
University of Pennsylvania News

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SOVIET CONCEPT OF NEWS A FACTOR IN CHERNOBYL COVERAGE, SAYS PENN MEDIA EXPERT

The problems with Soviet news media that led to severe Western criticism of their handling of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster stem in part from the attitudes of the Soviet government and public toward news, says George Gerbner, dean of the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania.

Soviet views of news are far different from those in the West, said Gerbner, who has analyzed various Soviet media for more than 30 years, comparing Soviet communications systems to those of Western and Eastern Europe, the Third World, and the United States.

One difference is that in the Soviet Union the news media do not compete to scoop one another as Western media do, because they are not economically competitive, Gerbner said.

"Instead, each Soviet newspaper, radio or television station is operated by an organization -- professional, social, religious, or political -- and waits to publicize negative stories until steps have been taken to solve the problem, or until the organization they represent has addressed the situation," he said.

"Soviet readers would really wonder if their papers printed a situation that was out of control. That's why many were shocked by the international criticism that followed the media's handling of the Chernobyl disaster," said Gerbner.

(MORE)

Another difference between Soviet and Western media, according to Gerbner, is that Soviet reporters are very careful to check facts and sources, and to avoid stories that could have negative social consequences.

"Editors would be severely reprimanded if they printed stories that panicked or misled readers," he said, "so they are cautious about what they print."

"The newscasters are usually academic types who research many current issues. They interpret the day's news and put it into perspective, instead of just reading it."

The Soviet media do have a degree of autonomy depending largely on the nature of subject matter involved, Gerbner said. They have more autonomy on local issues than on national, and almost no autonomy on international issues.

On foreign policy issues there is little analysis or public criticism of government policy in the news. Instead, the official opinion on foreign issues is usually presented.

In the Soviet Union, important national and international stories, like the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, are distributed by two central wire services, or by the major, government-controlled newspapers, Pravda and Izvestiya. Local papers not in the immediate vicinity of the crisis have no direct access to the situation, and no opportunity to gather their own facts, so they rarely challenge or expand on the official stance, said Gerbner.

But while the investigative power of the local media is limited in this respect, Soviet papers do perform functions other than writing and interpreting the news, Gerbner added. They also act as watchdogs of officials, agencies and businesses.

"The big papers receive thousands of letters every day -- often complaints about corruption or inefficiency in local agencies -- and they respond to each one, trying to remedy the situation through mediation and advocacy," he said. "In this respect, the Soviet papers are similar to consumer advocates in U.S. media, except that, for them, printing the story is a last resort to shame the wrongdoer."

(MORE)

The Soviet media are gradually gaining more autonomy and freedom to question or criticize domestic policies, Gerbner said.

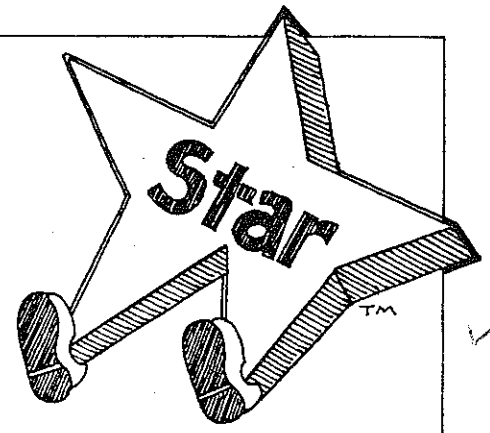
"Recently, television reporters talked to some young people who were having a party in a courtyard," he said. "The kids complained bitterly because they felt that the Ministry of Culture and Information was paying little attention to their needs, and they had no place to gather.

"Despite the request of the minister responsible for the situation, the station refused to postpone the broadcast, so the official had no time to remedy the problem before it was publicized."

The autonomy of the mass media in other Eastern-block countries is not necessarily as limited as in the Soviet Union, which has the largest communications system in the world. According to Gerbner, Yugoslavia and Hungary have the most autonomous media -- both news and entertainment -- while Bulgaria, East Germany and Romania are the most closely monitored.

published when you least expect it!

The Wolske's Bay



The International Public Newspaper

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ISSUE 2A

THE MESSAGE BEHIND THE MESSAGE

(Editors Note: Slowly and thoughtfully, Dr. George Gerbner delivered the contents of this article at the Chautauqua Institute in New York [state] during the Institute's summer lecture series of 1984. These excerpts appear courtesy of Dr. Gerbner, who is Dean at the Annenberg School of Communication in Philadelphia.)

By Dr. George Gerbner

There's one process, there's one activity, that stands out in my mind. And the word to sum it all up is storytelling. Homo sapiens are the storytelling animal par excellence. Not only do we tell stories, but we, unlike all other creatures, live in an environment of stories. We build a world by the stories we tell and the stories we hear and the stories we absorb as we go on.

Ordinarily, unlike with all other animals, the immediate environment is not the primary reason for being someplace and is not the primary environment to which we respond. We primarily respond to and live in an environment of symbols, of towering structures called fantasy or legend or religion. When I use the term fantasy, I mean a synthetic but very functional creator of the mind.

It is that fantasy to which we hold up a new event and if it fits we call it real. And if it doesn't fit we call it biased, absurd, false, or perhaps it's discarded altogether. The question I'd like to pose is, "how do we build this world to which we as human beings inhabit, respond, and according to which, we act".

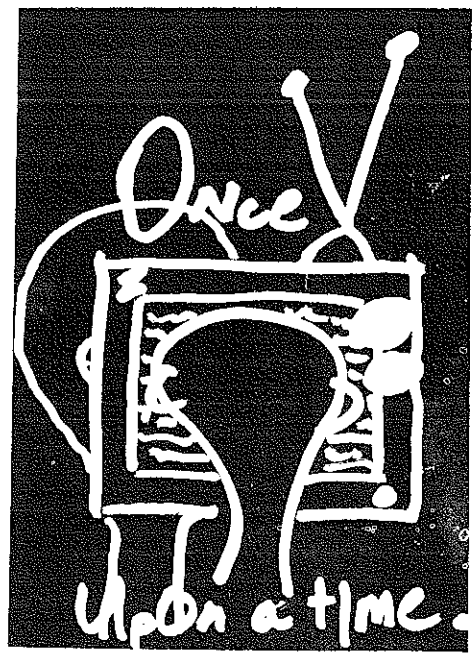
STORIES

There are three kinds of stories basically...forget about for the moment all the conventional distinction between entertainment and education and law and science and art, and think of all these as

just attempts to tell a story about something.

One is the story about how things work. The truth of how things work can only be approximated through fiction, because it is only through fiction that you can invent the facts and put them together in a way that develops the truth of how things really work. You embody the invisible forces in people, the invisible dynamics of life, you put people against one another or against some kind of difficulty, you have them struggle and cope and challenge, and in the end they succeed or fail, which illuminates how things really work, or ought to work.

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We all have these stories when we're very young, orinionally called fairy tales, today they're mostly cartoons, you see on television.

Stories of how things work sets the overall framework within which everything else fits, because facts only make sense when they're related to a larger purpose, and that give that framework some sense of likeness.

Stories of the second kind are stories about what things are. They are facts, they are bits of fact that are otherwise isolated, they have to fit into a framework that shows how things work in order to become meaningful. They are the legends of the past, today we call them news. They are the expositions of facts, that provide some credibility to the framework and in turn derive their own credibility from fitting a framework of some larger dynamics, some larger purpose.

The third kind of story is the story of action. Which means a story of values and of choice. A choice among alternative and often competing values and to do something. It is to say, "well, if this is how things work, and if this is how things are, then this is what we ought to do about them". These are the sermons, the instructions, the orders...today of course most of them are commercials. They are little stories that depict a desirable style of life or activity and in effect say, "if this is what you want then this is what you ought to do. This is what you have to buy, this is what you have to vote for, this is what you should avail yourself in order to obtain these values or to avoid something that is undesirable".

Although there are no stories of pure kinds, these three are the basic idealized types of stories out of which we weave an invisible web called culture. And out of which we build our concept of reality, how things work, what they are, and what to do about them.

That environment, in which we as human beings live, is a very distinctive life like no other creatures because this is the environment of stories that we ourselves erect for ourselves.

STORYTELLING

Throughout history stories have been told in three basically different ways. First and for the longest period of humankind's existance this was done face to face, oral. It depended on memory. You couldn't say, "well I don't have to remember it, I can look it up", because there was no place to look it up. And because it depended on memory, it depended on ritual, repetition, on rehearsing until the stories that are useful about how things work, what things are, and what to do about them are integrated into an organic structure called mythology, called "our way of life", called, later on, religion. It explains the nature and origin of universe, meaning of life, codes of proper conduct. And it enables human beings to lead distinctly human lives. As mythologies and religions have, it included all the art, science, statecraft, and the way of governing societies that people need to know.

Then came the industrial revolution which broke up the ritual with the first machine, the printing press. The first industrial product is hard for us to remember...stamped out standardized commodities of the book. That begins the industrialization of the storytelling process, which is the most profound transformation in the history of humankind.

It takes storytelling out of the hands of the chiefs who have interpret...out of the hands of the centralized authority. It puts the story, the book, of course the Bible at first and the Bible's of all religions, into the hands of people and in effect says, "well, take it with you, interpret it for yourself. You don't need the administrations of the heads of your tribes or your community to

interpret it for you. You don't need that bond, between the religious or tribal authority and the rest of the apparatus of the state. You can become a story teller, a story originator, a story interpreter yourself".

This is the precursor of the industrial revolution and of the enormous upheavals and uprooting of people that it meant. The building of factories and ports required people getting off the land by the millions, leaving their communities, going into the cities, going into the ports, going into the new factories, going into the new continents. And the only community they could take with them was the book, or their newspapers, or their printed stories that related them to a new sense of community.

The new community created by the industrial revolution and its industrialization of storytelling is today what we call "a public". A public is a community of meaning. It's something that we share with many many people who we never meet.

How do we share? Well, the process that creates the public is appropriately a "publication". We share through publication, meaning print, that relates us across vast reaches of time and space. To many many communities of like minded people who read the same basic books, who can tell stories that we find not only to be interesting to us, but also to our interests. And while this is going on we fight, a fight that is never over, a fight that is very bitter, very sharp...for the right to tell stories from our own point of view in a society which is now divided into classes, into many interest groups, into many regions, where people who come from different religions, classes, and ethnic backgrounds live side by side. Which was never before tolerated until the industrial revolution. And live side by side more or less peacefully, because they have won the right to maintain some integrity of their community among many other different communities by sharing publications. By having

Message (cont.)

won the right to tell, to create, as well as share stories from their own point of view. From the point of view of their own interests which may differ from the interest group living next door. And yet it is something to be maintained.

It is on this context of the ability of print to maintain communities of meaning, of conscious, called publics, of people who otherwise never meet, that our entire system of education, of self government, and most of our notions about human development today have been predicated. You take self government, as all modern theories have it, whether they're parliamentary, democratic, or Marxist, or any other...they are based on the ability of a group or a class, as in class consciousness, regardless of what it is and who it is surrounded by, then of being able to select or elect some representatives who represent that public in some kind of assembly where the differences between perspectives can be reconciled and adjusted, presumably to the interest of the whole, and that is the theory, based on the print era.

TELEVISION

Now we enter the third, modern era of storytelling, which for want of a better term I will call the era of telecommunications. The mainstream and flagship of this era is television, over the air mass broadcasting, which I believe will stay for a long time, despite its recent challenge by the new technologies.

Television has certain distinctive characteristics. Unlike print, it is used relatively non-selectively, people don't pick and choose as they do a book or magazine or even going out to the movies. Television is a ritual that most people engage in not by the program but by the clock. It is consumed, so to speak, according to the style of life and the riddle of the day, the week, the day of the week, the season...the audience is always the same. All the hullabaloo about competition is just

what share of the same audience which station or network will get at any one time.

Television presents an organically related system of stories of all three kinds. Stories about how things work, essentially that's where most of the action is and most of the lessons really are, called entertainment or dramatic fictional programs. Stories about what things are, news and documentaries, that in effect are selected to uphold our fantasy of what the world is like and how it works. If you go to a different country and different society you find a different selection because it's a different fantasy to uphold. And stories about what to do about it, come roughly every 15 - 17 minutes, if not more often, as the most insistent kind of message.

In these characteristics of ritualistically consumed highly centralized stories in very few formulas, a total organically inter-related mythology of life, (including all the art and science and the statecraft, you know, the age old nexis of power, church, and state), is now being reconstituted as television and state. You can't govern a highly diversified large country without television. There are political parties that have very few functions any more because they are not the medium of communication between the leaders and the voters. Their major function is to raise money to buy time on television.

In all these respects, television is not a continuation of print, or of movies or radio, but it's an inheritor of the process of tribal religion by electronic means. And as such, it has become the mainstream of our culture, and it has an enormous power.

Television has abolished isolation. There's no more parochialism, you can be out in the sticks, remote areas, rural areas, you can be very young, very old, you can be in the hospital, you can be in prison, you can be very poor or very rich...you all share a large segment of a common culture

for the first time in human history. And especially poor people, people who have not had the advantages of cultural diversity that many of us have had. For the first time they are part of this mainstream. It's for the first time that they share a very large segment of culture with the rich. It's for the first time that they're beautiful and they're powerful, and the rich, the ugly, and the notorious come into their homes and visit with them every day. Then they are plugged in, so they believe, into the central current of our culture, they've abolished isolation, and very much have abolished boredom too. Boredom, not exciting reading, was the fate of most people before television. And that can not be taken away and that can not be turned off.

It is a kind of upper middle class conceit to say "turn it off". Because people, for whom this is something enormously rich and powerful, will not turn it off, and even if they do, or even if you and I do, we live in a world in which 99 out of 100 people don't. And if we're not exposed to television directly, we're out of it, but we still get it through other people. We still get it through the world, from people who do not turn it off, build for us.

It has not only become a ritual, or what I call a new religion, but an environment into which for the first time in human history children are born. The average American home has television on an average of over 7 hours a day. A child today is born into a home in which that tells most of the stories to most of the people most of the time. Not the parent, not the school, not the church, which come later anyway, (that is the school and church), but not the parent anymore. Very few parents can compete with the patience and compelling attractiveness and liveliness quick pacing of television. There's no more isolation, there's no more insulation. You can be a child, an infant, born into a home in which,

Message (cont.)

until television, the parents could create an environment of their own choosing, according to their background, their own religion, their own ethnic group, their own language. A home in which a child could grow up feeling as good as anybody else...as not a minority, as no different, because a home such as that is a protective environment.

But no more. The voice in the symbolic environment of television storytelling immediately injects the outside world. With its demography, with its distribution of values, of habits, of cultures, and the child will immediately absorb. Before the child is two or three years old, before the child can learn to speak, let alone learn to read, the child would encounter the outside culture. The child would have absorbed 30,000, 40,000, 50,000 stories a year, on a very repetitive formula basis. And, according to our research, by the time that child is six, he or she will have a much more clearly defined and much more rigid ideas about different social types, about what life is like, about what his or her parents ought to be like, if they are to be good so and so's that the child can see on television, because after all that's what everybody's talking about. And I'm not saying that television is a model, I'm saying that television is a standard by which a child begins to judge, herself, or himself, life, her parents, her neighborhood, her society.

Now this process has never happened before. This is what the mainstream means...it means that there is a standardization going on which brings otherwise different people closer together in their conception, in their fantasy, of what the world is like, and of their conception of how they fit into the world. So this is a new process of socialization, and as I suggested before, it challenges many of our ideas about how human beings develop, about the role of the parent, the church, the school, of society, of the neighborhood,

peer group. About how to govern societies, and about whether self government really means what we thought it meant, and if it's even possible in this modern world.

RESEARCH

In order to fully appreciate the challenge, I would now like to give you a few highlights of our research of, "what is this world of television like?", concentrating on findings of our research by now 17 years standing on an annually monitored basis. What are some of the features, some of the lessons, what is the message behind the message that television conveys to us. First of all, across the board, it is a world in which men outnumber women at least 3 to 1, in the news it is about 6 to 1, in children's programming about 8 to 1. Daytime programming may be corny and melodramatic, but in many ways it's a healthier distribution. Most people watch most of the programming in the prime time and then there's the children's daytime, usually weekend programming. Which, incidentally, is only about one fifth of children's viewing time. Four fifths of children's viewing time is subjected to an accelerated impact of the adult environment. Again the first time in human history that children from birth on really participate in this enormously powerful impact of the adult cultural environment of storytelling. Only one fifth of children's viewing time goes into the kind of storytelling that is designed for children. Young people, 18 and under, are presented in the world of television only one third of their true proportion in the population. Older people, 65 and above, are only presented as one fifth of their true proportion...practically invisible, out of sight, out of mind. Non whites, only about two thirds, Hispanics, one third of their true proportion. What is the lesson of this exercise in census taking?

The message behind the message is the showing of a differential sense of opportunities, of styles, and of limitations in life. If you're overrepresented like white males in their prime of life, (65 percent of the total population of the world

of television, but well under half of the real population), you can do anything. If you are a white male in the prime of life there's no challenge where you can't pick up and go. Where as women; you're one third of the population, you are needed for romantic sotries, you are needed for family stories, as wives and grandmothers and so on, bringing cookies. White's see a great deal of variety of occupations and life chances. If you're a minority you're less likely to think of yourself to grow up as having the same opportunities, same abilities, the same chances as everyone else. You in fact begin the process at a very early stage of an internal mental colonization, from which there is no liberation unless we meet the final challenge of how to deal with it.

SKILLS

If you look at the occupational distribution, you find the same skills picture. Over two thirds of the people are professionals. Only 10 percent of employed people in the world of television are involved in service work or manual labor...the kinds of things that more than half our real population still does and is likely to do for a long time. On the other hand, a typical viewer of prime time television meets every week with a very stable set of about 300 speaking characters, in about six to five major parts, very stable, year after year. Stars come and go and titles come and go, and story lines come and go, but the demography of the population that we have measured over the last 17 years is very stable. And of these most are involved in the enforcement of the law, in a kind of social control exercise. Exercising a law of society, a law of human nature, of human physiology. Of all the characters, about 26 are police officers, about 23 are criminals, week after week. About 12 are involved in the health professions, most of them doctors, most of them male. Another six are lawyers, another three are judges. These are some of the most prominent professionals whose lives are seen in intimate working detail to the point that most children

Message (cont.)

know more about these occupations than they know what their fathers are doing, whose lives they can never see into with as transparent, luscive, detail...with all its lessons right there. This occupational distribution of course responds to dramatic values, and market values. The distribution of professions and occupations reinforces the kind of cultural stereotyping that is very unrepresentative and not the best preparation for life for most of our young people.

It's also a very violent world, I don't have to tell you. But let me tell you that an act of violence or somekind of violent incidence takes place an average of six times per hour during prime time, an average of 25 times per hour in children's daytime weekend programming. Clearly they need a bigger dose, after all they're just learning, of what the rest of us get. Of the total population, more than half are involved in some violence, almost half are inflicting violence on other people, 55 percent become victimized. Six percent are killers, every week. There are at least two entertaining murders a night, 14 a week, 60 a month, 750 a year, and counted up a repetitive lesson. A lesson in what? What is the lesson of this incredible avalanche of morbid and violent entertainment? Well, one lesson that we all know about and are concerned about is the stimulation and the cultivation of aggression, the cultivation of violence as a solution to human problems. And the vast majority of research studies conducted on the subject, overwhelmingly demonstrate that indeed, that the lesson is learned at a statistically significant rate, but that is still a few out of say, five or 10 thousand. Violence in fact is inhibited in our society, and most of the time it's simply stupid. It is learned, that it is a thing to do. But in terms of the immediate impact on most people, on most of us, we

don't go on the street prepared to be muggers. What is the lesson?

The lesson is one of power. Of demonstration of power, or the preparation of all of us to become victims. Its the projection of a very mean world in which we have to not only be very alert but also in which we must be very insecure. The violence that occurs in the world of television victimizes most people and trains most of us to think of ourselves as a potential victim, with its consequences. But violence is not evenly distributed. The internal colonization that I was speaking about is not just taught by the lesson of representation of numbers, but it is enforced by the lesson of vulnerability and the threat or fear of victimization in this way. If you are a member of the majority group, those infamous middle class white males in the prime of life, you are most likely to be represented, so you are most likely to get involved in violence, but you're least likely to come out as the victim. If you're a woman, only one third of the population, your chances of becoming involved in violence are naturally lower, but if and when involved in violence, you're much more likely to come out as a victim. If you're a non-white your rate of relative victimization goes up. If you're a non-white woman your rate of victimization jumps even higher. If you're a non-white old woman, and if you're cast or written into a play to become involved in violence you can be sure that you start out as a corpse, and have very little else to do, but perhaps be the curtain raiser to some kind of story, but this is your fate.

In the world of television a calculus of chances of victimization, a calculus of vulnerability, is unevenly cultivated in different segments of our population. And we find in our research that if you are one of these minority groups and the more you see television, the more you see yourself as vulnerable. The more you see yourself as depending on authorities for protection, the

more you will be controllable, the more you will reconcile in the very way in which you conceive of the world, and of your chances of getting away with something against somebody else. The more you will conceive of yourself as weaker, as more dependent, as more vulnerable, and therefore you're more controllable. All of us, the more we watch the more we exhibit a sence of relative insecurity, and, n our survey's comparing heavy and light viewers in the same categories and same demographic groups, the more you are likely to accept and often even welcome repression, if it comes in the name of security.

So, living in this mean world has human psychological and political implications that I think are very serious. Now despite all the mayhem, there's very little pain, there's very little blood, there's very little medical intervention required at all. Only about six percent of all the people who get hurt, get injured, or get beaten up are ever shown as receiving some kind of therapy. And that is a good tip off, the purpose is not therapy, but power. Once the demonstration of power is over the story can go on, you don't have to worry about actual consequences.

Yet despite the fact that there is little therapy there are a lot of doctors in this world. Twelve percent of the total television population is doctors and other related health professionals, whose medical influence doesn't extend to the rest of the world but it shows a very admiral and almost ideal social type, the doctor, who can solve many many problems, least of all medical. And who are often shown responding immediately to house calls, as of course all doctors do, having infinite time to talk to patients about their problems, of course all doctors do, sitting in the hospital cafeteria talking about romantic affairs, running off to perform open heart surgery, and coming back and picking up the conversation where

Message (cont.)

tolerant, in which you have to be suspicious and mistrustful. On measures of suspicion and mistrust, the more you watch the higher you score. The more television you watch the more likely you are to approve of the suppressing of free speech of people whose views differ from yours, who have views of which you don't agree. So that politically, in terms of individual rights, if you watch more television, you under the moderate label take positions that are conservative. But on the economic front, a market orientated instrument cannot preach austerity, cannot preach delayed rewards. It has to preach instant gratification if only you buy this product. Therefore the more you watch television the more demanding you are economically. It's as if to say, "get government off my back but I am entitled to a handout". And you're more likely to demand services from big government, but less willing to pay taxes. It's a paradoxical and potentially volatile position of a combination of intolerance and greed that does not auger well for our political future.

These then are the challenges, or some highlights, of having built an institution which tells most of the stories to most of the people most of the time. To children, parents, and grandparents at the same time. Having changed the flow of influence from the elder to the younger, perhaps even reversed it. It can go the other way now because whoever is most imbedded in this world of television can tell everyone else more of "how it's really like", using as most viewers do, television as the standard by which they judge. And of course it's a matter of having drifted into this institutional situation. How can we examine it, how can we review it, how can we revamp it? Not an easy task.

DREAMS

First we have to look around the world. In most democratic countries the same question has been faced, and some experiments and some choices have been made. We're virtually alone from not profiting from the examples of other cultures coping with the same problems and trying to handle it as democratically as possible, and a lot more democratically than we have. Because what we have is a non-responsive institution financed by a hidden tax, without representation. That hidden tax is about \$150 per household, that we all pay, that is added to the price of goods that goes to the advertiser, and is turned over to the broadcaster. We all pay it, whether we use ther service or not, and none of us has any say about how it is to be used. Because it's essentially the advertiser that foots the entire bill, and in effect builds the world from which we derive our humanity.

In our professional organizations I think we have to make sure that professional standards in representation of that profession or of that group, that social type, are at least considered. In citizens organizations that advocate specific representation of viewer groups in program policy. And finally in our schools, what we need, is a fresh approach to the liberal arts. An approach that puts at the center of a liberal arts curriculum something that may be called critical viewing, but something that really has to do with how to liberate ourselves from the unwitting and uncritical absorbtion of a great variety of messages behind messages that we don't understand. And we must remember how to build some of our own standards, how to reinforce our own families, our schools, our churches, our groups...to neutralize the abosrbtion, the unwitting learning that is going on.

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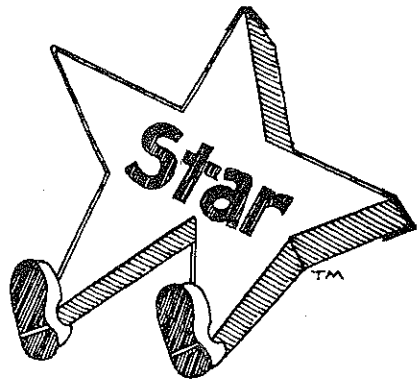
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3/7/86

Dear Dr. Gerbner

Enclosed are the first two issues of The Wolske's Bay Star, the flagship publication of The Corporation for Public Newspapers, and International Public Newspaper, Incorporated... based in Wisconsin.

Issue 2A contains the contents of a speech you gave at the Chautauqua Institute in New York in 1984. You may or may not recall that we contacted your office in November 1985 for permission to use some of the material. Well, it seemed appropriate to use most of the material.

I hope you enjoy and find favor with our treatment. Thank you.

Francis Nied

March 14, 1986

Francis Nied
The Wolske's Bay Star
P.O. Box 64
Menomonie, WI 54751

Dear Mr. Nied:

Many thanks for your letter of March 7 and the copy of your imaginative newspaper. I was pleased to see "The Message Behind The Message" in print.

With best regards,

Sincerely yours,

George Garbner
Professor of Communications
and Dean

GG:ab

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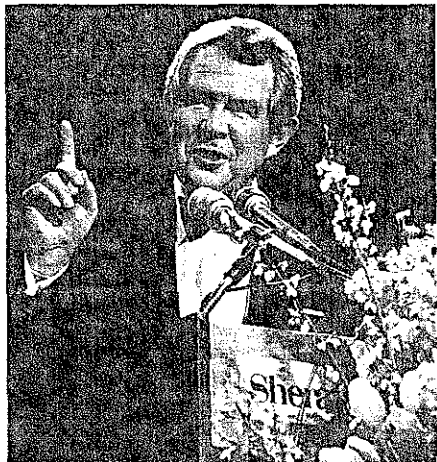
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Power, Glory —And Politics

Right-wing preachers dominate the dial

It was part political caucus, part camp meeting, part trade show—and all barn burner. As the crowds of 4,000 milled through the Sheraton Washington Hotel in the nation's capital last week, Gospel singers crooned, video-equipment salesmen hawked their wares, and media consultants prowled the meeting rooms for new talent. Dozens of Senators and Congressmen made it their business to turn out for the cameras and lights, cementing alliances and buffing up images. Jeane Kirkpatrick and Jesse Jackson were there. President Reagan, appropriately, sent a message on videotape.

The occasion was the convention of



Robertson in Washington last week

the National Religious Broadcasters. This is a group whose most resonant names—and recognizable faces—are the televangelists, the stars of the electronic church, the pastors of "Pray TV." And at one session after another, cheered on by such honored elders of the field as Billy Graham and Oral Roberts, these powerhouse preachers strutted their stuff. Jimmy Swaggart roared that the Supreme Court is "an institution damned by God Almighty" for allowing abortions. Jerry Falwell argued that "theologically, any Christian has to support Israel, simply because Jesus said to." Even White House Communications Director Patrick Buchanan drew audience cries of "Amen!" and "Praise the Lord!" when he exhorted Republicans to "tap into the spiritual revival that is going in the country."

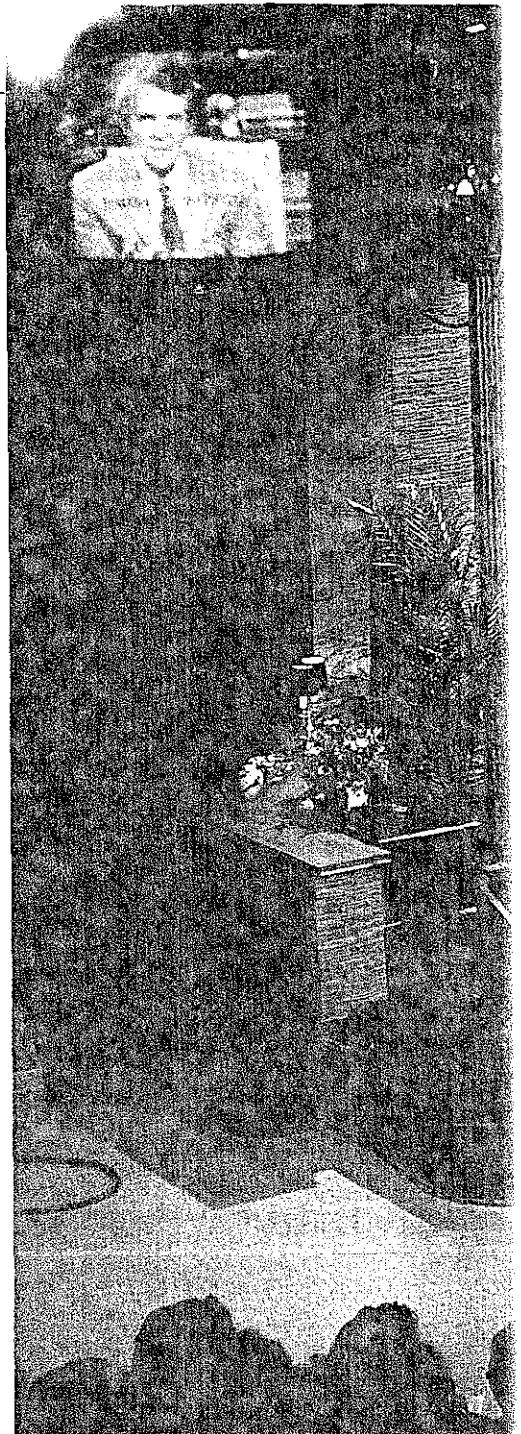
If Buchanan sounded downright

evangelical for a politician, one evangelist in particular sounded mighty like a politician. He was Marion Gordon ("Pat") Robertson, 55, head of the Christian Broadcasting Network and a fixture on CBN's four-times-a-day *The 700 Club*. Robertson, a Southern Baptist, has been transmitting signals that he might join the race for the Republican nomination to succeed Reagan. Political pros are uncertain how big a factor he could be in the primaries, let alone the convention, but they are convinced that he could energize the Christian right and siphon votes from other candidates. True believers are tingling at the prospect. As ROBERTSON IN 1988 buttons blossomed, the amiable Virginian took the N.R.B. platform to denounce the evils of abortion, homosexuality and school violence, all to be overcome by a flood tide of moral regeneration. "We are going to see a change in this nation," he promised his listeners, "and you are going to be a part of it."

Perhaps they are already. Preachers like Robertson command audiences that form, if not a true Moral Majority, at least several potent and readily mobilized minorities. Robertson's following provides much of CBN's \$233 million annual income. In a year, viewers of *The 700 Club* log 4 million prayer calls to 4,500 volunteers manning telephone banks in 60 counseling centers. Such motivated constituencies can—and do—bestow blessings aplenty, in the form of money and votes, upon candidates who win their favor.

The fact that a Robertson is even a potential candidate confirms the extraordinary power and influence amassed in the past decade by the shrewd, colorful headliners of Gospel TV. While impressing some as shallow and vulgar popularizers, they bring real inspiration and solace to others. Their past struggles in low-paid Gospel circuits bespeak a deep commitment, whatever skepticism might be aroused by their present enjoyment of stardom's rewards. They have changed the face of television; they may be gradually altering the very nature of American Christianity.

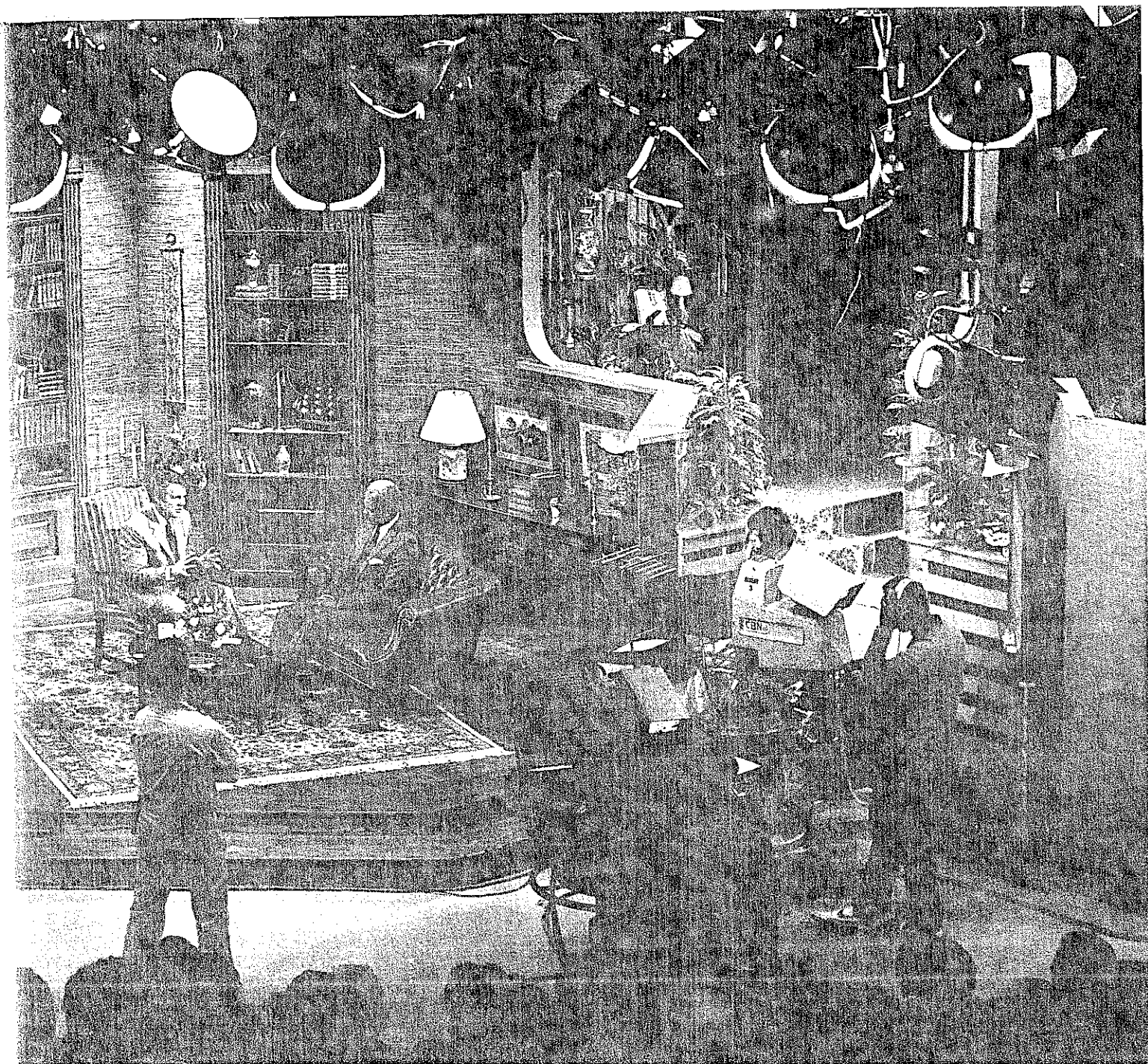
The Rev. Ben Armstrong, a Presbyterian conservative who has run the N.R.B. during two decades of astounding growth, boasts that his colleagues have "done what Ted Turner tried to do and Rupert Murdoch wants to do—create an



Taping *The 700 Club* with Co-Host Ben Kinchlow at

alternative fourth network." The video preachers are often bitter competitors behind their on-camera smiles, yet Armstrong contends they constitute a network nonetheless, one defined by a shared viewpoint. To the dismay of more liberal Protestants, not to mention Roman Catholic and Jewish leaders, the people who have seized spiritual control of the tube are unremittently Evangelical or Fundamentalist. Four of the top stars are part of the Pentecostal movement, which emphasizes the emotive and miraculous aspects of faith. Sunbelt churchianity is ubiquitous, and whenever there is a political tilt to the broadcasts—which is often—it is virtually always to the right.

Broadcasting's Jesus network comprises 200 local TV stations that have religious formats (more than double the figure a year ago), 1,134 radio stations (up 91 from



Christian Broadcasting Network's state-of-the-art studios: using entertainment and new technology to find audiences

JOHN LOIZIDES

last year), freelance productions that purchase time on general stations, and burgeoning cable and satellite hookups that reach tens of millions of homes. The preachers' fund raising, the stuff of jokes and sometimes of scandal, is prodigious. According to a 1977 estimate by *Television/Radio Age*, they spent \$500 million to purchase TV and radio time a decade ago; today Armstrong figures the total is \$1 billion, possibly \$2 billion. That does not count other expenses and the ambitious ancillary enterprises that most have launched.

There is furious debate over just how big the evangelists' combined audience is, as well as where each ranks in the ratings individually. A 1984 University of Pennsylvania survey estimated that 13.3 million people, or 6.2% of the national TV audience, are

regular viewers of the various shows. That nearly equals the membership of the United Methodist, Presbyterian and Episcopal churches combined. A Nielsen survey last year, designed to add cable data to the broadcast ratings, showed that 21% of the nation's TV households tune in to Christian TV for at least six minutes in a week, and 40% for at least six minutes in a month. This adds up to 61 million Americans with at least minimal exposure. The survey counted viewers of only the ten biggest among 62 nationally syndicated shows. By this measure, Robertson, whose CBN commissioned the survey, is at least briefly onscreen monthly in 16.3 million homes and reaches 27 million Americans.

Sociologist Jeffrey Hadden of the University of Virginia, who was skeptical of religious broadcasters' claims to big audiences in his 1981 book *Prime Time*

Preachers, says the Nielsen report shows a "much larger" audience than he and other experts had thought. The preachers, he now asserts, "have greater unrestricted access to media than any other interest group in America." Powered by TV evangelism, he predicts, the Christian right "is destined to become the major social movement in America" during the late 20th century.

What accounts for the surprising impact of the televangelists? In part, showbiz flair: outsize personalities, sermons carefully shaped around themes that pull audience response, dramatic personal stories of life-changing events, and toe-tapping music. But broader cultural forces are surely at work. "Everybody thinks the TV preacher is doing a number on people," says Armstrong, "but it's the viewer with his hand on the dial who controls the

system." People who hope TV Gospel will fade when today's stars are gone, says Armstrong, "do not understand that the real key is grass-roots people, dying for personal religion and traditional values."

There is little doubt that many Americans are yearning for meaning and moral anchorage, which evangelical religion has ardently and successfully provided. Critics add that people find it easier to acquire simple answers to complex personal and social ills via television than to commit themselves to solving real-life troubles.

Among Pray TV's top-rated figures:

► Jimmy Swaggart, 50, is a brash, raftering Pentecostal preacher and Gospel singer (his albums have sold 13 million copies) who preserves the old tent revival style at his striking 7,000-seat Family Worship Center outside Baton Rouge, La. In his weekly one-hour broadcasts, he prowls the stage, sometimes breaking into excited jig steps, as he revs up perorations assailing Communism, Catholicism and "secular humanism," the last of which he blames for abortion, pornography, AIDS and assorted social ills. He takes in \$140 million a year. The money pays for his weekly show (aired in 197 markets), his daily Bible study, and in 1984 enabled him to launch the Jimmy Swaggart Bible College, which drew 18,000 applications for 400 openings.

► Robert Schuller, 59, a bland-looking but calculatedly theatrical performer, presides over the vast, glittery Crystal Cathedral in Garden Grove, Calif. Finished in 1980 at a cost of \$18 million (paid largely by viewer donations), the structure serves as a dazzling stage set for Schuller's weekly *Hour of Power*. The show, seen in 169 cities, beats Swaggart in some audience listings. Schuller's TV budget is \$37 million a year, and the 10,000-member cathedral spends an additional \$5.7 million on non-TV operations. The author of several inspirational best sellers, Schuller shook 10,000 hands in a weeklong Janu-

ary tour promoting his latest volume, an upbeat rewrite of Jesus' Beatitudes titled *The Be-Happy Attitudes*. Schuller is affiliated with the mainline Reformed Church in America, as is his predecessor in hyper-optimism, Norman Vincent Peale.

► Jim Bakker (pronounced baker), 46, is the boyish-faced Pentecostal proprietor of the PTL (for People That Love or Praise the Lord) Network in Charlotte, N.C. The network ranks second to Robertson's CBN in Christian cable (13 million households, 24 hours, all religion). The featured offering is the daily *Jim and Tammy* show, a variety-and-talk program with Bakker and his wife as hosts on an opulent, hacienda-style set with orchestra, singers and live audience. Bakker's receipts exceed \$100 million a year. Much of the money is eaten up by his Heritage USA theme park, opened in 1978 near Fort Mill, S.C., and already the third-largest such attraction in the country, with nearly 5 million visitors a year. Unlike Walt Disney World and Disneyland, which rank ahead of it, Heritage USA charges no admission. The grandiose 2,300-acre project, which is years away from completion, includes Bakker's Assemblies of God church, a 500-room luxury hotel, a mock turn-of-the-century mall with 25 boutiques under an artificial sky, and an amphitheater for staging passion plays and living Nativity spectacles.

► Jerry Falwell, 52, presides at the 21,000-member Thomas Road Baptist Church in Lynchburg, Va., whose Sunday worship is seen in 172 markets. A Fundamentalist of genial manner and granite opinions, he used his TV clout to launch Moral Majority, the influential conservative political lobby. That group was subsumed last month under the new Liberty Federation, signaling Falwell's increased involvement in foreign affairs. He also runs Liberty University (7,000 students) in

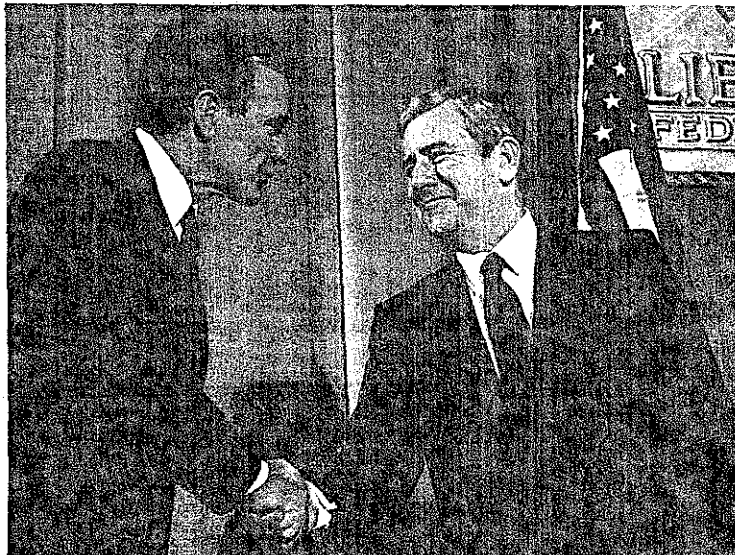
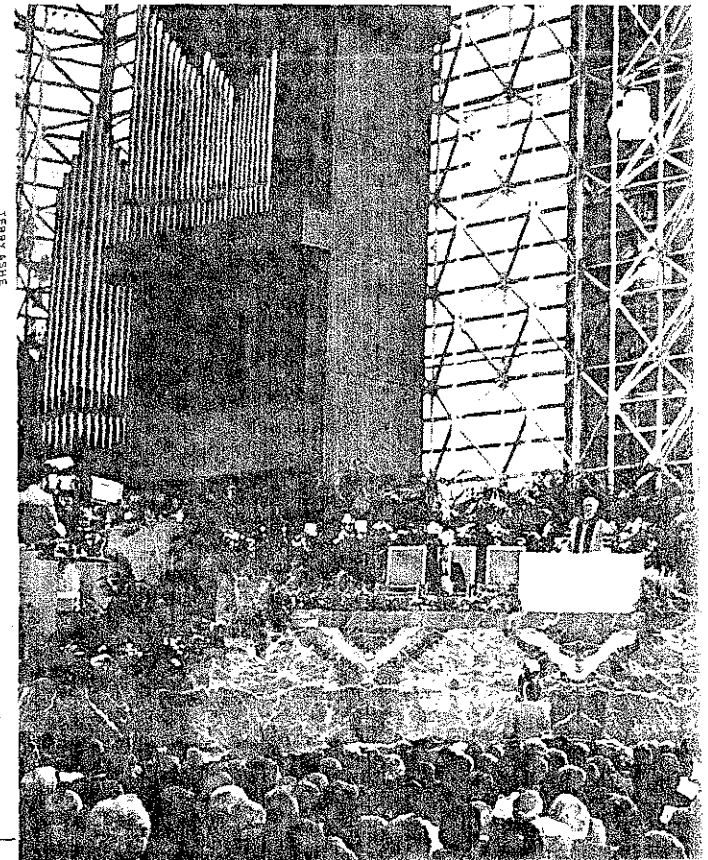


Tammy and Jim Bakker on camera: "A cute little

Lynchburg. The 1985 receipts of Falwell's ventures: \$100 million. Last year he started a Sunday-night call-in show on Ted Turner's superstation, WTBS. Last month he purchased a cable hookup (re baptized the Liberty Broadcasting Network) that reaches 1.5 million homes. It will run a new daily Falwell talk show.

► Oral Roberts, 68, of Tulsa, the century's most famed faith healer, has a TV flock that helped build the 4,600-student Oral Roberts University and the 294-bed City of Faith hospital and research center. The City of Faith is rumored to be in financial straits, but Roberts will divulge no details. The overall budget of his enterprises reportedly runs to \$120 million. Roberts'

Magnified on a Jumbotron screen, Robert Schuller leads televised



Vice President Bush with Ally Jerry Falwell at a Liberty Federation rally

Blessings aplenty for favored candidates.



JIM HESTER/ASSOCIATED PRESS

couple people felt good about watching"

Sunday half-hour still appears in 192 markets, but the "Prairie Tornado" is showing his age. The spotlight is shifting to a daily talk show inaugurated in 1984 to star Son and Heir Apparent Richard Roberts, 37. Due for partial opening next July is Oral's \$14 million Healing Center, which will feature, among other attractions, a three-hour tour of animated films of Bible stories.

Dynamic and high-profile achievers, every one, yet none of these preachers can compare to Robertson as a TV entrepreneur. Robertson pioneered the first religious TV station, the first religious network and the first Christian programming to use a talk-show format,

as well as a number of now widely imitated viewer-response and fund-raising techniques. He was also the first Christian broadcaster to sign up commercial sponsors, a development that appears to be the trend of the 1980s. His 24-hour CBN network reaches 30 million subscribers, making it not only the largest Christian cable operation but the fifth largest of any kind (No. 1 is ESPN, with 36.9 million subscribers).

The CBN headquarters in Virginia Beach, Va., consists of three massive white pillared buildings where some 4,000 Roberston employees work amid strict security (for example: coded cards to unlock doors). The buildings house not only studios but CBN University, which enrolls 715 graduate students and is adding a law school acquired free from Oral Roberts University.

CBN's viewership has tripled since 1981, when Robertson switched from an all-religion schedule to a family entertainment approach, combining Christian shows with wholesome reruns (*Flipper*, *Father Knows Best*), westerns, old movies and game shows. Two weeks ago the network premiered *CBN News Tonight*, a regular evening newscast produced in Washington, with special emphasis on right-wing issues.

Robertson's spiritual hub is *The 700 Club*, which runs without ads on the CBN cable system and also pays \$20 million a year to appear on broadcast outlets in 185 cities. Hosted in low-key style on a living-room set by Robertson and Ben Kinchlow, who is black, the program has featured interviews with such guests as Anwar Sadat, F. Lee Bailey, Mr. T and the last three U.S. Presidents, interspersed with inspirational film clips and reports in TV-magazine format. Robertson's political commentary is also

a staple, whether on domestic issues like abortion ("We are offering up 1½ million babies a year upon the altar of sensuality and selfishness") or international topics like the Nicaraguan *contras*. (The U.S. has "a moral obligation," Robertson maintains, to support "freedom fighters" who battle "satanic" Communism.)

During the programs, 800 numbers continually flash onscreen, encouraging viewers to phone in their requests, comments, prayers or pledges. (The show's name derives from an early crisis when, in order to stay on the air, it needed 700 donors to send \$10 a month.) CBN just passed American Airlines as the nation's heaviest user of WATS telephone lines. On-camera operators take the messages, sometimes suggesting local help and often relaying news of miracle cures for Robertson and Kinchlow to pass along to the audience. Kinchlow, 49, has known a miracle or two himself. He was drifting and embittered until "Jesus changed me from the inside." Now he is a CBN vice president. One of Robertson's four children, Timothy, 31, is another.

Nowadays *The 700 Club* is increasingly left in Kinchlow's hands as Robertson crisscrosses the country in the company's BAC One-Eleven jet. With his enterprises—and his political prospects—building up momentum, Robertson has less time to spend with his wife Dede in a university-owned \$420,000 mansion on the CBN campus. When he is home Robertson usually is awake at sunrise, studies the Bible for an hour, jogs two miles and perhaps takes a ride on one of his four horses before going to his studios. It is a country gentleman's life-style, which befits a blue-blooded Virginian who counts two Presidents, William Henry Harrison and Benjamin Harrison, in the family tree.

The son of longtime U.S. Senator A. Willis Robertson, Pat grew up in Lexington, Va., and graduated Phi Beta Kappa from hometown Washington and Lee University. After a hitch as a Marine

worship at California's dazzling \$18 million Crystal Cathedral



ZIMMERMAN/CANAL/UNITAISON



COURTESY ROBERTSON

Rafter-ringing Pentecostalist Jimmy Swaggart at broadcasters' meeting
"Son," he was told at his debut, "you've got the fire."

Standing Tall for Moral Principles

Politics has long been a vital dimension of the Rev. Pat Robertson's ministry. He applies his vision of scriptural truth to public concerns, and through his Christian Broadcasting Network, he gets the message to a wide audience with vast fund-raising potential. Now he may try to parlay this base into a run for the Republican nomination for President. In an interview in Washington with TIME Atlanta Bureau Chief Joseph J. Kane, Robertson explained at length how his theological convictions shape his approach to domestic and international issues. Excerpts:

On becoming a candidate. I think by the end of 1986 I will know a great deal more, certainly after the November elections and the Michigan caucuses. There are a number of people urging me to do this, especially those who think I would stand tall for certain moral principles in the country. Some of my good friends said, "You are much more valuable right where you are." Because with television there is access to people. But the other question is, Would the Government as such choke off a moral renewal if certain tendencies that have been evident in past Administrations were brought back? That is the issue. The only thing for me is, Where would God have me to serve?

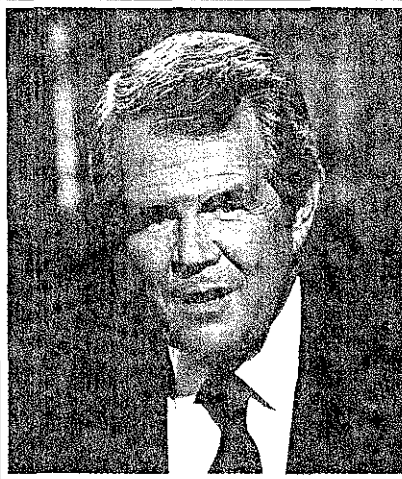
On physical and emotional healing. The Apostle Paul in *I Corinthians 12* lists nine so-called charismata (manifestations of God's Spirit), and among them are the "word of wisdom" and a "word of knowledge." This is a very quiet word, brought forth in the spirit of a human being dealing with a problem that somebody has that God cares about and wants to help. The first time that it happened to me, I thought it was something I don't really want to do. But I worked up my courage and mentioned what I felt was being spoken, and somebody called in and said that at that moment they had been gloriously healed.

I have seen not just a few—I am talking about tens of thousands—and we have medical verification, our TV crews taking their stories, interviewing their friends, and it is absolutely extraordinary. It is happening so frequently now that it seems to be an unusual blessing God has given to me . . . I have had on at least two occasions a spiritual insight into conditions, and people were helped in 15 minutes on matters that could have taken a year of intensive counseling.

On the "religious issue." People are looking for someone with strong convictions. The primary characteristic of a President is the ability to lead, and I am

perceived—give or take my shortcomings—as a strong leader who has vision and gets things done . . . I believe that just as Kennedy's Catholicism was not a drawback after he explained his position, my earnest faith would ultimately be a plus rather than a negative.

On Scripture and social issues. The Federal Government should not promote initiatives which will disrupt and break up traditional families, and if there are policies currently in place doing that, then I believe those policies should be changed. The majority of the dislocation has come about through Supreme Court and lower-court activism, and I believe that the courts have



The prospective candidate

usurped the legislative function to an alarming extent. The Constitution did not establish the courts as a supralegislature that would dominate all other branches of Government . . .

Much of welfare is perpetuating, especially in the black community, a sense of dependency, a breakup of families. Something has got to be done to help bring these people to a sense of dignity and a sense of worth. The illiteracy rate in the black community is appalling, and the unemployment rate tracks the illiteracy rate, and over 50% of the births in the black community are to unmarried women. And those things have got to be addressed. It is the churches that could take the lead. It is not something Government can get involved in.

On a balanced budget. The Bible says very cogently, "Do not forsake wisdom." Deficit spending is neither left wing nor right wing; it is just stupid. Balanced budgets make sense . . . We are stealing the patrimony from our future generations. This becomes immoral because

this is theft, now, of that which belongs to someone else . . . The Bible also says to stay out of debt, that people who are debtors are servants of their lenders.

On defense and foreign policy. The Prophet Isaiah says we are supposed to lift the yoke of oppression. And I think whether it is economic oppression, civil rights oppression of minorities, oppression against women or oppression against billions of people under Communist domination, there is a positive duty to at least assist people in their struggle for freedom. The Bible also says, "As much as life is in you, live at peace with all men." No one in his right mind wants to go to war or begin war, certainly a nuclear war. The charge that Evangelicals are somehow trying to help God by bringing Armageddon shows total misunderstanding of biblical truth.

Pacifism is not biblical. We have to realize that we are dealing with a malevolent power that over the last four decades has resulted in the death of 250 million human beings. There has never been a force in the history of the world that has been as vicious, as malevolent, and at its core, atheistic and desirous of destroying the liberties of people. I think that if we have the opportunity to assist these wars of liberation, as in Afghanistan or Nicaragua or Angola, we should do that. We have no obligation to assist the enemies of the U.S. or the enemies of the Lord or the enemies of freedom.

On conflict with the Soviets. I have felt that one day the Soviets or their satellites will invade Israel. I do not think the U.S. is going to go to war with the Soviets over Israel. But we might be drawn into something. That is the most volatile area in the whole world, and if you read the Bible, it seems to be considered the center of the earth. If something were to happen, of course, the U.S. would come down on the side of the Israelis.

I think that Soviet Russia is destined to fall, and I don't think the U.S. has to go to war with them to see that happen. It will continue to lose because the system violates basic human nature. It is for the benefit of an oligarchy of some 250,000 leaders of the party. But if they begin a venture in the Middle East, as I read the Bible, God is going to bring it to pass, not America or anybody else.

I think that freedom is breaking forth in the world. All the U.S. has to do is to stay strong and to stay the course. That is assuming we don't fall from within with moral decay. If we have a spiritual renewal, which is urgently needed, there is no question that the long-term outlook for the U.S. is very, very bright. We religious broadcasters are a symbol that a profound spiritual renewal is taking place in our country.

Religion

combat officer in Korea, he graduated from the Yale Law School, flunked the New York bar exam and was a partner in a small business. Then at age 26 he had a conversion experience ("At my desk in my office, I leaned back in my chair and burst out laughing . . . I had passed from death into life") and entered the Biblical Seminary in New York City.

Robertson's career took a dramatic turn in the late 1950s when he became an early convert to the Neopentecostal, or Charismatic, movement, which carried the beliefs of the older Pentecostal denominations into more sedate mainstream churches and independent congregations. These groups believe in baptism in the Holy Spirit as a necessary follow-up to personal commitment to Jesus Christ. Typically, this experience follows the laying on of hands by believers who already have been Spirit-filled, and results in speaking in tongues, a form of prayer language. Also emphasized are other Holy Spirit "gifts" mentioned in the New Testament, including faith healing.

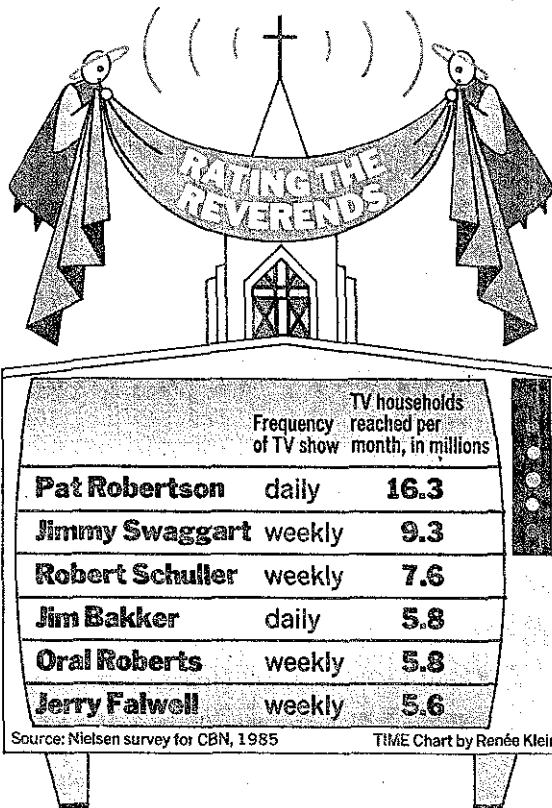
In his new enthusiasm, Robertson felt God telling him to apply literally the exhortation of *Luke 12:33*: "Sell your possessions, and give alms." While Wife Dede was in Ohio nursing a sick brother, Robertson sold virtually everything the couple owned and gave the money to the poor. According to Robertson's 1972 autobiography, *Shout It from the Housetops*, the marriage went through a tense period before Dede showed "willingness to submit herself to my spiritual headship."

After living as a church worker in a Brooklyn black ghetto, Robertson eventually landed in Virginia's Tidewater with \$70 in cash, an aged De Soto, and a vision of "claiming" a defunct UHF station for Jesus. The price (divinely ordained, as Robertson saw it): \$37,000. WYAH went on the air in 1961 with a weak signal, one camera, and a movie projector that frequently jammed. But America's first Christian TV station was afloat, to be followed by others in Atlanta, Dallas and Boston. After overcoming struggles that Robertson attributed to "satanic oppression," the operation developed money-raising telethons and friendly talk shows.

Even in CBN's flourishing state today, fund raising is pervasive, as it is on all Gospel TV. Sometimes the pitch is blatant, as with California Neopentecostalist Paul Crouch, 51, operator of the all-religion Trinity Broadcasting Network (nine stations, 6 million cable homes, \$35 million budget). He tells viewers that a widow has donated her life savings of \$7,000 and comments, "Do you realize what an awesome responsibility it is for me to stand here and encourage people to literally give all they have to God?"

"I'm either the biggest fool and idiot and con man in the world or else I'm plugged into heaven."

Preachers who purchase airtime frequently offer books, calendars, lapel pins and whatnot to those who phone or write in. Viewers requesting "premiums" often send checks, but the preachers' real goal is to build a computerized name list for future direct-mail solicitation. One prominent evangelist, Oregon-based Hispanic Luis Palau, complains with some justification, "When you try to talk to somebody about Jesus Christ in America, they immediately think all you want is to get their name, address and ZIP code."



The mail volume at the warehouse-size depots maintained by top televangelists is monumental. For instance, Billy Graham is notably discreet in asking for money, but after his telecasts 40,000 or 50,000 letters a day come in to his Minneapolis headquarters. Graham remains the leader in prime-time evangelism, confining himself to infrequent specials. Among last year's productions was coverage of his pathbreaking preaching in Communist Hungary and Rumania. The 1985 cost for airtime and other TV expenses was \$18,675,000, about a third of his overall budget.

The world of Gospel TV has been rocked repeatedly by scandals, rumors, shake-ups, and reports of high-living preachers, which obscure the fact that many in the field have only modest personal incomes. An inveterate financial secrecy exacerbates the air of suspicion. In a move designed to allay donor skepticism and head off possible Government intervention, leaders of nondenominational

ministries in 1979 formed the Evangelical Council for Financial Responsibility. The council certifies that its associated fund seekers fulfill a simple code of ethics. But of the seven major TV ministers, only Graham and Bakker are members.

Like the old-time revivalists to whom they are the natural successors—George Whitefield, Charles Finney, Dwight L. Moody, Billy Sunday—today's televangelists tend to be mavericks, outside of denominational control and resourceful about using entertainment and new technology to find their audiences. When radio was born, the early networks wanted no part of troublesome evangelists.

They encouraged stations to donate time for network shows produced in cooperation with the liberal Federal (later National) Council of Churches, as well as Catholic and Jewish agencies. In early TV, too, the networks continued to give traditional denominations free time, in effect confining the conservative evangelists to weak "dollar a holler" stations. As late as 1959 the evangelists accounted for only half the religious airtime. By 1980 they had achieved a virtual monopoly.

What caused the radical turn-about? Primarily, mainline religion violated the first commandment of TV: Thou shalt not bore. The shows avoided not only Gospel appeals but personalities, a necessity on an entertainment-oriented medium. The only galvanizing religious figure to emerge in weekly prime time, Catholic Bishop Fulton Sheen, was sponsored by the Admiral Corp., not by his church. Another factor: the Federal Communications Commission decided to give equal "public service" credit to paid religion and free-time shows. Stations were eager to sell time and increase profits, and the Evangelicals were ready. Their

40 years in the paid-time wilderness turned out to be a boon. Additional UHF and cable outlets became available to them. Videotaping facilitated cheap production and distribution. The computer brought magical mass fund raising.

Then there was the unmistakable dynamism of the preachers themselves. Graham caused such a sensation that his 1950 advent on ABC radio was fore-ordained. He made his TV debut the following year. Weekly shows, the basic unit of TV programming, did not begin until traveling Revivalist Rex Humbard happened by a crowd gazing into an Akron department-store window. Fashion show? Puppets? No, a TV set. By 1953 Humbard was telecasting services weekly and in 1958 opened the splashy, 5,000-seat Cathedral of Tomorrow, the first church designed to be a TV studio. In 1955, at Humbard's urging, Oral Roberts began telecasting weekly films of himself placing healing hands upon lines of supplicants in sweat-drenched tent revivals.

The nation was thrilled, or aghast, to watch hard-core Pentecostalism in the living room. Roberts, a Bible college dropout, was able to fold the tent and open his university off the proceeds.

Soon after Pat Robertson's station went on the air in 1961, he hired Jim and Tammy Bakker, who were working the revival circuit, to run a children's show. Bakker later devised and helped host what became *The 700 Club*. Eventually Bakker left Robertson and helped Paul Crouch launch the Trinity network, then moved to Charlotte in 1974 and became the head of the PTL network. Bakker thus had a hand in developing the three original Christian networks.

Tammy was no great singer, and Jim no penetrating interviewer, but their TV ascent was rapid. Says their avuncular announcer, Henry Harrison: "They were just a cute little couple that people felt good about watching." Soon Bakker was giddily expanding religious and charita-

building his network, Robert H. Schuller decided to start telecasts from California's first drive-in church, which he had founded in Garden Grove. His optimistic Christianity won a ready audience, and the church boomed. Emboldened by a nationwide fund base, Schuller opened the Crystal Cathedral in 1980. U.S. Christendom had never seen the like. Designed by Architects Philip Johnson and John Burgee, it has a 128-ft.-high network of white steel trusses supporting more than 10,000 silvered panes of glass, which diffuse an effulgence of brilliant daylight. Sunday mornings at the cathedral have more the feel of sporting events or variety hours than worship services. Gold-jacketed attendants guide cars in the parking lot. Inside, caged canaries chirp and camera-toting tourists click away through worship. As the service begins, 90-ft. doors open to reveal twelve fountains, one for each apostle, and an 11-ft. by 15-ft. Jumbotron video screen, so the back pews

been a radio preacher and top country-Gospel singer (his cousin is Rocker Jerry Lee Lewis). The son of an Assemblies of God minister, Swaggart preached at his first street meeting at 19. "Son," said a policeman who was there, "you've got the fire." He has it still. Anyone who believes that TV has made the "hot" Gospel hell-raisers obsolete has not seen one of Swaggart's sweating, mike-toting, Bible-waving, Devil-thrashing performances. "Muhammad is dead but Jesus is alive," he intones. "He's alive. He's alive! GLO-RY!" He loves the sawdust trail and conducts a road-show crusade about once a month. "It has its own charm, spontaneity and electrifying power," he says. "There's really nothing in the world quite like it. It's like the Republican or the Democrat-ic Convention every night."

Swaggart's self-contained studios bristle with top-of-the-line equipment, and his 15,000-sq.-ft. printing plant churns out 24 million items a year: books, pamphlets, posters, album covers. He has opened mission and charity offices in 53 countries and preaches regularly overseas. Swaggart and Wife Frances live next door to Son Donnie, 31, in Baton Rouge, La. The houses are worth at least \$1 million; much of the materials and labor was contributed by followers. Swaggart insists that "we've never taken a dollar from people's donations." He pays himself a salary from book, tape and record royalties, and he admits, "The Lord has been good to me."

Time and again, the power and glory of video have dramatically shaped the careers of evangelical preachers. Jerry Falwell founded his little Lynchburg church in a rented soda-pop plant in 1956 with only 35 souls. But he bought radio time after the first week and TV time within the first year, and the people came. And came. Even then his fame might not have gone much beyond the county line had he not syndicated his program nationally after moving into a sleek octagonal sanctuary in 1970. When he made his big move into political activism in 1979, he was armed with a solid computer bank of backers, financial and ideological.

Every style seems to find a responsive audience. At one extreme are nondenominational Richard and Martin De Haan and Paul Van Gorder of Grand Rapids, who look and sound like local bankers but relieve their board-plain Bible lectures with tapes of singers lip-synching cheerily away at Florida's Cypress Gardens. Their *Day of Discovery* runs in 153 cities, and the operation, including radio and publishing, spent \$16 million in 1985. D. James Kennedy, 55, of Fort Lauderdale has a 7,000-member church within a conservative Presbyterian group and spends half his \$20 million budget on media. A television comer, he tries to "fill the gap" left by flashier preachers, offering formal worship and cerebral sermons.

At the other end of the spectrum, the weekly show of Akron's Ernest Angley, who bought out Humbard's church and



Mother Angelica, Catholicism's top producer, with Eternal Word satellite dish in Alabama
In a \$1 billion business, a minor role for the mainline churches.

ble works at home and abroad, though shunning politics.

PTL finances have suffered continual ups and downs. In 1979, after the Charlotte *Observer* charged that money ostensibly raised for overseas work was diverted to expenses at home, the FCC held preliminary hearings on stripping Bakker's license to a TV station in Canton, Ohio, then let him sell it to Anti-Communist Crusader Billy James Hargis. Last month the *Observer* asserted that, during the FCC deliberations, former PTL executives had testified the Bakkers used donations to buy a sports car, a houseboat, a mink coat and other personal perks. Seething, Bakker produced documents to rebut the accusations and called them a plot to "destroy us." But he does live well, even as he pleads poverty on the air and lays off some 500 employees (as he did weeks ago). He tools around in a Mercedes, and he and Tammy have a \$449,000 retreat in Palm Springs.

Four years before Bakker began

can catch the preacher's every gesture.

Schuller's sermons, taxing to neither spirit nor intellect, owe as much to psychology as to Scripture. They are peppered with greeting-card aphorisms for seekers of happiness and self-esteem. "Coping and hoping." "Turn your scars into stars." The cross is "a minus turned into a plus." Beyond that, his crystalline Gospel aims at a historic shift, purging Christendom of what Schuller sees as centuries of enslavement in negative thinking. By preaching sin and judgment, he argues, the clergy "can be, quite accidentally and unintentionally, but nevertheless a destructive influence in the human personality and human life." Schuller gets no salary and lives off book and tape royalties and speaking fees; he lives in a restored farmhouse on 2.5 acres, complete with waterfall.

Jimmy Swaggart went on TV three years after Schuller and claimed his first No. 1 rating by 1982. Not that Swaggart was unknown in the South. He had long

Religion

studios in 1984 for \$2 million, is a throwback to the faith-healing spectacle of the original Oral Roberts show. Another eccentric is bearded Gene Scott, 56, of Los Angeles, who puffs a cigar and peers from under such headgear as a cowboy hat or policeman's cap as he heaps scorn on other TV preachers. Of Pat Robertson he says, "The first name almost exhausts the subject."

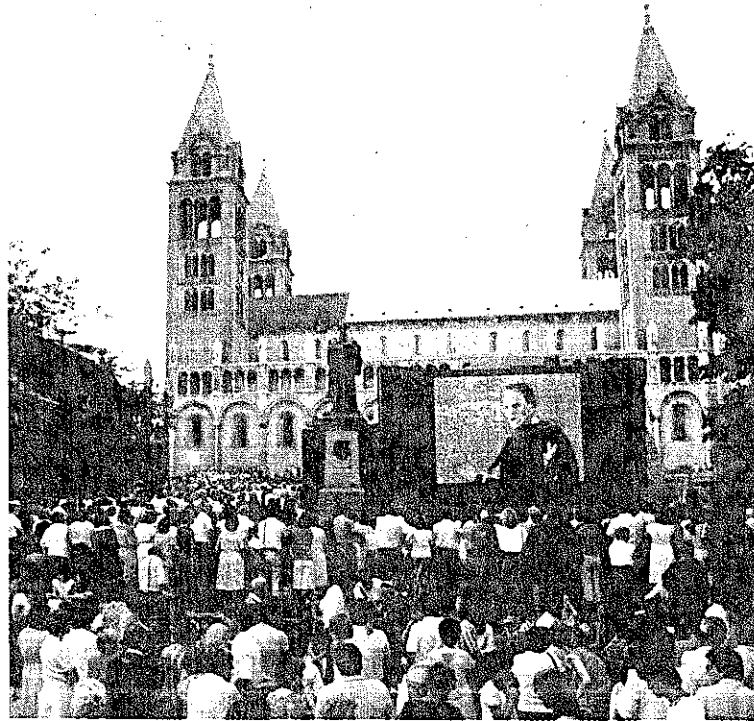
Mainline religion nowadays is a minor force in TV. The three commercial networks still prepare free-time series for the National Council of Churches and other groups. Lloyd Ogilvie, a handsome Hollywood pastor-telecaster, is within the mainline orbit but gets no backing from his Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The Southern Baptist Convention, strongly evangelical, is the only denomination that runs a standard network, ACTS. Begun in 1984, it reaches 4 million homes, but is struggling because local church support has not offset the \$25 million to \$30 million cost to date.

The U.S. Catholic hierarchy has spent \$5.2 million on a network used mainly for in-house telecommunications, though some shows get on local broadcast and cable. Without official imprimatur, Birmingham's amateurish but affable Mother Angelica, 61, a Franciscan nun, has become Catholicism's top producer. She got her start when Robertson decided to add a Catholic to CBN's lineup. In 1981 she branched out with her Eternal Word satellite hookup, which has 4 million homes on line and beams four hours nightly.

Curious, and even worried, about the impact of Gospel TV, evangelists and mainline critics joined in a rare cooperative gesture in 1984, commissioning an extensive study by the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School of Communications and the Gallup organization. The three conclusions: surprisingly, although the evangelists raise their funds to reach the "lost," they mostly reinforce people already committed to evangelical religion. Contrary to understandable fears, Gospel TV does not undercut attendance and contributions at local churches. The competing church factions face a common, all-powerful enemy: secularized general TV.

The Rev. William F. Fore, communication secretary at the National Council of Churches, asserts that the televangelists "have been willing to buy enormous popularity, power and income at the expense of their own integrity." Measuring

Christian teaching by the popular acclaim it wins, writes Australian Protestant Minister Peter Horsfield in *Religious Television: The American Experience* (1984), "has been rejected from the earliest beginnings of the Christian faith." Other critics say that TV subordinates the reflective aspects of Christianity to emotive material that affords instant gratification and entertainment. Political differences underlie some of the sniping, of course. Liberals are upset because their criticisms of U.S. policy and culture are far less popular than the Christian right's simplified affirmations of American success.



A Billy Graham rally in Hungary last year, seen on a U.S. TV special

Reaching grass-roots people who are hungry for traditional values.

The power of positive TV thinking is especially evident in the "faith message" or "prosperity Gospel," a major Pentecostal variant in the 1980s. Its chief exponent is Kenneth Copeland, 49, platform maestro of the bustling Eagle Mountain Chapel outside Fort Worth. Urging viewers to give a tenth of their income to the Lord, Copeland asks himself rhetorically, "Well, Brother Copeland, are you tithing to get?" His answer: "Yes, yes, yes! A thousand times yes! I want to get healed, I want to get well, I want to get money, I want to get prosperous!" Other advocates include Frederick Price, 54, the black pastor of a huge Los Angeles church, and Robert Tilton, 39, of the Dallas-based Success-N-Life cable network.

The prosperity preachers build on the Pentecostal faith in here-and-now miracles, citing bits of Scripture to proclaim that God has already guaranteed not only spiritual comfort but material prosperity and physical healing. Believers who pronounce their wishes in true faith have already received them, the preachers main-

tain, even though it may take time for the miracle to be realized. The shorthand version: "Name it and claim it."

The movement deeply disturbs more traditional Evangelicals and Pentecostals (Oral Roberts and Pat Robertson, however, are among outsiders who are friendly). The Rev. Russell Spittler of California's Fuller Theological Seminary thinks such nice-sounding but strange messages show that his fellow Pentecostals are "theologically impoverished." Theologian Charles Farah Jr. of Oral Roberts University asserts that "there are hundreds of thousands of wounded Christians for whom it didn't work." The current best-selling Evangelical paperback *The Seduction of Christianity*, by Dave Hunt and T.A. McMahon, charges that this TV-borne movement is a slide into occultism and a sign of the End Times.

In the face of Gospel TV's theological simplifications and secular agendas, its sometimes overbearing personalities and unrelenting emphasis on money, should earnest Christians simply shun electronic religion altogether? To Hollywood's Ogilvie, that is not an option: "Otherwise we roll over and play dead." Jim Bakker sees video technology as the means to fulfill Jesus' 2,000-year-old injunction to reach out to the world and spread the Gospel. If Jesus were on earth today, Bakker asserts, "he'd have to be on TV. That would be the only way he could reach the people he loves."

The opposite view comes from Malcolm Muggeridge, a British author, TV personality and curmudgeonly Christian convert. In his 1977 book *Christ and the Media*, Muggeridge spins a fantasy in which Jesus, having survived the three temptations in the wilderness, is offered a fourth: a contract from Lucifer Inc. to go to Rome and anchor a First-Century network variety show. Jesus, "concerned with truth and reality" rather than "fantasy and images," refuses. As a direct result of that choice, across the centuries the greatest artists and architects, poets and philosophers, musicians and mystics celebrate "the brightest and most far-reaching hopes ever to be entertained by the human mind and the most sublime purposes ever to be undertaken by the human will." Now that, says Muggeridge, is communication. —By Richard N. Ostling. Reported by Joseph J. Kane/Virginia Beach, B. Russell Leavitt/Charlotte and Michael Riley/Los Angeles, with other bureaus

Communications projects sought with USSR

By Margaret Barry

A delegation of the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) visited Moscow earlier this month to explore the possibility of Soviet and American scholars designing joint communications projects, including computer and teleconferencing networks, a study of the use of communications technology in educational programs, and a project to enhance the effectiveness of translation of news and other items of interest from one language to another.

The ACLS delegation, headed by Dr. George Gerbner, dean of the Annenberg School of Communications, met with the Soviet Academy of Sciences Commission on the Humanities and Social Sciences in Moscow for two days to discuss "Communications and Contemporary Society."

According to Gerbner, recent advances in communication technology have brought about profound changes that affect people in all realms of their experience: work, cultural life, education and the family. "Exchanging knowledge and experiences can help both countries make better use of their own resources," he said.

"Communications as an academic discipline has played a growing role in American academic life, but it has yet to become recognized as an important academic discipline in the Soviet Union," said Gerbner.

The Americans proposed a number of projects to the Soviet delegation. They include:

- new communications systems such as computer networking and interactive video and radio
- comparative studies of the history of media research and media policy
- "space bridges," television programs that connect live audiences in the Soviet Union and the U.S.A.
- bi-cultural studies of television content and media effects. Gerbner calls this a "comparative cultural indicators project." The American version, which Gerbner has been involved in for the past 18 years, employs teams of trained analysts who have viewed more than 2,500 television programs as part of an ongoing study called the Cultural Indicators project.

The goal of a U.S./Soviet comparative cultural indicators project would be "a comparative analysis of viewer concep-

tions of reality and their relationship to behavior," said Gerbner.

The ACLS supports scholarship in the humanities through a variety of programs including research grants for foreign study and travel grants to enable American scholars to attend conferences abroad.



George Gerbner

According to Gerbner, the next step is to create a subcommission of the American Council of Learned Societies-Soviet Academy of Sciences Commission on the Humanities and Social Sciences which will review the proposed projects. Funding for the projects will be provided for the first two years by the Interna-

tional Research and Exchanges Board (IREX) in the U.S. and by the Soviet Academy of Sciences Commission on the Humanities and Social Sciences in the USSR.

This is not the first time that Gerbner has conducted research projects in the Soviet Union. In the mid-1960s, with a research grant from the U.S. Office of Education (now the Department of Education), he compared schools and teachers of the mass media in 10 countries, including the Soviet Union. In the late 1960s, with a grant from UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), he studied the film heroes of full-length feature films produced for entertainment in six countries, also including the Soviet Union.

The American delegation also included Dr. Michael Cole, professor of communication and psychology and director of the Laboratory of Comparative Human Cognition at the University of California at San Diego; John Paterson Boyer, editorial director, Inside Story; Dr. Murray Turoff, professor of computer science and director of the Computerized Conferencing and Communications Center, New Jersey Institute of Technology; Dr. James Michael Holquist, professor of comparative and Russian literature at Indiana University; Dr. Peter Blount Maggs, professor of law at the University of Illinois; and Dr. Ellen Mickiewicz, dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences and professor of political science, Emory University.

VIDEO FOR CHILDREN

Hire a VCR to baby-sit — and teach, too

By Ed Cohen
USA TODAY

They don't raid the refrigerator, have to be driven home or move away. VCRs make perfect baby sitters. Or do they?

The more VCRs join USA families, the more parents learn how handy these machines can be for buying time alone. Half the parents renting children's cassettes now use them with, or instead of, human baby sitters, video store managers say. And kid video is the fastest-growing segment of the home sales market. Seth Goldstein, publisher of industry newsletter *Video Week*, says kid video could account for 15 percent of the home video market in 1986, up from about 8 percent three years ago.

Videocassettes give parents more control over their young children's viewing, and preschoolers can learn from video tapes what they're too young to read.

"It's really about the best thing to come along in a long time," says Zena Claiborne, 22, who rents Disney movies and cartoons in Hendersonville, Tenn., to watch with her 12-year-old brother, William.

Psychologists aren't as enthusiastic. Few have studied videocassette viewing per se, but some say too many tapes — like too much TV — can stymie creativity and development of reading skills. VCR baby-sitting may alienate family members, others warn.

"If you consider videocassettes as a substitute for TV, you might say it's a positive," says George Gerbner, dean of the University of Pennsylvania Annenberg School of Communications. "If you consider tapes a substitute for books, I think it is not a step forward."

The Palermos of Rochester, N.Y., use their VCR every day, father Sam Palermo says. They belong to six video clubs, rent 10 to 15 cassettes a week, and when daughters Michelle, 13, and Amanda, 10, arrive home from school, they usually have a tape ready to watch until their parents return from work.

"The networks have movies that run to 11 p.m., and I don't want them to stay up till 11. So, at 10 they go to bed, and I tape the last hour for them to watch the next day," Palermo says.

The Palermo parents try to prescreen everything their children watch. R-rated movies aren't allowed, and the VCR is off-limits until the girls finish their homework. But Sam Palermo says their VCR solves more problems than it starts.

"I find that ... it actually works as an incentive. A lot of times before (owning a VCR), if I made them turn off the TV to do their homework, they were being penalized by not being able to watch it. This way, they're not missing anything."

Gerbner says parents should never use television as an incentive or punishment, regardless of content. "What that teaches is that content is secondary to the time spent with the instrument."

How much time a child wants to spend with TV depends on how parents treat the tube, he says. "If you sit in front of the TV all the time, then tell the child you have to go do your homework, you have already lost the battle."

Claiborne admits to having mixed feelings about providing her brother with a reason to stay home with the TV. "If he has everything done, all of the school work, it's not bad, but if he wants to just stare at the TV, that's not good."

Video baby-sitting is "an old phenomenon in large measure," says Eli Rubinstein, psychologist and adjunct professor of mass communications at University of North Carolina's journalism school. "That's been the major use of TV."

"What should be done is that parents watch it with the child so that the TV, rather than a baby sitter, becomes a source of parent-child interaction," Rubinstein says. "They should talk about what they just saw and use it as a source of getting closer to each other."

No matter how popular videocassettes become, says Leonard Jason, professor of psychology at DePaul University, Chicago, they'll never be a substitute for parents and children spending time together.

"The videotape might be real exciting, but you're never going to get beyond the human contact you have with reading. The child has a chance to talk to the adult (with reading). A child can't talk to the TV screen."

Cooperation

Annenberg dean led delegation to USSR

By NINA STUZIN

A delegation representing the American Council of Learned Societies headed by Annenberg School Dean George Gerbner met with representatives from the USSR Academy of Sciences in Moscow last month and agreed to set up a subcommission for collaboration in the fields of communications and society.

The memorandum of understanding described the creation of the subcommission for the "initiation, support and coordination of cooperative operational research projects." It was signed by Gerbner and Oleg Smirnov, director of the Institute of Automated Systems at the USSR Academy of Sciences.

The new subcommission, headed by Gerbner and Smirnov, proposed research projects in the areas of comparative media studies and interactive communication technologies in an intercultural context.

Among the many projects proposed were the study of media programming, research on computer

networking, experiments in teleconferencing, history and theory of media systems, and research on the use of communication technology in education.

The subcommission also proposed joint action, conference and publication projects to build the basis for continued exchange and collaboration.

These projects include a symposium of communication researchers to discuss history and recent trends in the two countries and a book of research on communication and society in the U.S. and the Soviet Union.

"The major accomplishment was breaking the ice in exchanging ideas about communications as a field of study in its own right," Gerbner said last week.

"The [Soviet] response was very good," he added. "Especially after the Geneva summit, things have gotten much warmer over there. . . This was a good time for an academic summit of a collaborative nature."

Gerbner expressed particular



GEORGE GERBNER
'Breaking the ice'

concern in the area of computer networking.

"The hope, and this is my personal hope, is that a computer network will be established for academic work," he said.

Gerbner also mentioned the importance of bi-cultural studies of television content and media effects.

"From a research point of view, we are interested in how well they achieve their purposes compared to how well we achieve our purposes," he said.

(Continued on page 7)

Intercultural communication

(Continued from page 1)

According to Gerbner, one of the problems encountered by the American delegation was determining with which Soviet institute in the USSR Academy of Sciences to sign an agreement.

"[In the Soviet Union], communications does not fit into any existing categories in the academy. . . The problem was how to bring about interdisciplinary cooperation among institutes which does not exist there," Gerbner said.

Agreement was finally reached with the Institute of Automated Systems, under Smirnov. The agreement was signed on behalf of "the American and Soviet participants," because it was unclear exactly who was being represented.

The meeting, which took place February 6 and 7, was organized by the American Council of Learned Societies/Soviet Academy of Sciences Commission on the Humanities and Social Sciences.

The commission is administered in the U.S. by the International Research and Exchanges Board, a division of the ACLS, and is responsible for most of the research relations

in the fields of humanities and social sciences between the two countries.

Commission Secretary Wesley Fisher said the trip was organized because "there is a lot happening in new technologies in communications which is affecting both countries."

Fisher cited as examples the New Year's Day speeches of President Ronald Reagan and Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev, and recent advances in computer networking.

"[The new technologies] are creating really a revolution in the access that people have to information in the other society. . . [but] no one has been studying the consequences of this," Fisher said.

"In effect, this trip was a visit to sort out what are the main areas that are important to the scholarly communities in both countries and to determine which types of problems ought to go forth first," he added.

Fisher attributed recent Soviet interest in communications partially to the fact that present Soviet leaders have made greater use of media than did their predecessors.

Work on the projects is set to begin before the summer.

ADWEEK

The VCR: Opening the Way For a New Television Viewer

With technology giving rise to an "active" TV viewer, programmers and advertisers must learn to adjust.

By Joe Mandese

Critics of television and advertising often describe the two in Orwellian terms. And, like Big Brother's, the advertising industry's medium of choice is television. But unlike Big Brother, the industry now has little control over who watches, what they watch and when they watch it.

Had Orwell written *1984* in 1984, Big Brother would find himself competing for viewer attention in a multi-channel viewing environment where half of new television sets are equipped with remote controls. By 1986, one-third of viewing

Despite new technology, non-selective viewers remain. "They don't watch by the program. They watch by the clock."

households would be using VCRs to time-shift Big Brother's rhetoric and zip through the parts they don't want to hear. And by 1987, Big Brother would likely be vying for attention amid the glut of how-to videos in the totalitarian section of the local Video Shack or 7-Eleven.

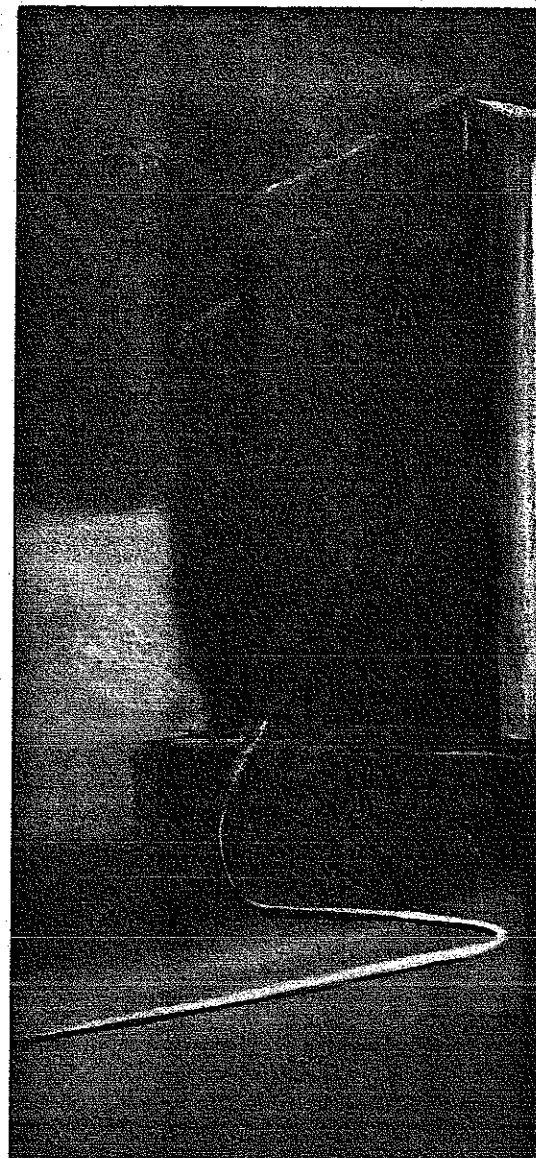
When he conceived Big Brother in 1948, Orwell could not have foreseen the shift from a passive viewing technology to an active one. Yet many advertisers and television programmers appear to be

locked into a 1948 mindset, ignoring the fact that active video has come of age.

Virtually all of the VCRs sold to date are equipped with their own television receivers. Thus, when a VCR is used with a television set, the TV's receiver becomes redundant, making the set little more than a video monitor. In fact, the trend in electronics sales is toward monitor/receiver systems that allow consumers to mix and match the audio and visual components of their choice. With integrated remote-control systems being added to those components, viewers now can become listeners at the touch of a button.

In 1984, for example, RCA introduced an "intermedia" component system that integrates nine different electronic devices—including TV monitor and receiver, VCR, record player, compact disc, tape cassette—into one remote-control system. Others have addressed the market for a "unified" home-entertainment system with so-called "master" remote-control devices that allow the remote controls from several different electronic components to be programmed into one.

Still, the question remains whether the convenience of the new electronic technology alters viewing behavior. George Gerbner, dean of the Annenberg School of Communications in Philadelphia, suggests the new technology merely exaggerates existing behavior patterns. Gerbner says media users fall into two behavior categories: selective and non-selective participants. Selective participants are light viewers who consciously choose the limited amount of television watching they do. Selective participants, he says, tend to be better educated and



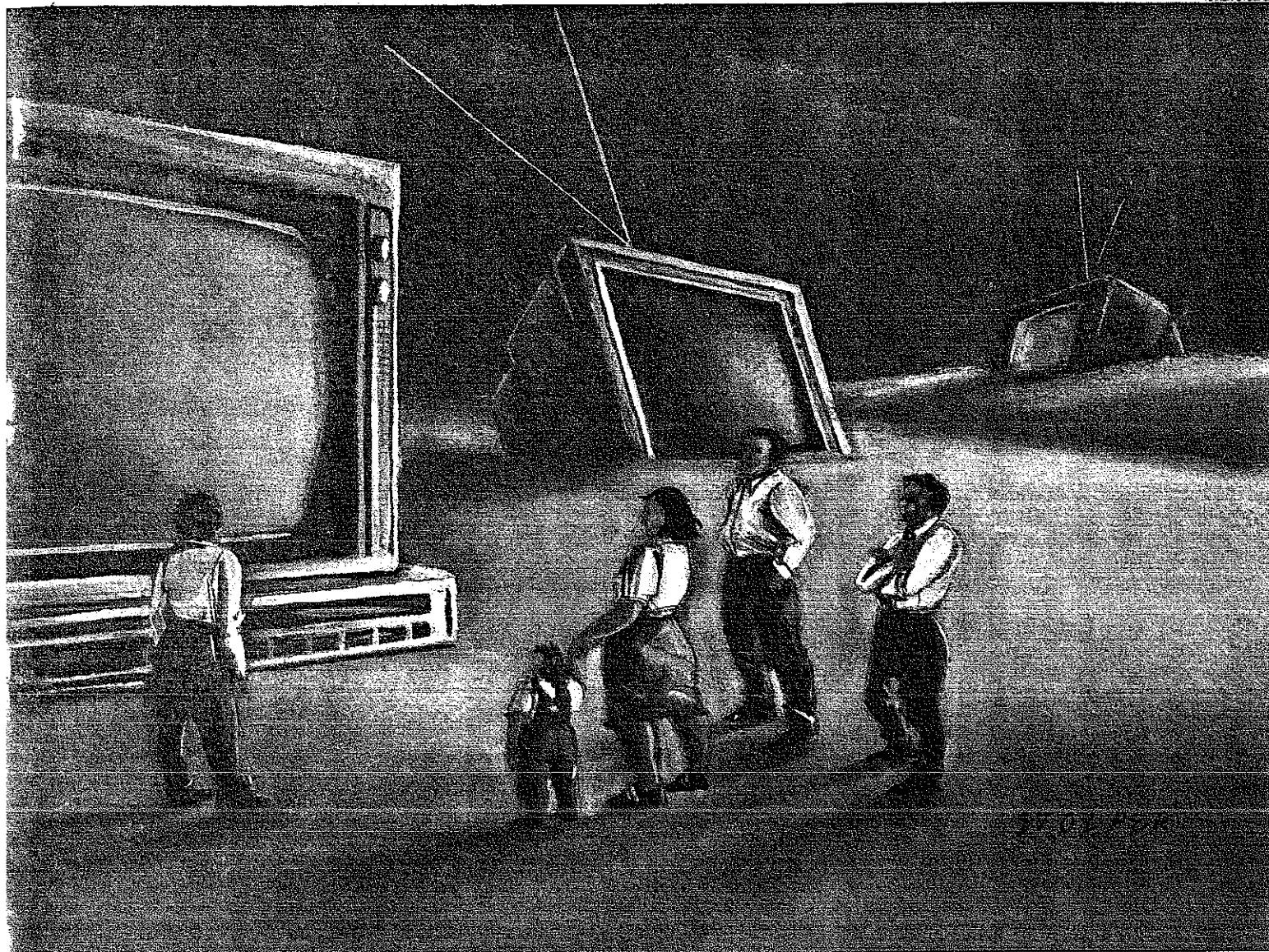
more affluent. When they use a VCR, it's generally a substitute for or a supplement to other selective media, such as reading a magazine or going out to a movie.

The non-selective participants, on the other hand, are the couch potatoes who watch seven-hours-plus daily and generally do not give much thought to what is on the tube. "Essentially, they don't watch by the program," says Gerbner. "They watch by the clock."

Gerbner says the active technology does not significantly affect the viewing behavior in the great mass of television households. But, he adds, a "3% to 5%" shift can be commercially significant in an industry where a rating point is worth some \$80 million annually to a network. "The consequences are very real in terms of dollars," he says.

While some advertisers and agencies

KAREN STOLPER



fear competing on a medium where viewers control their options, others invite the challenge. Chiat/Day chairman Jay Chiat termed the zapping potential of VCRs a "blessing" in a recent issue of *Video Review*: "It helps eradicate bad advertising by forcing people to come up with ads that viewers want to watch, not zap."

But Ron Kaatz, director of media concepts for J. Walter Thompson U.S.A., Chicago, says the issue is no longer as simple as making commercials that are more compelling. "It has nothing to do with people not liking commercials," explains Kaatz. "Zapping isn't new. People always left the room when the commercials came on, and you could always switch the station as long as there was more than one channel. These tools just make it a lot easier."

Therefore, Kaatz says, the advertising

and television industries also must focus on how to improve the environment in which those commercials are seen—if they are to be seen at all.

Recently, Kaatz proposed ways of im-

"It's not enough to say we'll make commercials that are more compelling. We have to explore other options."

proving viewers' receptivity to commercials. His suggestions included juxtaposing commercials on a split-screen with programming, using contests that invite viewers to stick around during commer-

cial breaks and scheduling better commercial adjacencies. (Kaatz recently noticed a Michelob commercial that was directly followed by one for Listerine.)

"It's not enough to say we'll make commercials that are more compelling," says Kaatz. "We have to explore other options. Either we do advertising that is seen or we do advertising that is not seen. It's as simple as that."

Others, meanwhile, would like to develop a profile of those viewers who are more inclined to use their hardware not to see. Ogilvy & Mather recently proposed such a study to the A.C. Nielsen Co. "If I had to guess now, I'd say they were the same type of households that first subscribed to cable TV," says John Hunt, vice president/associate director of resource information at O&M in New York. "They tend to be the more affluent ones,

usually with children. Unfortunately, these are the households that are the target audience for many of our clients."

The good news, however, is that VCR homes appear to watch more television, according to Nielsen research. In January 1986, says Hunt, VCR homes averaged 33.7 hours of viewing each week, versus 32.8 hours for non-VCR homes.

But Edward Cornish, president of the World Future Society and editor of its magazine, *The Futurist*, predicts that viewers increasingly will use their TV sets to view non-traditional television, including home video and videotext. "The long and short of it," says Cornish, "is that broadcast TV is going to get a smaller share of the viewer's time." Indeed, a recent survey by Video Storyboard Tests indicates that television households increased their use of alternative television options during the previous year.

One study found a man watching 24 of a possible 21 primetime hours. How? "I tape stuff and view it after 'Nightline.'"

Zapping aside, the biggest question advertisers have about VCRs is what value to put on time-shifted audiences. Currently, Nielsen credits VCR audiences when shows are taped, but there is no method to prove whether a tape is played back—and, if a tape is played back, whether it is played back in its entirety.

Marvin Mord, vice president/marking and research services at ABC, New York, thinks VCRs are boosting viewing, especially for the networks. In a focus-group study, the network asked how many of a possible 21 primetime hours viewers watched each week. "One guy said he watched 24," says Mord. "We said, 'How can you watch 24 out of a possible 21 hours?' He said, 'Because I tape stuff and view it after "Nightline."'"

Advertisers want to know much more about when people do their playing back. According to Mord, current research shows that most playback occurs Saturday nights and weekend mornings. But by 1995, New York research firm Wilkofsky Gruen Associates estimates, VCR playback will represent 17% of all prime-time viewing and 25% of daily viewing. □

Is Home Video the Real Fourth Network?

Coca-Cola, which owns Columbia Pictures, recently began putting Coke commercials at the beginning of its home-video release of "Ghostbusters." Tapes carrying the spot were part of an experiment Coke conducted in Britain, but many observers think it's only a matter of time before other movie companies make the transition from movie trailers to commercial advertising on their video releases.

Ever since VCR penetration began reaching the "critical mass" threshold of one-third of U.S. television homes, marketers have been seeking ways to get their messages across on the medium. Like cable before it, home video now is touted as an efficient form of narrowcasting that would keep marketers from wasting their messages on viewers uninterested in their product. But where cable so far has failed—except for a few examples like MTV and ESPN—to deliver on the narrowcasting promise, video distributors believe they can do the job.

"We're still living down all the hoopla the video gurus gave to cable," says Stuart Karl of Karl-Lorimar Home Video, Irvine, Calif. Because of that hoopla, Karl has been slow to exploit the advertising potential of his product. But with a year of advertiser-supported video projects behind him, Karl is beginning to talk of home video in terms of a "fourth network."

He is not alone. Analysts predict home video will have a 25% share of overall television viewing by 1995, and 17% in primetime.

Karl, meanwhile, has signed about a dozen magazine titles and is negotiating with others to adapt their formats to ad-supported video. Magazines can be adapted literally, as with "Playboy," or loosely, as with "Ski," which is a how-to instructional video done in the style of the magazine.

Sponsorships also fall into two categories: general and generic. General sponsors are advertisers who come in after a video is made and associate themselves with the product. General advertisers on "Ski" include Subaru, Ray-Ban and Molson's. Generic sponsors are those involved with and usual-

ly integrated into the production of the video, such as Red Lobster's "Eat To Win" and Glenmore's "Mr. Boston's Official Bartender's Guide."

But unlike broadcast television, you will not find many advertisers on any given video, says Karl. "That's part of the attraction of video," he explains. "We wouldn't want to turn it into a video store-window display."

And since viewers can zip through video programming, Karl says not just



Karl: "still living down all the hoopla."

any advertising will work. "They will be more 'informercial' type spots that offer the viewer a reason to watch them," he says.

As the industry moves from an experimental phase of video sponsorship to make it a regular practice, Karl is developing a base of comparison to traditional media buys. "We are now trying to develop a whole new base of numbers to relate to CPMs," he says, suggesting concepts like "view-along viewership" to relate to pass-along readership in the print world.

In fact, Karl says the logical media-buying comparison for home video is with print. "We feel we are going to be very comparable to specialty publishing in terms of CPMs," he says.

—Joe Mandese

Influence of Gospel TV studied at Annenberg

By **STACY ASHER**

The shows have different hosts, but their elements are the same: shiny-faced singers praising the Lord, breathless testimonials of miracles and the omnipresent 1-800-number

Campus Life

for contributions flashing across the bottom of the screen.

Jimmy Swaggart, Jerry Falwell, Rex Humbard, Oral Roberts and Pat Robertson are just a few of the biggest "emcees" of Pray TV, a phenomenon that has recently spurred great controversy.

Some fear the TV preachers are an ominous force in American politics —

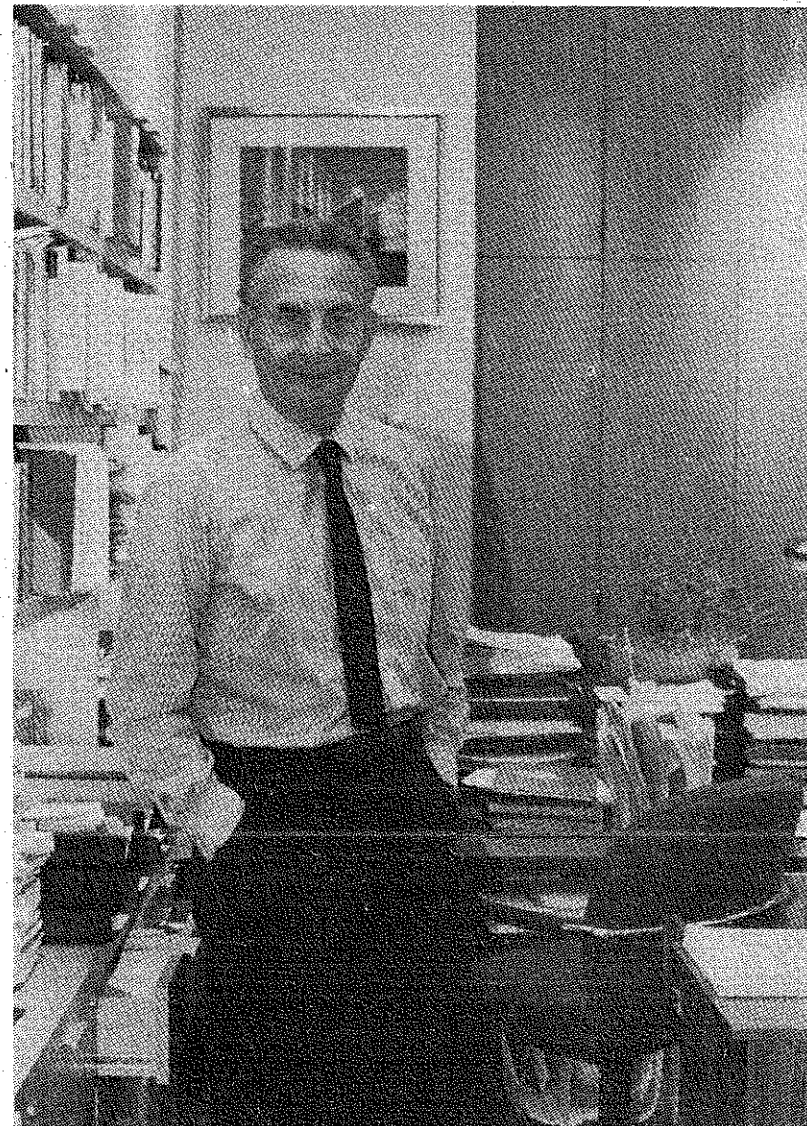
advocates of religious repression, trying to outlaw what they consider to be personal vices. Others welcome Gospel TV as a bastion of traditional virtues, striving to keep secularized America from sinking into moral decline.

But the question remains: has the media exaggerated the influence of these TV ministers and their audiences, or have they truly gained enough political clout in the past decade to be able to make the law reflect their moral principles?

A group of researchers at the Annenberg School of Communications conducted a study of the social influence of TV religion, uncovering some statistics about the seemingly

(Continued on page 10)

Campus Life



Lisa Feinman/Daily Pennsylvanian

George Gerbner is co-author of the Annenberg School study

The audience for religious programs is a fairly coherent and well-defined group — generally older and more conservative.

TV preachers: a new political force?

(Continued from page 1)

massive following.

The most well-known, and politically active, of the TV preachers, include Swaggart, Falwell, Roberts, Humbard and Robertson, who are all evangelical.

Evangelicalism, one of the most puritanical branches of Christianity, regards the Bible as an infallible source of religious and moral authority.

Believers emphasize direct experience by the individual of the Holy Spirit, of being "born again," and they testify that through faith they have overcome insurmountable problems — terminal diseases, fatal accidents, and financial straits.

Annenberg School of Communications Dean George Gerbner is the co-author of the 1984 study on religion and television that reports that this miracle-rich faith appeals to a specific common audience.

"The profile of the audience for religious programs tends to be fairly coherent and well-defined," he said. "They are somewhat older, lower in education and income, more conservative, and more likely to live in rural areas and in the south and midwest than those who do not watch religious programs."

Though the TV evangelists tend to exaggerate the size of their audience, Gerbner said his study found that approximately 13.3 million, or 6.2 percent of the national TV audience, watch religious programs regularly.

This percentage does not represent an increase. Stewart Hoover, another researcher who worked on the An-

nenberg study, said the audiences have grown only when a city that didn't show the program first, begins broadcasting it.

"Those who fear the evangelicals' political aspirations fear that they are gaining a larger percentage of the national TV audience, which they're not," Hoover said.

And according to Gerbner: "The ones who tune in now are the same ones who always did. The rest of the TV audience still considers religious programming to be irrelevant."

Though the TV evangelists have this compact, loyal following, they have traditionally been more concerned with personal salvation than with social reform.

But James Reichley, a College alumnus and author of the 1985 study "Religion in American Public Life," said the turbulent events of the late 1960's and early 1970's led TV preachers to enter the political arena.

"The Supreme Court's decisions prohibiting organized prayer and permitting abortion caused outrage in the evangelical community," Reichley said. "Also, the Vietnam War, Watergate and the violent social disorders of the late 1960's made the evangelicals fear that the moral foundations of American society were crumbling."

Since the American government seemed to be blandly accepting this moral degeneracy without fighting it, the only way to prevent the total secularization of American values was to get control of the government into different hands, according to the evangelicals.

Just as they were beginning to form political aspirations in the mid 1970's, organizers of what they called the New Right realized that the congruence of their social views with those of the evangelicals could make them political allies.

"The New Right was looking for issues on which they could rally people's support, and social issues filled the bill," Reichley wrote in his study. "So while the Old Right had concentrated on economic and foreign policy issues, the New Right emphasized busing, abortion, pornography, education, traditional biblical moral values and quotas."

Abortion was the main issue that gained support for the New Right. Formerly not of major importance to evangelists, the New Right used it to unify the support of conservative religious groups such as Catholics and Evangelicals, Reichley said.

In the 1980 presidential election, Ronald Reagan became the favorite of the New Right only after the campaigns of John Connally and Phillip Crane fizzled. Though he was still closely associated with the Old Right, Reagan's stands on abortion and public prayer helped him gain the votes of the religious right.

The key to the evangelists' support was voter registration, Reichley's study further continued.

"In his own church in Lynchburg, Virginia, Jerry Falwell instituted an effective Sunday morning exercise," the study states. "Following the regular worship service, he asked the entire congregation to stand. After telling the registered voters to sit down, he lectured those who remained standing on their duty to get on the election rolls and warned that he would repeat the same procedure every Sunday until election day."

This campaign seemed to produce

(Continued on page 10)

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June 13, 1986

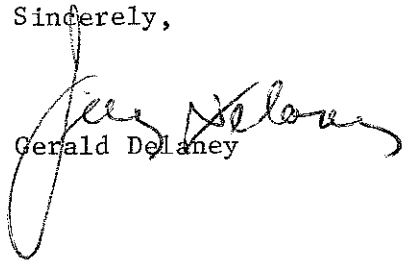
Mr. George Gerbner
Prof. Of Comm. & Dean
The Anneberg School of Comm.
3620 Walnut St. C5
Philadelphia, PA 19104

Dear Dr. Gerbner:

See page 4.

I hope you like the way we handled this.

Sincerely,


Gerald Delaney

GD:ml

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NATIONAL

Personal Choice Focus Of WHO Symposium

UNITED NATIONS, NY— Good health is a matter of choice, and the challenge before the health community is to empower people to choose what is best for them.

That was the consensus of national health experts who addressed an April symposium celebrating World Health Day sponsored by the New York Committee of the American Association for World Health in cooperation with the World Health Organization.

The vast majority of the population doesn't fully appreciate the extent to which they can control their own health, J. Michael McGinnis, M.D., deputy assistant secretary for health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, told the audience.

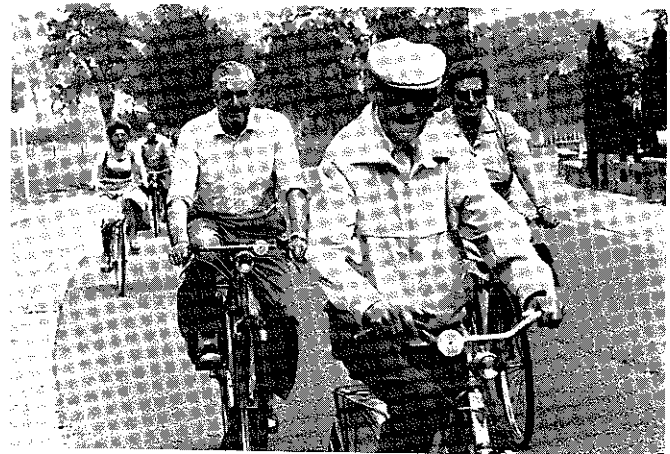
"The largest cancer factors are the ones that people can control. Lifestyle factors account for 50 percent of all cases of premature mortality."

W. Virgil Brown, M.D., chief of the Division of Arteriosclerosis and Metabolism at Mount Sinai School of Medicine, New York, and a participant in a roundtable discussion, recommended:

"Each one of us should know our individual set of risk factors so that we can

deal with them. If, in a certain family, the father had a high cholesterol level and died of a heart attack around age 35, his children should be monitored routinely for elevated cholesterol."

By the time all children are six or seven, they should be taught to know their cholesterol levels and the impor-



Healthy living is a goal for everyone.

Not Everyone Takes the Long View

NEW YORK—The task of getting people to change addictive behavior is formidable, says J. Michael McGinnis, M.D., deputy assistant secretary for health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

During an interview with *HealthLink*, McGinnis said: "When someone is shifting behavior from a certain norm, such as quitting smoking, he needs a lot of support from the people closest to him. Traditionally, support has come from the family. But it's hard to get that kind of support in society today—in many cases, there is no family unit to fall back on."

There's tremendous pressure on low-income people that McGinnis says is not related to their health concerns, but to their view of

opportunities in life.

"It's hard for these people to take the long view. It's easier for them to take relief in the abusive behaviors. It's hard for them to think that exercise, for instance, will open up new opportunities in life."

Regardless of the socioeconomic group, simply providing information isn't enough, McGinnis argues. "A person has to feel that there is more of an immediate payoff for taking action other than waiting 40 or 50 years down the line to prove that a healthy lifestyle was worthwhile."

In order for health promotion programs to be effective, McGinnis said that efforts must reach out and involve resources outside the traditional health sector, including schools,

teachers, the workplace, churches, and the media.

In addition, while most people want to be accepted by society, 10 to 15 percent of the population will oppose collective health efforts, he noted.

In his opinion, society's statutory support of the clean indoor air movement offers a big signal to people about what's acceptable and what isn't. McGinnis points to the number of nonsmoking sections in restaurants, to protect patrons from unwanted cigarette smoke, as an example.

"Although the Surgeon General has called for a smoke-free society by the year 2000, he ought not be disappointed that about 10 percent of the population will continue to smoke."

—CG

tance of maintaining a certain range to avoid the risk of heart disease, he urged.

Heart disease is very expensive, reminded Richard A. Stein, M.D., director of cardiology at the State University of New York Health Sciences Center: "It's better to make decisions about prevention in advance so you don't move into the cardiac high-risk group."

The problem the health community faces is, according to Stein, "what can we do so that people are oriented toward health before they become patients?"

The medical care system has not trained physicians to emphasize prevention of disease, "but we're beginning to make changes in the education of medical students."

The relationship of choice to health was the resounding theme presented by Harold H. Gardner, M.D., Visiting Professor, Department of Community Medicine, Mount Sinai School of Medicine. His thesis: It's not what a person chooses, but who makes the choice that is the key to personal health.

"The health decisions that most people face are made in the doctor's office and they are framed in life-and-death terms," Gardner noted. "Most of the time doctors do the deciding and they're driven by economic incentives.

"People need options that involve more than going to the doctor. First, they must engage in self-observation; second, begin self-help; and, third, find professional services."

—Constance Grzelka

Forum Speaker Decries Influence of Television

NEW YORK—More than half the premature illnesses and deaths in the United States are not the result of lack of health care, but the result of lifestyle habits that are in great measure cultivated and culturally sustained by television, according to George Gerbner, Dean of the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania.

Gerbner made this ob-

- nine episodes of showing or talking about eating or drinking.

"About half the characters in prime time and two-thirds of the characters in children's programming are involved in some violence every day," Gerbner told the audience of health educators and opinion leaders gathered at the Pierre Hotel. "Yet there is no pain. There is little or no blood, and only



George Gerbner addresses NCHE Forum.

ervation in a luncheon talk to participants at the NCHE Whitehead Forum, "Health Sells—Who Profits?" February 27, in New York City. He cited tobacco as the leading cause of premature death, at 1,000 people a day, and alcohol as the second leading cause, at 200 people a day.

Gerbner said that someone watching commercial television for one hour during prime time sees:

- six acts of violence
- seven acts of reckless driving
- eight episodes of showing or talking about illness

about six percent of the characters get treatment."

"Drinking is totally inescapable," said Gerbner. "It occurs at the rate of a little over two times per hour. If the hero doesn't reach for a gun, he will reach for a drink, and the drink overwhelmingly is hard liquor." And yet the consequences of smoking and drinking are rarely shown. "The ill effects of alcohol affect less than one percent of all characters."

The food situation is no better, according to Gerbner. "A child growing up with television sees about 5,000

commercials for food a year. Half of the food is high in sugar, high in calories, and low in nutrition." Commercials are slick, persuasive, and hard-hitting; More talent, money, care, and sensitivity go into commercials than into programming, Gerbner said.

"Our children grow up in an environment in which they see 12 doctors a week, every week," he said. And what do these doctors do? They solve all our problems, according to Gerbner. They are authoritative, powerful, daring, and successful. People are given a totally unrealistic sense of physicians' availability, accessibility, reasonability, and rate of success, he said.

Television has become all-pervasive. "For the first time in history a child is born into a home in which the set is on an average of seven hours a day. It is like the wallpaper."

According to Gerbner, the medium of television cultivates a resistance to change among its viewers. And he added that executives in charge of programming have little freedom. They work in a rigid system that is market-oriented and power-oriented.

Gerbner said that he represents a new movement that seeks to improve our cultural environment. This movement aspires to liberate television from its rigid structure, extend its resource base, diversify its programs, and present entertainment that will advance learning in the most rewarding way—one that heals, not hurts.

—Gerald Delaney

Getting Fat and Lazy? You Can Blame Television

BOSTON (AP) — Television's image of the brawny hero who tosses back liquor, grabs quick snacks and never gets fat or sick may cause poor health attitudes in TV addicts, a study concludes.

Researchers say that people who watch television many hours a day are likely to adopt the nonchalant, careless outlook of the characters who populate prime-time TV.

The study was conducted at the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania, where researchers watched a week of prime-time and weekend programs and conducted surveys of viewers. The

results were published in today's issue of the New England Journal of Medicine.

"The more people watch television, the more complacent they are about health and exercise and the more confidence they have in the medical profession," said George Gerbner, one of the researchers. "There is an unrealistic belief in the magic powers of medicine. They say, 'If anything goes wrong, the doctor will take care of it.'"

The researchers said people probably get more health information from TV dramas than anywhere else.

"The cultivation of complac-

cy, coupled with an unrealistic belief in the 'magic of medicine,' is likely to perpetuate unhealthy lifestyles and to leave both patients and health professionals vulnerable to disappointment, frustration and litigation," they wrote.

□

The study said the results show that "prime-time characters are not only healthy (though often

vulnerable to inflicted injury) but, despite all the mayhem, eating and drinking, are also relatively sober, safe from accidents and slim at all ages."

The researchers found that TV

characters eat, drink or talk about food eight times an hour. They grab a fast snack almost as often as they eat breakfast, lunch and dinner combined.

Despite these poor eating habits, fewer than 6 percent of the male TV characters and 2 percent of the female characters were overweight.

The most common beverage on the tube is alcohol. Thirty-six percent of the characters drink, but only about 1 percent are alcoholics.

Most people on TV shows use cars, but in the week of study, only one character wore a seat belt.

Crime is 10 times more frequent on television than in the real world, and there are five acts of violence per hour during prime time. Yet pain, suffering or medical help rarely follow this mayhem.

"These little things add up to a lifetime pattern of ritualistic indoctrination," said Gerbner, noting that the average family watches 6½ hours of television a day. "Most of the storytelling about what life is all about, what assumptions we make about the outside world (and) what we believe about conduct are primarily and most pervasively carried by television."

The Real Issue Of TV Violence: It's Subversive

By George Gerbner

TELEVISION violence is up again and, for the first time in two decades of monitoring, the 8-to-9 p.m. "family hour" is the most violent hour of prime time.

Surveys by my colleagues and me show that violent episodes occurred in the 1984-85 and the 1985-86 seasons at the record rate of eight per family hour, more than six per late-evening hour and more than 20 per children's-program hour.

Violence at this magnitude is not free expression nor realism nor even audience-grabbing. Violence is prevalent on TV because it is cheap to produce, not because it is particularly popular. It is being used wholesale as a cheap dramatic ingredient to hype dull programs. Our children and our democracy may pay a high price for a system that imposes that formula on writers, directors and producers who know how to create richer fare.

What we in the University of Pennsylvania's cultural indicators research project also have found is that American television is immersed in a tide of violent representations that is historically unprecedented and shows no real sign of receding.

Growing up with that tide cultivates heightened conceptions of victimization, danger, meanness and general malaise more that it incites us to violence.

Our theory can be summed up as follows: While the convergence of research indicates that exposure to violence does occasionally incite and often desensitize, our findings show that for most viewers exposure to television's violence-saturated world tends to create feelings of danger, mistrust, intolerance and — despite its supposedly entertaining and even "escapist" tonic — a sense of alienation and gloom.

TV serves to confirm more than upset the social order. Symbolic violence is the cheapest, quickest and certainly the most entertaining show of power. It is the best teacher of who can get away with what against whom, and who should submit to whom.

For every 10 male characters on prime-time network TV who commit violence, 11 men fall to violence. But for every 10 women who inflict violence on other characters, male or female, 16 women become victims.

As TV drama goes down the social pecking order, it raises the price paid for getting involved in violence. Minority and foreign women pay the most. For every 10 perpetrators, they suffer more than 20 victims, double the relative victimization rate of white males.

Others most likely to be victims rather than victors are older women and men, young boys and some minorities. We have also found that symbolic victimization on television and real-world fear among women and minorities are highly related — even if the fear is unsupported by facts. Viewers who see that members of their own group have a higher calculus of risks than those of other groups seem to develop greater apprehension and mistrust in the real world.

Heavy viewers are more likely than comparable groups of light viewers to express insecurity, suspicion and hopelessness. Do these feelings drive them to television in the first place? If so, watching is no escape. It only confirms and deepens their anxieties.

The unequal and corrosive sense of danger, vulnerability and general malaise cultivated by so-called entertainment invites more than incites aggression. Fearful and alienated people are dependent and easily manipulated, exploited and controlled. They are susceptible to deceptively simple, strong, tough measures and hard-line postures — both political and religious. They may accept and even welcome repression if it promises to relieve their anxieties. That is the broader and deeper problem of violence-laden television.

George Gerbner is dean of the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania.