>5</sup> Ecclesiastes 1:18.

<sup>6</sup> The Global Village: Transformations in World Life and Media in the 21st Century, M McLuhan & BR Powers, Oxford University Press, 1989.

<sup>7</sup> Out of Control, Zbigniew Brzezinski, McMillan, 1993.

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that the purpose of art is to infect.<sup>8</sup>  
Advertising has such a systematic purpose.

### IV. Mentality

Individual images and experiences of reality may have discrete or focal physiological effects. Multiple images and experiences contribute to individual and to group mentality.

Mentality may be natural, accidental or directed by a vision, "dream," ideology or purpose. There have been many attempts in human history to influence or direct mentality for better and for worse.<sup>9</sup>

The ways by which experience and knowledge are assimilated and ordered have important results.

Bitter 20th century experience suggests that choices and hazards in communication of knowledge, images, dreams and visions is of deep concern for the sake of future civilization.<sup>10</sup>

### V. Mass Media

Media is plural of medium - a channel or instrument of communication - and also one enabling spirits to communicate.

Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.<sup>11</sup>

Early public communication used oratory, drama and mystery plays. Communication became more shareable with the invention of writing and literacy, but mass distribution came later.

Today Mass Media imply information flood, perhaps even a communications explosion.

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<sup>8</sup> What is Art, Leo Tolstoy, Oxford.

<sup>9</sup> Heaven, Earth and Hell: Reflections on Mentality, AR Wilcock, 1993.

<sup>10</sup> Hitler and Stalin: Parallel Lives, Bullock, Knopf, 1992.

### A. History

Egypt produced the papyrus that sustained the Roman Empire,<sup>12</sup> then there was parchment.

Pioneer printer Joannes Gutenberg led the first media revolution enabling mass circulation of the Holy Bible (1455) and classic works. This was the main technical mass medium until the 20th century.

In the 18th century propagandist Sam Adams was acclaimed as Father of the American Revolution.<sup>13</sup> Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence, and co-authored the French Revolution's Declaration of the Rights of Man.<sup>14</sup>

In pre-Revolutionary France - ballet was invented as a form of public communication by mime when it was forbidden to verbally criticize Le Roi.

In the 19th century, social communication occurred mainly through books and pamphlets. Social conscience was awakened particularly through the works of Dickens and Tolstoy. William Booth's "In Darkest England and the Way Out"<sup>15</sup> was the blueprint that became the Welfare State.

The 20th century brought telecommunication, radio, film, and eventually worldwide digital and satellite television news gathering and distribution.

Lenin and Hitler used traditional social communications, but also exploited the new 20th century mass media methods.

The techniques and capabilities available to modern mass media are enjoying several recent creative explosions. They benefit

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<sup>11</sup> 1 John, 4:1.

<sup>12</sup> War and Peace in the Global Village, M McLuhan & Q Fiore, Touchstone, 1968, p25.

<sup>13</sup> Sam Adams: Pioneer in Propaganda, IC Miller, Stanford Univ Press, 1936.

<sup>14</sup> Thomas Jefferson: A Life, WS Randall, Holt, 1993, American p272-5, French p486-7.

<sup>15</sup> In Darkest England and the Way Out, William Booth, The Salvation Army, 1890.

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enormously from 20th century electronic, computer and information revolutions.

Available multimedia computers<sup>16</sup> now offer television producers broadcast quality Desktop Video Workstations on microcomputers.<sup>17</sup>

Within two years there will be yet another media explosion with full digital worldwide media integration and accessibility. Full length feature films will be available on 5" CDROMs. Telephone and audiovisual media will be functionally integrated using broadband distribution. The resultant effects on human mentality and culture are still unknown.<sup>18</sup>

Modern details of film and television production are multidisciplinary and are able to coordinate the highest available levels of talent and expertise into a totally programmed product.<sup>19</sup> This "creation made by hands" is in general anthropocentric and is having a profound spiritual impact upon the mentality of mankind on a global scale. The metaphor of the industrial revolution most likely applies--that shiny "new lamps for old" may bring unanticipated, hidden surprises for the unwary. There are two main forms and purposes for communication:

### B. Information

This may be divided theoretically into objective Fact and subjective or motivated Opinion/Fiction. In practice, the distinction is frequently blurred through processes and techniques such as selection, exclusion and intentional choice. We see what we want to see...

Today there is a plethora of global news sometimes broadcast "as it happens." This is a

phenomenal, technical, human achievement. Here too distortion may occur through selection and exclusion by "framing the story" or "putting a spin on it."

### 1. Education

Television already competes profoundly with formal education in terms of hours, content and influence. Undeniably it can be highly educational and very valuable. The content of television does not please everyone. Danger is seen as well as benefit.<sup>20</sup> It may be the greatest thief of time ever invented.

### 2. Telepersuasion

Mass media may also serve persuasion and propaganda. Television became the principle turf for U.S. political competition (1974 U.S. Presidential election). This role for television meets with both enthusiasm and skepticism.<sup>21</sup> Professional documentaries begin with a statement of goals and objectives. They can be objective, scientific and superbly educational. In this there is great hope for good, although the popular demand for educational and factual products is low. Better World Society members produced a series of excellent persuasive, educational and influential documentaries that targeted the Cold War.<sup>22</sup>

The borderline between objective fact and intentional fiction may not be evident on the final screen. Here more than anywhere else, perception becomes reality. The persuasive impact is much greater than most people realize.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Windows 3.1 Multimedia, R Jennings, Que, 1992.

<sup>17</sup> Matrox Studio, Matrox Video Products Group, 1055, St Regis Blvd, Dorval, QU, H9P 2T4.

<sup>18</sup> Wilson Markle at Fast FWD 1993 - The Society of Amateur Videomakers and Cinematographers, Hamilton, Ontario, 1993.

<sup>19</sup> The Technique of Television Production, G Millerson, 12th Ed., Focal Press, 1990.

<sup>20</sup> The Early Window, RM Liebert, JM Neale, ES Davidson, Pergamon Press Inc, 1973.

<sup>21</sup> The Spot: The rise of political advertising on television, E Diamond & S Bates, MIT Press, 1988.

<sup>22</sup> The (former) Better World Society: eg. Battle for Peace, Breaking the Spell, Dark Circle, Terror Trade, Only One Earth.

<sup>23</sup> The Perfect Machine: TV in the Nuclear Age, Joyce Nelson, between the lines, 1987.

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### C. Entertainment

The most popular choices are films and cartoons which provide much pleasure and recreation. Many are undeniably entrancing and wonderful art.

Who could ever forget the enchanting Sound of Music, The King and I, Dr. Zhivago, Chariots of Fire, Gandhi... and many others.

Many studies have commented on the pervasive influence of popular entertainment which creates a climate of experience and social education - for better or worse.

#### 1. Film Festivals

Perhaps Film Festivals provide significant clues about values and priorities.

The 1993 Canadian International Amateur Film Festival contained some beautiful and inspiring work. It included celebrations of nature and loving supportive themes - such as pets and caring. Amateur derives from the Latin amat - s/he loves.

By contrast, it was startling to study the content of the 1993 Montreal Film Festival and to see descriptions of popular films only about crime, horror, violence and depravity. There were no pastoral or inspirational films listed. The symbolic models presented were not socially or morally improving. They would be viewed especially by young people and students. Has counter-culture succeeded in displacing real culture? Why is there such adulation of sleaze and deviance?

#### 2. For Love or Money?

Today a major commercial film or video release costs on average \$28,000,000 and each resembles a hypothetical shiny new car. Production is synthesized and assembled in every possible way. Every image and every sound can be and probably is totally programmed. The apparent reality seen is fully synthesized to the last detail. It is a kind of technical magic. It is illusion.

In spite of great traditions, there has sadly been a flood of less ethical and inspiring production. Many insult with unwelcome depravity. Noise drowns excellence. The media field grew polluting weeds. Why is this?

### VI. Mass Communication

What is the optimal role of mass communications?

Now international and multicultural issues are very important. What is fair? What is right? Is there danger in this new aristocracy? Is there a new imperialism? Who sets the agenda?

Clearly books and electronic media have a great potential for good as well as for harm. Wisdom invites selective and responsible utilization.

#### A. Mass Mind Abuse

Abuse of modern mass communication media may have begun with Leni Riefenstahl's films such as "Triumph of the Will" exhibiting Nazi power to the world. Her films were artistically and technically excellent but she was blacklisted after the war for her association with Hitler.

Hers was indeed great art. New twists have since been added to the electronic art of propaganda.

The Nazi example of totalitarian response to a technological imperative remains as a memorial for any who might venture on this path.

Was propaganda ever used more effectively than to create war fever in support of the "Gulf War" against Saddam Hussein? Leaving aside the causes and morality of that situation, the Mass Media - particularly CNN - became perhaps unwitting tools for that wave of violence. The war drum had become electronic and programmable.

### B. Brain Programming

Some modern research suggests that television viewing bypasses critical faculties and engages the pattern recognition of the "Right Brain" uncritically.<sup>24</sup> It is alleged that this makes television the ideal instrument for subliminal persuasion, and that it is being used in this way systematically.<sup>25</sup>

If this is true, widespread practice of what is tantamount to public hypnosis or mass druggery may have received inadequate responsible discussion.

If this is true, mass effects of modern electronic technology may be more significant than mass effects of modern nuclear technology.

"For Better or Worse" may be a uniquely important matter.

### C. Social Direction

Much concern has been recorded in recent times about television and manipulation of American life.<sup>26</sup> The point is made in a balanced presentation that American television, the world's most exported - is guided by no coherent policy about television.<sup>27</sup> Whether this is in the end good or bad, right or wrong - reaches to the heart of the Jeffersonian revolution - and the American way.

The impact of electronic media on social behavior has a long bibliography, and the issue has now become global rather than national.<sup>28</sup>

On the whole, the values conveyed by the media repeatedly manifest what might be justifiably called moral corruption and cultural decadence. Television is a particularly serious offender in this respect. Today, for much of the world, especially the young - television is the most important instrument both for socialization and for education... With audiences round the world increasingly glued to television sets, there is nothing comparable, either in the era of forced religious orthodoxy or even at the high point of totalitarian indoctrination, to the cultural and philosophical conditioning that television exercises on the viewers... It is no exaggeration to say that Hollywood movie and TV producers have become cultural subverters who - cynically exploiting the shield offered by the First Amendment - have been propagating a self-destructive social ethic.<sup>29</sup>

It is not wrong to want to live better; what is wrong is a style of life presumed to be better when it is directed towards 'having' rather than 'being' and which wants to have more not in order to be more, but as an end in itself.<sup>30</sup>

Television has become predominant in shaping American culture and its beliefs. American TV has become a medium whose input is so profound and so resolutely banal that it has removed vulgarity from modern culture by making it the norm.<sup>31</sup> The result is a mass culture, driven by profiteers who exploit the hunger for vulgarity, pornography, and even barbarism. Such supremacy of decadence and hedonism in a culture cannot help but have a demoralizing effect on the values of society, undermining and eroding once more deeply felt beliefs... TV entertainment and even news has gone overboard in sensationalizing reality as novelty detached from any moral moorings...

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<sup>24</sup> Electroencephalographic Aspects of Low Involvement: Implications for the McLuhan Hypothesis, HE Krugman, American Association of Public Opinion Research, 1970.

<sup>25</sup> The Perfect Machine: TV in the Nuclear Age, Joyce Nelson, between the lines, 1987.

<sup>26</sup> Remote Control: Television and Manipulation of American Life, F Mankiewicz & J Swerdlow, Times Books, 1978.

<sup>27</sup> Big World, Small Screen: The Role of Television in American Society, AC Huston et al. U of Nebraska Press, 1992.

<sup>28</sup> No Sense of Place: The impact of electronic media on social behavior, J Meyrowitz, Oxford, 1985.

<sup>29</sup> Out of Control, Zbigniew Brzezinski, McMillan, 1993, p69-72

<sup>30</sup> Centesimus Annus, Pope John Paul II, 1991.

<sup>31</sup> Carnival Culture: The trashing of taste in America, JB Michell, 1992.

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The marked decline in the nuclear family as the basic social unit aggravates the cultural-philosophical malaise of contemporary America... the direct product of changing social values, as reflected in the mass media. America clearly needs a period of philosophical introspection and of cultural self-critique.<sup>32</sup>

While respecting the best tradition of good journalism, it seems that something isn't right when the above quotations reflect the serious concerns of many mature citizens today. Probably nobody wishes to see great and valuable traditions and future hopes sullied by corruption from whatever cause.

It is easy to be critical and ignore technical, artistic and human achievement, but many comments suggest there may be serious problems with moral direction.

If people such as journalists didn't care about this situation - they would not trouble themselves to complain about it.

Comparison of several cultural manifestations such as American TV, Canadian CBC, UK BBC, and Russian Television eg NEVA TV reveals significant differences. Canadian broadcast media are accountable to a national licensing authority.

### D. Media Industrialization

Freedom of American Journalism is uniquely protected under the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution 1791: "Congress shall make no law abridging the freedom of speech or the press."

In America there is a great tradition of free and critical journalism--in best Jeffersonian tradition. Until the '80s there were many independent U.S. newspapers but then came a revolution in corporate ownership in the '80s described as "The Media Monopoly."<sup>33</sup> This development raises serious new concerns

about media influence through ownership and policy.<sup>34</sup>

McLuhan considers technological development in relation to violence. He indicates how profoundly military technology influences social organization eg papyrus and Roman roads, and the Mediaeval Knight. He describes WW2 as the Radio War.<sup>35</sup>

Preparation for WW3 involved enormous technological development in which television became a global and specific influence. The dangerous Nuclear Stalemate succumbed among other things to careful use of television and videotapes.<sup>36</sup>

Some members of the Better World Society engaged in a "Peace through Music" initiative visiting the Soviet Union (1986-88) and even appearing on Soviet national television.<sup>37</sup> Video recordings of joint celebrations were made and distributed privately as a form of video (citizen) diplomacy.<sup>38</sup>

The Salvation Army became involved with these goodwill developments in 1990 with the cooperation of Moscow Television and later NEVA Television.<sup>39</sup> When U.S. Desert Storm food supplies (55 aircraft) were delivered to Moscow in 1991 they were received and distributed through the newly formed Russian Salvation Army.<sup>40</sup>

In this television contributed to the development of Peace and better international confidence.

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<sup>34</sup> Guide to Canadian News Media, P Desbarats, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1993.

<sup>35</sup> War and Peace in the Global Village, M McLuhan & Q Fiore, Bantam, 1968.

<sup>36</sup> Ted Turner, CNN and members of the Better World Society played a constructive role. The effort seemed multicentric. I can only comment on what I saw myself.

<sup>37</sup> Michael Elley & Alan Rosenthal.

<sup>38</sup> AR Wilcock, 1989.

<sup>39</sup> Salvation Army documented visits and the St Petersburg Christmas Renaissance Telemarathon by NEVA TV, January 1991.

<sup>40</sup> Reported by CNN, 1991.

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<sup>32</sup> Out of Control, Zbigniew Brzezinski, McMillan, 1993, p113.

<sup>33</sup> The Media Monopoly, BH Bagdikian, Boston Beacon Press, 1983.

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The Gulf War however proved the antithesis of benign use of the medium and the provocation and its consequences have become all too familiar.

Drawing a parallel with Eisenhower's 1961 speech Bagdikian in 1986 said:

The new corporate domination of the mass media has created a media-Industrial complex.<sup>41</sup>

The fighting effectiveness of this new partnership was clearly demonstrated in the Gulf War.

Bagdikian writes:

Concentrated control of the media is not the most urgent danger facing society. It pales before more compelling threats--imminence of economic disorder, deterioration of the planetary environment, growing violence between the world's rich and poor, and the possibility of nuclear annihilation.

But the ability to cope with larger problems is related to the peculiar industries we call the media, to their ownership and the nature of their operation. They create the popular base of information and political values out of which all critical public policy is made. In a world of multiple problems, where diversity of ideas is essential for decent solutions, controlled information inhibited by uniform self-interest is the first and fatal enemy.

The "enemy" is not wicked individuals who operate the dominant media. The enemy is avarice married to arrogance. It is the insidious power that comes with unchallenged dominance over the information of others. The object of reform is not to silence voices but to multiply them, not to foreclose ideas but to awaken them. For it is in diversity and openness that the genius of the United States can flower.<sup>42</sup>

Bagdikian's valuable analysis clearly identifies that the key problem is spiritual--theologically

speaking "The Mind of Sin" was institutionalized.

This is also what happened in the Soviet Union where ideological monopoly resulted in spiritual desertification.<sup>43</sup>

Access to free and independent mass media played a key role in the Soviet changes and the August 1991 coup when St. Petersburg Mayor Sobchak spoke out publicly against the legality of the Coup seeking to depose Mr. Gorbachev.

### E. Media Manipulation

A 1989 bulletin board submission expressed concern as follows:

Television is being used largely to manipulate people, but that's because of the commercial use to which it has been put, rather than because that's the role which is best suited for it as a medium. The commercial sponsors of television use this medium to establish money as the predominant cultural value in our society. In order to do this, television shows must belittle or ignore other values and beliefs. "Family" shows depict families engaging in every activity except studying and creative art. The children in TV situation comedies never read, practice the piano, draw, etc. The violent shows are used to stimulate the viewers' fear and anxiety. Just at the high point of anxiety (for example, a chase) a commercial enters and offers security - if one uses a certain deodorant, drives a shiny new car, or uses the right mouthwash. The violence on television is also used to keep the public from adopting values and ethics. Such violence is also prevalent in movies shown during flights. If people remain basically amoral, they will just buy and consume. If the streets aren't safe, then they'll go to shopping centers as islands of safety, the only places where they can walk at night (especially women).

<sup>41</sup> The Media Monopoly, BH Bagdikian, Beacon Press, 1983-93, p11.

<sup>42</sup> The Media Monopoly, BH Bagdikian, Beacon Press, 1993, p237.

<sup>43</sup> Personal communications.

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But I recently read an article which described a large public demand for purchasing videocassettes of great performances. While such offerings would compete with live performances for the public's leisure time (which has decreased from about 23 hours to about 16 hours per week over the past few years), it also competes with the broadcasters' offerings of junk. Linda<sup>44</sup>

### F. Influence

There have always been influences promoting social cooperation and cohesion or otherwise. Is this necessary to avoid disorder and confusion? In political terms dictatorship, oligarchy and monopoly imply dominance of the many by the few.

Democracy too is challenged by intelligent advocates of benign anarchy such as Lev Tolstoy and Naom Chomsky. Even Winston Churchill commented that

Democracy is a terrible system -- but the alternatives are worse!

Democracy ideally is the political process in a free, well educated, moral society. Totalitarianism is its logical opposite. Freedom of information and freedom to choose wisely are critical elements of difference.

Can we be sure that Mass Media are contributing optimally towards the greatest good (Kant's definition of God)?

Concerns exist over potential large scale harmful influence:

If as the research indicates, the left hemisphere is effectively disengaged during TV viewing, unless we make the conscious effort to attend critically, then as a culture we are being swept

into the totalitarian embrace of man-made media gods.<sup>45</sup>

Does this threaten democracy?

Concerns exist at the personal and family level:

Does the arrangement of furniture have the television set as its focus? ... Does watching television displace family centered activities? ... Do you make conscious decisions about TV time and program content? ... Do you know how much is too much?<sup>46</sup>

Do you understand how Mass Media are influencing you?

It was never easy to have a mature, independent point of view.

### VII. Harmful Imagery

One of life's golden rules is "Do no harm." Yet there are forms of harm that may be not at first be evident though later effects may be profound.

#### A. Enemy Images

Work by psychologists to understand enemy images and enemy stereotyping showed that the same ideas and techniques are always used on both sides of conflicts to dehumanize the "enemy."<sup>47</sup> This fosters a war psychosis leading to the frenzied preparation and engagement in war as consummation of hatred and fanatical group violence.

Mikhail Gorbachev made therapeutic use of this new knowledge of psychology in his historic non-violent campaign to overcome the Cold War and Class War enemy images - ending both for a time - with the happy

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<sup>44</sup> ID: <1796@hptabsz.HPL.HP.COM> From Hewlett-Packard Laboratories, Software Technology Lab [This was submitted by a C&S Digest reader from the Usenet newsgroup. seltzer@ernie.Berkeley.EDU

<sup>45</sup> The Perfect Machine: TV in the Nuclear Age, Joyce Nelson, between the lines, 1987, p80.

<sup>46</sup> The Fine Tuned Family: How parents like you can take control of TV, MM Simon, Christian Parenting Today, Sept/Oct 1993.

<sup>47</sup> Faces of the Enemy, Sam Keen, Harper & Row, 1986.

experience affirmed by many that "Peace was breaking out all over."<sup>48</sup>

### B. Terrorism

Advice in dealing with terrorists and hostage taking incidents includes avoidance of playing into the hands or supporting the egos of publicity seeking terrorists.

### C. Rape

It has been documented that rapists often have a cache of violent erotic pornography which inflames the mind until evil within bursts the bounds of civilized behavior. In spite of this, business interest persist in seeking to discredit scientific studies trying to relieve this serious moral problem.<sup>49</sup>

### D. Murder

Researchers have demonstrated that television can spark violence and murder in the minds of unstable people ready to follow the prompting of a violent example. This is known as modeling behavior with well recorded examples of aircraft hijacking, murders and group violence.<sup>50</sup>

### E. War and Genocide

In the post-Cold War situation - violence remains a very serious global problem. There are many reasons for this. There has been an enormous investment in militarism - political, economic, social, psychological and structural. There is a stockpile of weapons of all kinds from nuclear to personal weapons with some already in untrained irresponsible hands.

Many are being sold illegally for criminal profit.

There is a particularly dangerous potential now in the post-Soviet countries. They have had an enormous Arms Race producing many weapons including small and conventional arms as well as nuclear weapons. Now these are reaching extensive public circulation through pilfering, crime and whatever means of ill considered distribution.

To this already fertile soil for war is added fictional violence of the American media exports of amoral videotapes, and satellite transmissions. Is this wise?

The people of the FSU were not accustomed to publication of such horror. In the socialist period, violence happened in secret but the popular image was kindly and nonviolent. Left to themselves they had great cause to be peace loving if self protective having suffered the worst realities of war and violence of the 20th century.

The apparent triumph of the Global News media raises a new spectre whereby News itself has taken on the appearance of fictionalized violence for entertainment which has long been the major feature of American Television. This closes the loop of the "School for Violence" as American television in its current form has been named.<sup>51</sup>

Will the influx of violent public imagery incite people towards violence? In the presence of many grievances with added severe deterioration and deprivations - it is easy to stir trouble - but much harder to stop it.<sup>52</sup>

Russian murder statistics have rapidly surpassed the American.<sup>53</sup>

Many of the new influences are perceived by people abroad as the unwanted "Way of the West."

<sup>48</sup> The Law of Love and The Law of Violence - in Confession and other Religious Writings, Leo Tolstoy, Penguin, 1987, and also Canadian newspaper reports 1989-1990.

<sup>49</sup> Pornography and Rape: A Causal Model, DEH Russell, Political Psychology, V9,N1,P41-74, 1988.

<sup>50</sup> The Early Window, RM Liebert, JM Neale, ES Davidson, Pergamon Press Inc, 1973.

<sup>51</sup> The Early Window, RM Liebert, JM Neale, ES Davidson, Pergamon Press Inc, 1973.

<sup>52</sup> The Roots of Evil: The Origins of Genocide and other Group Violence. Erwin Staub, Cambridge University Press, 1989.

<sup>53</sup> Manchester Guardian Weekly Aug 1993.

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### F. Addiction

Does TV steal time, money or choices from more needful activities? ... Do you program TV free time for yourself, your family? Who is in control? Do you use it ... or does it use you?

Do we understand fully how TV influences us? If we can draw a parallel with alcohol, it might have beneficial effects when wisely used, but harmful or even fatal consequences can follow through abuse. Is this comparison appropriate?

Abstinence like fasting and the Ramadan period help us to be aware of and overcome dependencies, also giving opportunity to reflect. We may need help such as the advice of others or even professional help to overcome enslavement.

### VIII. Helpful Imagery

There has been a long tradition in Russia especially before corruptions introduced by Peter and Catherine the "Great" - of Holy Icons - Images of Christ the Saviour, Mary and Jesus and of exemplary Church Fathers who preached the Christian virtues of kindness, compassion, good works and tolerant love for our neighbor - to which their lives gave practical expression.

These Christian traditions of Holy Russia are exceptional on the planet. Many churches were built and dedicated to Peace and deliverance from the evils of War. It's churches and cathedrals were "Houses of Peace" with inspiring Icons - windows to God - and the way of our Loving Heavenly Father.

They were designed to aid understanding of the way Jesus taught of His Heavenly Father, the Loving Father of All. They portray inspiring examples (symbolic models) of the blessed Christian Way.

Lev Tolstoy struggled in later life to publish the vital difference between the Law of Love

and the Law of Violence<sup>54</sup> and gave his last message to mankind on this to the Stockholm Peace Congress in 1909.<sup>55</sup> Tolstoy's pleas were recalled at the United Nations in 1988.<sup>56</sup>

Lenin, father of Bolshevism, tried to refute this ancient wisdom. He failed completely to comprehend Tolstoy's enlightened struggle to renew Christianity and introduced the totalitarian violence of the monopoly state.<sup>57</sup>

In Russia, the cherished Way of Peace contrasts with a long tragic history of violent struggle including Viking, Mongol, Napoleonic and Nazi invasions causing profound experience of violence and suffering. In Russia still today, holy icons are revered in many people's homes.

Many people in the modern world experience instead the electronic iconoscope. Is this new electronic phenomenon good or bad? Something in it seems reminiscent of Aaron's problem of the Golden Calf!

Spiritual desertification resulting from the Soviet-atheist period is nowhere more striking than in Tula where a Russian Cathedral has been converted (seen in 1992) into an armory exhibition displaying all manner of diabolical lethal instruments. Instead of holy icons and pacific murals, there are depictions of war, battle and horror blazing from the walls of this venerable Sanctuary of Peace. Tula is close to Yasnaya Polyana -- the family home and last resting place of Lev Tolstoy.

These images of death by modern violence shriek from hallowed walls in soulless desecration of Christianity - and of the life's

<sup>54</sup> The Law of Love and the Law of Violence, Leo Tolstoy, Penguin, .

<sup>55</sup> Address to the Stockholm Peace Congress, Leo Tolstoy, International Peace Bureau, 1909.

<sup>56</sup> Leo Tolstoy: Symbol of Reconciliation between East and West, AR Wilcock, Teifhard Trust, 1988.

<sup>57</sup> Alfred Adler 1918 predicted that "Socialism by Violence" would fail in *The Individual Psychology of Alfred Adler: A systematic presentation in selections from his writings*, Ed. L. Heinz & R. Ansbacher, Harper Colophon, 1956, p456. Soviet disillusion took 70 years and enormous loss of life (World: 167,000,000 see Brzezinski, 1993. p16). Solzhenitsyn said during Oct. 94 that Stalin murdered 65m of his own people..

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work of one of Russia's - and the world's greatest literary geniuses.

### A. Conflict

World spiritual traditions recognize "two worlds." There is the inner (internal) world and the outer (external) world.

Consistency between principle and practice, inner and outer is a third variable relationship. Many good examples of internal conflict resolution exist in the long human record of divine inspiration and wisdom.<sup>58</sup>

### B. Global Nuclear War

The danger of global destruction grew through incremental steps towards ultimate destruction. In 1993, this is understood and much saving work has already been done - but many serious problems remain to be overcome.

### C. Inner Nuclear Conflict

The ultimate battleground of life is the heart and mind of man. Only here can prevention really be effective. Only here may be found supernatural hope.

Here it is necessary to counteract evil lurking within.

Here it is necessary to heal the hurts of cruelty, war, rape and pillage.<sup>59</sup>

In Tibetan iconography, three poisons: ignorance, hatred and craving are symbolized by the snake, swine and cockerel which go on chasing and gnawing at each other. The basic human condition of enslavement to these interconnected, mutually reinforcing negative feelings has led to certain recognizable patterns of thought and behavior. They have given rise to an active philosophy predominant

in the western world of competitive materialism.<sup>60</sup>

This portrayed mentality is what St. Paul identifies in the Roman-Jewish world he knew as the Mind of Sin. Today we can recognize it as the Rat Race mentality.

The New Testament offers the example of the healing Mind of Christ. The choice may be hard and the price high - we must die to Sin and be effectively born again.

Western Mass Media energetically are projecting prevalent western mentality and its intrinsic values round the world. Is this wise, healthy and desirable? What will the consequences be?

Christianity should be understood as an authentic way of living rather than something to sell.

### D. Nuclear Struggle

In what condition and in what environment today is the soul of modern man?

## IX. Which Direction

There are trends and influences for good and ill. There is much that ennobles - and otherwise.

### A. For Better

Today there is a world of challenge. The harmony of the universe with its wonderful consistency strains the imagination to comprehend it. Wonderful tools exist to see better and further than ever before. There is much to celebrate.

Love and Work remain as pillars of well being, and good books give sound advice on moderation, care and consideration.

After resolution of the Cold War, more prayers have been answered with the miracle of courageous Israeli-Palestinian reconciliation - Sept. 1993.

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<sup>58</sup> The Salvation Army in Relation to War and Peace, AR Wilcock, 1991.

<sup>59</sup> Healing from the War, A Egendorf, Shambhala, 1986.

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<sup>60</sup> Tools for Transformation: A Personal Study, Appendix 2, Adam Curle, Hawthorn Press, 1990.

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For many today, this is a truly blessed age.

### B. For Worse

Increasing human numbers with inevitably increasing problems lead to overwhelming awareness of pathos. At many levels, problems seem to be more and greater than can be solved. There is danger of a sense of hopelessness developing leading to depression...

Beyond accidental occurrence of harm there is the intentional. This may be recognized in simple terms as crime and corruption. Corruption is a familiar, perennial process accompanying human development.<sup>61</sup>

Pornography means depiction of that which tends to deprave and corrupt. This includes holistically any and all matters pertaining to the pollution or corruption of body, mind and spirit. Pornography is a key problem in relation to social and cultural responsibility.

Body - the physical - includes instruments and institutions of action. Agents causing harm include weapons, bombs, guns, drugs and poisons. Investment and finance are necessary for physical production. Profit is the usual incentive of the market economy. Obstacles include deprivations and poverty.

Mind - includes instruments and institutions of instruction, education and persuasion. Agents include magazines, books and journals together with new electronic communications media.

Spirit - pertains to the integrated exercise of the soul, to matters of conscience and guilt, to the meaning and purpose of life and death. Here is the realm of interaction between ideologies, ethics and values.

Thus that which depraves and corrupts stands in opposition to that which improves and enlightens such as the meditations of great

minds and the traditions of understanding and wisdom.

Meditation needs a degree of tranquillity and isolation. Noise impairs it. Here is a dilemma of modern life.

### X. Values

Just as psychology may be approached as individual, group, social, applied, industrial, cultural etc. so may be the issue of values - yet integrity like unity cannot be divided.

Values often emanate from individuals, but ultimate effects are social and global. Communications can make sharing possible.

Desbarats discusses Canadian News Media in a very useful and comprehensive study with international comparisons throwing valuable light on important cultural differences.<sup>62</sup>

### A. Individual

The system of law is greatly concerned with individual responsibility and accountability. The deviant individual may suffer the full weight of social and institutional punishment.

#### 1. Individual Corruption

Many studies from many disciplines detail the downward steps and paths.

In terms of Christian culture St. Paul portrays in Galatians 5 the unregenerate qualities: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings and such like.<sup>63</sup> What they all have in common is "yielding to temptation."

Here is a painful problem of human nature which everybody understands. Here too is the root of exploitation of the innocent.

Key writes in 1989 that U.S. viewers - and therefore over half the Canadian population

<sup>61</sup> The Literature of Police Corruption, AE Simpson, John Jay Press, 1977; (a representative study of organizational corruption).

<sup>62</sup> Guide to Canadian News Media, P Desbarats, HBJ, 1993.

<sup>63</sup> Galatians 5:19-21.

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also - are exposed to US\$155,000,000,000 worth of advertising annually increasing 10-15% a year. By 18 years, the average American has seen over 18,000 hours of television - far more than the hours spent in educational pursuits. Of this viewing, not more than 15% is documentaries and educational. He goes on to say:

No one has as yet made serious long term investigations into the eventual effects of ad-media flimflam upon human personality, mental health and survival. The U.S. blindly allows the commercial establishment to inflict avaricious self-interest upon the entire population. Virtually no one appears to hear the faint ticking of time running out.<sup>64</sup>

### 2. Individual Salvation

World religions offer ways of reconciliation and recovery. Here are paths towards integration and wholeness which may need acts of repentance (turning around). God (Allah) is the archetype of unity, wholeness and harmony.

Paul contrasts the fallen way with the way of the kingdom of God, the fruit of the spirit - love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.<sup>65</sup>

Personal commitment, faith and consistency are necessary to follow the chosen better path.

### B. Mass

What happens at the institutional, corporate and international level? Who is responsible? How is it possible to establish and maintain good health and ethics? Is this inevitably a matter of politics and power?

If so - it is said that "Power corrupts - and absolute power corrupts absolutely."

### 1. Mass Corruption

Today, temptation is the frequent purpose and strategy for much public communication reaching into every home.

Does current electronic Mass Culture portray and advertise the fallen way of Galatians 5:19-21 or the better way of Galatians 5:22-23?

The influence of the lifestyle of the advanced Western countries, as projected by global television is shaping a worldwide preoccupation of acquisition of material goods and with instant satisfaction of morally uninhibited personal desires.<sup>66</sup>

Is this intentional corruption of people? Does it deliberately seek to induce destruction? With modern electronic mass projection, "The wages of sin is death" acquires new meaning.

Violence harms, love protects.

There is a widespread international concern that modern American/Western culture is sick - "America is in danger of losing its soul"<sup>67</sup>

Can it be wise to export and disseminate such an infection? The problem of course is not with American culture alone, but is part of a global problem.

A substantial body of medical research concludes that subliminal stimuli are responsible for most, if not all psychosomatic illnesses... Considering the vast amounts invested in media research annually, it is remarkable that media effects on public health remain completely unexplored.<sup>68</sup>

In 1993 it seems that collective mentality is being brutalized by hard hitting global news and harmful sounds, images and advertising so that ability to respond humanely is being numbed.

The introduction of Mass Media on survival among Native Peoples has been shown to have very serious effects.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Out of Control, Zbigniew Brzezinski, McMillan, 1993, p53.

<sup>67</sup> Pope John Paul II, 1993.

<sup>68</sup> The Age of Manipulation, WB Key, Henry Holt, 1989, p59 & 63.

<sup>69</sup> In the Absence of the Sacred, Jerry Mander, Sierra Club, 1992.

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<sup>64</sup> The Age of Manipulation, WB Key, Henry Holt, 1989, p163.

<sup>65</sup> Galatians 5:22-23.

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In confronting the problem of Media Violence and harmful Mass Media effects, I am making a parallel with the other Nuclear issue.

Citizen Action was vital in helping towards that resolution, and is recognized -- though small -- to be a vital contribution we can all make.<sup>70 71</sup>

### 2. Mass Salvation

Hope assures us that when we focus clearly on such problems, we can overcome them with prayer, persistence and collective effort.

What are helping, healing images? Where is healing compassion and inspiration?

With today's global media distribution -- is there appropriate multicultural sensitivity? Is there really honest appraisal of the consequences?

Reading, reflection and time have convinced me that the interests of society require those moral precepts only in which all religions agree (for all forbid us to murder, steal, plunder or bear false witness) and that we should not intermeddle with the particular dogmas in which all religions differ, and which are totally unconnected with morality.<sup>72</sup>

Does American mass media projection meet Jefferson's noble standards today?

One American author has even proposed elimination of television to prevent development of a world wide monoculture of passivity, reactive hyperactivity, and reality confusion.<sup>73</sup>

Do we recognize harmful icons and influences when we see or hear them? Why is the wrong stuff so much in evidence? Is the right stuff crowded out or suppressed? Are we mentally

blind in failing to perceive the consequences of what is happening?

### XI. Recent Trends

Mikhail Gorbachev's peace process was derailed by the Gulf War conspirators ending a vital period of progress towards civilization. The tragic fiasco relegitimized brutality. This affected mentality round the world giving support to the dark side of human nature.

Cable News Network was started by Ted Turner who had ideals expressed through the Better World Society which he founded. Its purpose was to grapple with international problems which were greater than could be addressed by individual nations. These included the Nuclear Arms Race and threat of Nuclear War, Global Environmental Damage, Pollution, Human Population pressure etc.

CNN was to be a medium for international communication and understanding. It has played a valuable role in many ways - but now as violence spreads in Yugoslavia, Somalia, Israel etc. it plays a debased role as a purveyor of potentially corrupting violent imagery. Worst of all - the dead exhibited are truly dead, the mass graves and rivers of tears - are not confused with fictional entertainment.

This is no mere fantasy of horror. Tragically, it is reality.

Even with altruistic motivations, News is Business. It exists not only to inform, but for profit. Modern journalist training is about earning money and not about social conscience.<sup>74</sup> (Every CNN staff member receives a copy of "The State of the World"<sup>75</sup>).

News provides or can be tailored to provide, a very reliable vehicle for profitable advertising. The corporate mentality is a prominent aspect of modern life. Does it interact favorably with

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<sup>70</sup> The Roots of Evil: The Origins of Genocide and other Group Violence, Erwin Staub, Cambridge University Press, 1989.

<sup>71</sup> New Challenges for Citizen Peacemaking, Adam Curle, Nuclear Age Peace Foundation Global Security Study No 14, June 1993.

<sup>72</sup> Thomas Jefferson, Letter to J Fishback, 1743-1826.

<sup>73</sup> Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television, Jerry Mander, Morrow/Quill, 1977.

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<sup>74</sup> Personal communication.

<sup>75</sup> The State of the World, Ed L Brown, WorldWatch Institute, annually.

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traditional values or is it amoral and harmful?<sup>76</sup>

The modern consensus is that media control must be either by votes or money.<sup>77</sup> This gives advantage to wealthy aristocracy rather than to true democracy.

For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and loses his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?<sup>78</sup>

Is conscience sleeping?

What is the place in the modern situation for social and global responsibility, for altruistic human values? All Great Teachings promote in some way - compassion, kindness, clarity and insight.<sup>79</sup> All share criticism of worldliness and offer enlightened ethical alternatives.<sup>80</sup>

### XII. Problems

For journalists and other writers, the computer is the greatest invention since the pencil.<sup>81</sup>

The News Business today is athletic, not aesthetic.<sup>82</sup> There is a flood of violent news reporting with rapid transmission of electronic information almost everywhere.

Opportunity for mature reflection and balanced opinion can be denied to many people by the rapid fire, superficial, 90 second television news bursts. Effects upon human mentality and traditional values may be harmful.

We need to better understand the effects of what may be the mental equivalent of the

machine gun on minds, hearts and human behavior.

We need to consider effects on not only stable people with jobs, (the minority) but the young, the impressionable, the family, the unemployed, the angry, and people who are already distressed, resentful and disturbed.

How are we influenced by the new media? - people around us? -- and the world's children?<sup>83</sup>

Ours may be the best informed generation in history, but are we overwhelmed and intimidated by the magnitude of the many problems we are witnessing?

What is the daily flood of horror doing to Global Culture and Mass Mentality?

Bagdikian concludes:

How the growing international media evolve will profoundly affect social values and political accountability in the future. Since the Industrial Revolution, society and culture have been subservient to technology. One of the compelling tasks today is to reverse the process and make technology serve culture and society. The old tyrannies have taught us a terrible lesson: those who control a nation's media also control its political, cultural and social life. Freedom of choice in politics can be sustained only by freedom of choice in mass media. The two cannot be separated.<sup>84</sup>

### XIII. Questions

Is it not ultimately wiser to do good rather than harm?

Is it really better to make fast profits by marketing horrors than to patiently teach and inspire people to care better for each other and for the world we live in?

Is the current use of the Mass Media the most enlightened way to help the world?

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<sup>76</sup> Ch.7, Corporations as Machines, In the Absence of the Sacred, Jerry Mander, Sierra Club, 1992.

<sup>77</sup> S.A.V.A.C., Hamilton, ON, 1993.

<sup>78</sup> St Matthew 17:26.

<sup>79</sup> Kindness, Clarity and Insight, The Dalai Lama, Snow Lion Press, 1991.

<sup>80</sup> Heaven, Earth and Hell: Reflections on Mentality, AR Wilcock, 1993.

<sup>81</sup> Guide to the Canadian News Media, P Desbarats, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1990.

<sup>82</sup> Personal communication.

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<sup>83</sup> The Early Window, RM Liebert, JM Neale, ES Davidson, Pergamon Press Inc, 1973.

<sup>84</sup> The Media Monopoly, BH Bagdikian, Boston Beacon Press, 1983, p252.

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Where is encouraging reporting of helping and healing to show that good can overcome the evidence of evil?

What is being done to change the current direction of human development?

All that is necessary for evil to flourish is that good people do nothing.<sup>85</sup>

Bystanders have great potential power: How can this power be used to diminish harm and do good? ... we can and must work for a better world.<sup>86</sup>

### XIV. Principles

Key advises awareness and critical thinking to encourage independence of mind in his "Eight Steps to Survival."<sup>87</sup>

The past experience of humanity offers some hope to guide the future. There are examples of success and failure. From these some guiding principles for human interaction can be distilled.

The Great Teachings all propose remedies for the human condition by turning to a better path. They begin with repentance and involve re-orientation - conversion.

Burrows proposes a practical, ethical vision to help make our world better -- beginning with ourselves.<sup>88</sup>

**Love** is the meaning and purpose of life. Nothing should be attempted where Love is absent since lovelessness and hatred lead to death.

**Truthfulness** is an essential requirement of harmony within, in the soul, and for consistent honorable relationships in the external world. Deceit and betrayal are self destructive.

**Humility** is a condition for mutual respect. Pride and arrogance prepare for undoing.

**Service** is for others, and only through this can we become our true selves.

### XV. Conclusion

Increasing human demand upon the biosphere and all world resources calls for self denial and self limitation.

In a finite world, the selfish attributes of greed and self gratification are patently antisocial, leading to harm and conflict. Institutionalization multiplies the order of magnitude. This is not the way of social responsibility.

A new circumstance exists today where human ideas and experience can be immediately shared throughout the worldwide noosphere for information and as symbolic models.

Mass Media have obligations of social and global responsibility that have yet to be met. Much will depend on wisdom of use.

Good leadership should not always follow public opinion, but should guide and direct with compassion and wisdom.

The mass media can be part of the solution instead of the problem by projecting better symbolic models based on the wisdom and example of humanity's moral leaders and of inspiring humanitarians to encourage a more peaceful and harmonious world.

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<sup>85</sup> Edmund Burke.

<sup>86</sup> The Evolution of Bystanders, German Psychoanalysts, and Lessons for Today. E Staub, Political Psychology, V10,N1,p39-52, 1989.

<sup>87</sup> The Age of Manipulation, WB Key, Henry Holt, 1989, p261-2.

<sup>88</sup> Agenda for the Future, General Eva Burrows, The Salvation Army Handbook, 1988.