COMMUNICATION RESEARCH TRENDS

Religion in the Mass Media

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Since the advent of the earliest mass media a relationship has prevailed between religious organizations and the secular media which is at best uneasy and at worst downright vindictive.

Until sobered by evidence of the Holocaust, European media were not overly friendly to Jews, and the more vicious or gullible publications spread various canards about them, undoubtedly contributing to the Nazi atrocities.

Catholics, too, were at the receiving end of such "exposes" as that of "Maria Monk," "guns in the church basement," and various other "papist plots."

Caricatures of Protestant fundamentalists flowed from the pen of the famous journalist H. L. Mencken, as he reported on the "Monkey Trial" of evolutionist teacher John T. Scopes, in 1925. Every evangelist has had to overcome the negative stereotype fostered by the novel and movie, *Elmer Gantry*. The "religious right" has, in recent years become a *bête noir* in certain journalistic circles.

Religious people, on their part, frequently voice an exaggerated distrust or disgust at the materialism and "immorality" they feel the media promote. Some denounce all advertising as "deceptive" and "exploitive". Movies are condemned, sight unseen, as in the case of Martin Scorsese's well-intentioned, if flawed, *The Last Temptation of Christ*. The slightest media criticisms of religious organizations or religious leaders, even when deserved, can provoke storms of protest.

Motivated, in part, by professional pride and a concern for good public relations, both media and religious bodies have recently shown an increasing interest in establishing better relations. But problems persist.

This issue of *Trends* surveys some of the recent research, dialogue and commentary which have striven to understand and improve those relationships.

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A Note to Regular Subscribers

Please note that this is Vol. 15, No. 2, of *Trends.*
You should have received Vol. 15, No. 1, on "Quality
in Television Programming," several months ago.

However, we had some trouble with the address
labels which might have prevented the delivery of that
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apologize to those whose names were printed
incompletely or inaccurately on the labels.

--The Editor

Religion in the Mass Media

I. Are Journalists Irreligious?

S. Robert Lichter, Stanley Rothman, and Linda Lichter. *The Media Elite*. New York: Adler and Adler, 1986.

John Dart and Jimmy Allen. *Bridging the Gap: Religion and the News Media*. Nashville: Freedom Forum First Amendment Center, 1993.

S. Robert Lichter, Daniel Amundson, and Linda Lichter. *Media Coverage of the Catholic Church*. Bala Cynwyd, PA/New Haven, CT: The Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights/The Knights of Columbus, 1991.

A Research Base for Discussion

In 1986, S. Robert Lichter, Stanley Rothman, and Linda S. Lichter published a study of 240 journalists in the elite American media represented by top daily newspapers, news magazines, and the news departments of the four national broadcast networks. It was a comprehensive look at the character of those elite journalists, conflicts among them, and their impact on American life. A fundamental assumption of the research was that the personal beliefs and attitudes of journalists would tend to influence their reporting; that "journalists' reality judgments are consistent with their social and political perspectives" (Lichter, Rothman, and Lichter 1986: 92).

Concluding a chapter significantly titled, "The Rashomon Principle," the authors claim to have shown how the perspectives of a media elite which is quite socially and intellectually homogeneous might influence the shape of the news.

> The most straightforward news report is the outcome of unavoidable choices that reflect the journalist's sensibilities in weaving together fact and interpretation. We have illustrated the ways stories can vary according to choices of emphasis, source selection, descriptive vs. insinuational language, and even poetic license that reshapes the facts to fit the truth (pg. 165).

Within their profession's generally homogeneous outlook individual journalists' choices may vary, and journalistic choices in general may vary through time. According to Lichter, Rothman, and Lichter, the rise of the wire services caused greater emphasis to be placed on "factual" reporting and "objectivity" as values, but "today, under the influence of television, they seem to be incorporating more subjective elements" (1986: 165).

The journalists who comprised the research sample tended to be self-defined as "liberal" -- more so for younger than for older informants. This included a "liberal" approach to most moral and public policy issues (pp. 29-31). Religion was only a small part of the study, but it also appeared to be only a small part of the journalists' collective lives.

> A distinctive characteristic of the media elite is its secular outlook. Exactly half eschew any religious affiliation. Another 14 percent are Jewish, and almost one in four (23 percent) was raised in a Jewish household. Only one in five identify as Protestant, and one in eight as Catholic. Very few are regular churchgoers. Only 8 percent go to church or synagogue weekly, and 86 percent seldom or never attend religious services (Lichter, Rothman and Lichter 1986: 22).

A "Hard-Boiled" Crew

Other characteristics of the world-view of the "media elite," as interpreted in the same study, could influence their approach to religion.

> Compared to successful businessmen, leading journalists are at once relatively power-oriented and ambivalent toward power. They are relatively narcissistic, needing to build themselves up at the expense of others (pg. 130).

Furthermore, many who choose journalism as a career "are fascinated by machinations for power.. Indeed, the spotlight they place on the race and the prize may dim their awareness of events and processes that take place outside its glare" (pg. 130).

"In this scenario, good reporters don't give anyone the benefit of the doubt. Nice guys get scooped" (pg. 131). Few would push this to the extreme represented by an incident in which "a crew from a local television station filmed an attempted suicide by self-immolation.

They let the cameras roll to record the event before stepping in to put out the flames" (pp. 126-127). But the tendency is in that direction. "The hard-boiled or cynical persona adopted by many journalists may be seen as making a virtue of necessity" (pg. 127).

A Different View

Subsequently, the religious segment of Lichter, Rothman, and Lichter's research has been used by others to explain a perceived bias of the media against religion. Their findings tended to support a "widely shared" belief that the "media elite" are "either anti-religious or at least irreligious" (Hoover et al. 1994: 31).

John Dart and Jimmy Allen (1993) set out to explore that hypothesis and to weigh it against alternative explanations.

They cite a study by David H. Weaver and G. Cleveland Wilhoit (1991), which showed that only 28.2% of a sample drawn from a wider range of media and journalists than that of the Lichter, Rothman, and Lichter study said that religion was "not important" to them.

Dart and Allen's own nationwide study of 266 managing editors found 72% who responded "that religion was at least 'important' in their lives" (as cited in Hoover et al. 1994: 32). They did admit that their sample rated religion as "very important" substantially less frequently (35%) than did the general American population (58%), as regular Gallup polls indicated (ibid., pp. 32-33). They found that more of those journalists specifically assigned to report on religion said that religion was "very important" in their own lives than had the general public (75% and 58%, respectively).

One of the authors of *The Media Elite* countered that the data of the various studies had asked different questions of different categories of journalists and therefore are not comparable. While the Lichter, Rothman and Lichter study had focused on "national communicators, who were setting the media agenda," Allen and Dart had targeted religion writers and small town editors (as cited by Peter Steinfels in *Commonweal* 1995: 16).

The Clergy's Perspective

Whatever the religious orientation of the journalistic profession may be, a very high proportion of the clergy surveyed in the study by Dart and Allen felt that "most religion coverage today is biased against ministers and organized religion." The religion writers and editors

surveyed disagreed with the clergy's impression. Dart later summed up the gist of his and Allen's conclusions: "In general, our recommendations were that organized religion needs more media savvy and news media need more expertise and familiarity with religion" (*Commonweal* 1995: 31).

Anti-Catholic Content

Following their publication of *The Media Elite*, the Lichters, together with Daniel Amundson, were commissioned to do a content analysis of influential American media to determine whether they showed a sustained anti-Catholic bias in their reporting. Four outlets, *Time* magazine, CBS Evening News, the *New York Times*, and the *Washington Post* were selected for analysis in three five-year time blocs sampling coverage in three decades (1964-68, 1974-78, and 1984-88), during which the four accounted for about 10,000 news items about the Catholic Church. CBS archives were not available for the 1964-68 period (Lichter, Amundson and Lichter 1991: 11).

Although the news on some issues was either favorable to the Church's position or straight reporting of Church statements -- notably on ecumenism, war and peace, homosexuality, and abortion -- the negatives outweighed the positives in the overall study. The outlets' reactions to Church positions on sexual morality and Church authority were found to be especially negative. Coverage was structured to stress conflict -- typically between the hierarchy and "dissidents" among clergy, religious or laity. Descriptive terms "applied to the Church emphasized its conservative ideology, authoritarian forms of control, and anachronistic approach to contemporary society." (pg. 74).

Trends noted in the period included a sharp drop in the volume of coverage, a decline in the reporting of official teachings and more challenges to them when they do appear, and increases in descriptive language which "carries connotations of conservatism, oppressiveness, and irrelevance" (pp. 74-75). The authors note that these changes may have been due more to changes in journalistic standards and in American society at large than to any increase in negativity towards the Church (pg. 75).

Among the four media outlets analyzed, CBS Evening News presented the least negative view of the Church, and *Time* magazine was most negative. It..

paid the most attention to dissidents and focused most heavily on conflict, featured the most frequent use of

judgmental language (and led the pack in depicting the Church as irrelevant), and printed a majority of opinions opposed to the Church on every issue dimension except ecumenism (pg. 76).

To some degree, this negative image in *Time* may have been due to the nature of a news magazine with a "regular religion beat", which had to be kept interesting from week to week (*ibid.*)

II. Incongruent Agendas and Conflicting Values

Robert Lewis Shayon and Nash Cox, compilers. *Religion, Television and the Information Superhighway: A Search for a Middle Way: Conference Report*. Philadelphia: Waymark Press, 1994.

The Freedom Forum Media Studies Center. *Religion and the News: A Conference Report*. New York: The Freedom Forum Media Studies Center, Columbia University, 1994. (Cited as "Freedom Forum 1994.")

Bill Moyers. "Let There Be Light" (keynote speech to the Religion Newswriters Association). *Religion and Values in Public Life: A Forum from the Center for the Study of Values in Public Life at Harvard Divinity School*. Vol. 2, No. 3/4 (Spring/Summer 1994), pp. 4-8.

Commonweal. Special Issue: "Religion and the Media: Three Forums." Vol. 122, No. 4 (24 February 1995).

The four references on which this section is based are not "research", strictly speaking, but they consist of contributions from some of the most knowledgeable and incisive observers of the interaction between religion and the mass media in the United States, and a few from other countries. With the exception of Moyers' separately published keynote speech, they are reports of conferences and panel discussions in which the selected participants interacted, testing their views on each other. In a sense, these observations may be more accurate than much research, because in most cases the individuals' thoughts are the result of long and intimate involvement with the issue, resulting in well-informed opinions which have then been moderated and corrected by the give-and-take of dialogue with equally well-informed and articulate colleagues.

Material from Freedom Forum (1994), Moyers (1994), and *Commonweal* (1995) will be discussed as units, below. The report by Shayon and Cox (1994) is the result of a conference at the Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania, in April 1994. The two compilers presented their panelists' views as summary statements, some of which will be introduced wherever pertinent throughout this review article.

The contributors to these four sources generally limit their observations to the United States, where the debate is especially intense for many reasons including the Constitutional prohibition against a religious establishment, extreme development of religious pluralism, a hegemonic ideology of materialistic consumerism and, paradoxically, a deep commitment to religious belief and/or practice on the part of a large majority of the population.

Other countries and cultures, with different mass media traditions and different religious mixes in their populations may have different problems, but many do share the American conditions of pluralism and consumerism, with at least a nod to freedom of the press and of religion as significant values. So, the American case is more broadly relevant than it may at first seem.

"Getting It Right"

Whether or not journalists are "irreligious," concern has been growing in recent years, in both religious and journalistic circles, about the seeming inability of the press/TV/radio to "get it right" very often when dealing with religious topics. In many cases, the religious side interprets negative reporting as due to hostility; while many journalists see little "news value" in religious activities unless they contain an element of conflict or scandal.

The Introduction to the Freedom Forum report sketches some of the possible reasons the press has seemed indifferent to religion:

The causes of the press's seeming indifference toward religion are manifold -- inherent skepticism of authority,

including the church's; the scant hard evidence for the supernatural; a lack of understanding about the complexities of different faiths; and the fact that religion, unless there is a scandal, does not often meet traditional standards of newsworthiness (Freedom Forum 1994: 1).

Added to the list is "the belief that religion is a personal issue, not one to be made public" (ibid.).

A Changing Relationship

Everett E. Dennis, in his foreword to the Freedom Forum's conference report (1994: unnumbered page), notes changes which have taken place in the relationship between American news media and religion during the past two centuries. Although both newspapers and television news have manifested "a standoffish attitude toward religion" in recent years, religious news was much more highly valued in the 19th century. But it frequently was biased against members of particular religions, such as Catholics, Jews and evangelical Protestants.

Dennis notes a recent revival of interest in religion in the news media. With the demise of Communism as a world force the most news-worthy world conflicts often involve religion, and the importance of religion in all aspects of daily life is increasingly recognized.

Some of journalists' earlier coolness to religion may have arisen not from hostility but from a professional concern for fairness. "Recognizing that they could not possibly cover all religious faiths equally and adequately, they often chose to avoid the topic altogether" (ibid.).

This concern remains strong as religious coverage expands, but the impression persists that the press in general endorses a "culture of disbelief." Dennis quotes Professor Stephen Carter's description of this phenomenon in U.S. culture as "'treating religious beliefs as arbitrary and unimportant'" with an accompanying "'rhetoric that implies that there is something wrong with religious devotion'" (ibid., quoting from Carter 1993: 6).

A "Liberal" Bias

The 150 religious leaders and communicators gathered for the Freedom Forum Conference offered insights from many perspectives. Brian Healy, senior political producer for CBS News, said that most journalists are prejudiced in favor of "liberal" positions, so that their minds already are made up.

..there is rarely any debate in most television newsrooms

on abortion, birth control, celibacy, curriculum oversight, gays in the military, premarital chastity or condom distribution in high schools (Freedom Forum 1994: 3).

In other words, a hegemonic ideology of political correctness is dominant.

Laziness or Intellectual Decline?

Rev. Patricia A. Reeberg, executive director of the Council of Churches of the City of New York, said that she learned quickly that the press would not be interested in a religious story "unless it could be reported without including the religious angle" (Freedom Forum 1994: 4).

John Dart and Rev. Jimmy Allen accused reporters of being "intellectually lazy about getting their facts straight when assigned to cover religious stories" (pg. 5).

Joan Connell, of Newhouse News Service, agreed that religious ignorance is prevalent in newsrooms but saw it as only one manifestation of a "larger decline in intellectual rigor in society," adding that the many armed conflicts around the world cannot be explained without accurate knowledge of their religious contexts (pg. 5). She saw hope, however, in increasing allusions in reporting to questions about morality. "You see this issue popping up in everything from our policy on Bosnia to the death penalty to the effect of violent entertainment on developing minds" (pg. 7).

But Rabbi A. James Rudin sensed a "disturbing trend" as the media appear to create a "false dichotomy between 'organized religion' and the other ethic of private morality, which is too simple a dichotomy" (pg. 7).

Authority or Challenge?

Although many journalists are suspicious of religious authorities -- part of their suspicion of authority in general, as Healy pointed out -- the same journalists often legitimize secular power structures they should criticize. Diane Winston, a reporter turned Princeton research fellow, said that this is true despite their "romantic ideal" of being the "watchdogs of government and other institutions." She added that religion, by contrast, often challenges authority structures, and more effective "religion reporting could challenge the accepted social and power relationships" (pg. 5).

A New Language Needed

Cliches and stereotypes, such as *fundamentalism* and *extremism*, are seen as dangerous in religious reporting; but the "primary moral language" of individual religions is not suitable for writing about religion in a pluralist society, according to Rudin, since it cannot be understood by those with no background in the religious tradition within which that language has developed. Connell added that "journalists should become fluent in both the primary language and a secondary, more neutral and descriptive language" (pg. 8).

Political and Economic Bias

Some participants attributed the watering down of religious content in the media to reporters' uncertainty about how to report its complexities. On the other hand, Al-Haaj Ghazi Khankan, of the Islamic Center of Long Island, New York, saw a systematic pro-Israeli bias in the media, representing "an all-out effort in the West to drive a wedge between the West and the Muslim world and its peoples" (pg. 10). As far as individual journalists are concerned, however, Khankan attributed their distorted reporting of Islam more to ignorance than to malice (pg. 11).

Azizah Y. Al-Hibri, writing from an American Muslim perspective, notes the "unabashedly consumerist" character which American television has assumed during the last twenty years. "We as a people have not given our express permission for the invading television entities to attack our psyche and mold our values unilaterally" (in Shayon and Cox 1994: 21-22). They nevertheless do so "constantly and with impunity in the name of free enterprise" (pg. 22). Al-Hibri feels that even religion, as presented on television, partakes of the medium's undesirable qualities, being robbed of its spiritual dimension and "transformed into a consumerist business" (*ibid.*).

Annabelle Sreberny-Mohammadi, Director of the Centre for Mass Communication Research, University of Leicester, (in Shayon and Cox 1994: 87-90) sees no threat to religion from television, although the latter may be influencing the forms in which religion is expressed. She sees a greater threat to the value systems of non-western cultures in "the rhetoric of globalization" which "is often the language of transnational corporations which are concerned with global markets, not global movements or meaning" (pg. 88). In Iran, the perceived cultural threat from the Western media may actually have "precipitated a retraditionalization of popular Shiism" (pg. 89).

Sulak Sivaraksa expressed what he saw as a diametric opposition between the consumerism promoted by the global media and the fundamental principles of Buddhism. Commercial television's "strategy is to play (consciously or not) on the fact that being inseparably part of the universe, we still think and feel that we are alienated, separate, bereft" (in Shayon and Cox 1994: 83).

Distortion by Omission

Stewart Hoover, of the University of Colorado, noted (in Freedom Forum 1994: 14) that by leaving out religion the media present their audiences with a defective picture of society. From their own experience of society in which religion is important, audiences are prepared to critique this defect in the media. The media's defective view includes an assumption that the role of the spiritual is declining in modern society, which audiences know is not true. Hoover also comments that the religious news carried by the media often is localized, but that his research on religious news readership indicates that many want a national and world dimension, which is relatively rare in the press.

Citing Robert Wuthnow and Robert Bellah, Hoover says that what journalists sometimes regard as a progressive secularization of American society actually is a restructuring of religion in which institutional authority is declining as private systems of values become stronger -- in a kind of "cafeteria religiosity" (*ibid.*, pg. 15). Hoover's own survey (Hoover, et al. 1994: Table 14) indicated that "few self-described religious people subscribe to religious magazines or watch religious television; so, he concludes, the sources for news about their religion must be the secular media" (Freedom Forum 1994: 15).

According to a Gallup poll in the early 1990's, "43 percent of Protestants consider themselves evangelical or 'born again,'" and Randall Balmer, of Barnard College, says that "as a group, evangelicals are highly mistrustful of the media." He traces this to the media's derisive characterization of evangelicals, which has gone on in the United States at least since H. L. Mencken's reporting of the Scopes evolution trial of 1925 (*ibid.*).

Cultural Defense

Claire Badaracco, of Marquette University, found in her research on religious lobbyists that they must use roundabout means to get a hearing, since "legislators rarely listen to religious people who are specifically

advocating a political position" (Freedom Forum 1994: 16). The religious lobbyists, functioning as special interest groups, "create public opinion clusters to which people can belong" (pp. 16-17). Religiously motivated people, who feel they are "outsiders" to the political process, can then join a subculture, created by the lobbyists, which uses religion "as a defense against the larger culture" (pg. 17). The secular mass media are very much a part of that "larger culture."

Judaism

Jeffrey Goldberg, of the national Jewish weekly, *the Forward*, feels that "Judaism, unlike evangelical Christianity, is respected by assignment editors and reporters" (pg. 17). They fear the label "anti-Semite" and are very cautious when reporting Jewish affairs, even though "they actually know very, very little about Judaism. So Jews can learn little, if anything, about their own community from the mainstream news outlets. And non-Jews cannot learn much about Jews" (*ibid.*).

Rabbi Michael Paley, Chaplain of Columbia University, sees Internet and the information superhighway as a blessing for Jews. Through this "method of communication that is both participatory and cohesive" Jews can engage in the intensive conversation they must have in order to maintain and strengthen their worldwide community of belief. On the other hand, the commercial media are a threat. The interactive media are personal, but "the commercial media have become more obsessed with their attack on the sacred, the spiritual and the religious.." which they portray "as fanatic, fundamentalist and hypocritical" (in Shayon and Cox 1994: 72-73).

Religious Motivation

Rev. Dr. Donald Shriver, Jr., President Emeritus of Union Theological Seminary, in New York, and Gustav Niebuhr, religion reporter of the *Washington Post* -- and at the time of the conference one of only about 65 or 70 full-time newspaper religion reporters in the United States -- discussed the reporting of religion from the perspectives of both church and media. They agreed that an important element missing from religion reporting often is a description of the motivation of religious people. It is intangible, and therefore hard to deal with, but it is at the heart of the story (Freedom Forum 1994: 18-19).

The buildup to big stories often is missed by journalists because they neglect the religious motives which bring those stories about. Jeff Greenfield of

ABC News was quoted as having said, some years ago, that "the media would have discovered the civil rights movement sooner had they paid more attention to what was going on in the basements of black churches" (Freedom Forum 1994: 19). But, instead, they missed a major "scoop."

The Churches' Fault?

Both Jesuit Father Robert Drinan, S.J., a former Congressman, and Rev. William F. Fore, of the *Christian Century* and Yale Divinity School, placed substantial blame on the churches and their members for failing to live up to the challenges of their faith and for allowing secularism to dominate society. As Fore put it, "The problem is that the church has cut itself off from the whole culture" (Freedom Forum 1994: 13). He sees much of this isolation as stemming from the training given in divinity schools, which fail to teach seminarians about the modern world, and especially about the media. "Most religious leaders have to develop their relationships with the press on the street" since they get little practical media training in their theological courses (*ibid.*).

Positive Reinforcement

The ways in which clergy deal with the media were seen, by Niebuhr, to be a fundamental question. First, they should make greater efforts to approach the media and to take more interest in the media with which they are dealing, as well as informing journalists in a friendly way about their interests and concerns. Reporters need sources, and religious leaders often can refer them to people who can supply them with newsworthy information. Reporters should not be hostile to religion, but religious leaders, on their part, should not automatically regard the media as "the enemy" (pp. 19-21).

Both Shriver and Niebuhr emphasized that expressions of appreciation for good media coverage can go a long way to encourage reporters to exert their best efforts in the future.

Preparation of Reporters

Shriver felt that, ideally, religion reporters should have a college major in religion, or even a seminary education. The lack of historical perspective in many news items does not breed confidence in the press among academics, and an improved grasp of history could do much to improve religion reporting. Attendance at religious services would give reporters a grass-roots awareness not otherwise obtainable.

news items does not breed confidence in the press among academics, and an improved grasp of history could do much to improve religion reporting. Attendance at religious services would give reporters a grass-roots awareness not otherwise obtainable. Niebuhr agreed that the education of a reporter is important, but he added that "the key thing on the beat is to have a voracious curiosity, a passion about the subject, to a point that what you want to do on any given story is to get out there and ask questions" (pg. 23).

In his contribution to Shayon and Cox's report (1994: 69), Charles M. Oliver, a telecommunications attorney and former Federal Communications Commission official, said that communication schools, by themselves, cannot prepare future media leaders for their role as socially responsible decision makers -- implicitly in regard to religion as well as other dimensions of life.

> The way to learn to be a socially responsible decision maker is to have good parents and major in the humanities. Then you can go to communications school or law school or business school with a clear conscience, as I did (Shayon and Cox 1994: 69).

The Importance of Religion

Bill Moyers is both a minister of religion and a mass media personality. In his speech to the Religion Newswriters' Association (Moyers 1994), he describes how people are increasingly confused about the meaning of modern life and how many are therefore returning to religion to find core principles by which to guide their lives.

> The Gallup organization reports that more Americans today say religion plays a role in their lives than did in 1987. Church attendance by teenagers is up, and other surveys report that even among people who reject organized religion there is a yearning for spiritual connections (Moyers 1994: 4).

In Moyers' view, this situation poses a big challenge to the mass media. The changing role of religion in American life calls for greater attention by the media, if they are to provide accurate interpretations of current events. Furthermore, there is "rich grist for the journalist's mill" in the combination of forces which are influencing contemporary religious life: a desire to renew understanding of historical faiths, an intensive intermingling of cultures which brings different

traditions into close contact, and a sense that the "old story" -- the basic plots and assumptions by which our lives were guided -- is not functioning properly and needs renovation to fit the demands of the modern world (*ibid.*). There is exciting potential in this confluence of urgent questions, but the mass media have not responded to it. Religion finds no room in the mass media's inn.

> When I think about all that is happening in the religious dimension, of the search for meaning and the appetite to connect, I am bewildered at the absence on television of any serious, ongoing, non-partisan, democratic dialogue about religion and values (pg. 5).

Law professor Stephen Carter has said (cf., Carter 1993: 21, 23-43, 54 and *passim*) that "American law and politics trivialize religious devotion," treating it as "just another hobby," and Moyers feels that the media do the same.

Words or Images?

The preferred mode of expression in television is pictures. Words are necessary, but they often tend to be secondary to the visual in the amount of attention they get from producers and directors. Moyers feels that religion and other intangibles can only be fully expressed through words. Pictures help, but they do not become precise and adequate symbols of ideas until they are explained by words. Moyers therefore suggests that the best television format for presenting religious ideas is that of the conversation.

Rich and untapped veins of exciting material for such programs exist, and Moyers' own experience in moderating a long-running television program in that format is evidence, to him, that audience interest can be maintained. The theme of "reform" is, for example, a stimulating and recurrent one in American life, more often than not arising from religious roots. Moyers cites Robert H. Abzug's book, *Cosmos Crumbling: American Reform and the Religious Imagination*, on the importance of religion in American reform movements.

> Abzug maintains that we can only understand reformers if we try to comprehend the sacred significance they bestowed upon these worldly arenas. His book raises questions about the future of reform if the cosmology of religion, in which individuals are morally responsible agents accountable to God, continues to crumble. One can conjure up the names of a dozen prominent philosophers, historians and theologians who could

and absorbingly into religious ideas and motivations. Science, art, popular music, and even television situation comedies provide material which has religious implications well worth exploring, according to Moyers (pg. 7).

The pluralization of American society makes mutual understanding increasingly urgent. Political issues intrude more and more into the religious sphere and vice-versa. "The most interesting stories of our time are indeed emerging in this intersection between the secular and the spiritual, between God and politics" (pg. 8).

Moyers feels that all these religious issues constitute the biggest story around, which the mass media need to cover with greater depth and sophistication (*ibid.*).

Television as "Ultimate Value"

William F. Fore paints a somewhat less optimistic picture than Moyers, in his contribution to the Shayon and Cox report (1994: 37-41). He says that "today television is beginning to replace religion as an institution" since it is on television where "an increasing number of people find the expression of a world view which reflects what is of ultimate value to them.." That world view is the ideology of Capitalism. He agrees with cultural historian John Staudenmaier, S.J., of the University of Detroit, that of all social systems "only capitalism has conceived of human beings as raw material" (pg. 39).

Multinational corporations, espousing this dehumanizing ideology, are in the process of monopolizing the world's mass media, according to Fore. He feels that this tendency can be counteracted only by people of faith moving into the media, especially television, with greater vigor, to "tell stories on TV that talk about community, connectedness, giving, sharing, helping and nurturing -- rather than self, things, getting, keeping, forcing, using and conquering" (pg. 40), as a capitalist-controlled mass media inevitably will do.

A Crisis of Mutual Distrust

Commonweal, the national Catholic lay review, organized three forums during the latter half of 1994, at Loyola University in Chicago, Georgetown University in Washington, and Fordham University in New York, to bring together top level media people and media-knowledgeable religious specialists to probe the sore points where religion and the media touch. As the editor's introductory paragraph set the scene:

Media treatment of religion has become a neuralgic issue. The perception of bias, unfairness, or outright distortion has reached the point where many groups assume that their views will not be accurately reported. Since the secular media are the primary source of news and information for most Americans, inaccuracy and unfairness pose a major challenge to the credibility of both religion and the media (Commonweal 1995: 13).

Much of the discussion in the three gatherings addressed the same issues that Moyers and the Freedom Forum conference were covering at about the same time -- and, in the latter case, with some of the same people present.

A Measured Approach

Peter Steinfels, religion editor of the *New York Times*, in his keynote address at both the Chicago and New York sessions, doubted that religion is as "invisible" in the press as some critics claim. For example, in a more-or-less randomly-selected period from May 28th to June 7th, 1994, the *New York Times* ran a major series of four articles on the Catholic Church and "thirty-six other articles dealing with groups ranging from Orthodox Jews and mainline Protestants to Muslims, Mormons, and self-styled witches," some of them beginning on page one (*Commonweal* 1995: 14).

All of this indicates, I believe, that religion is at least visible in some parts of the media. It suggests that we should approach this topic in a measured mood. It does not, however, demonstrate that all is well with the media's handling of religion...Even though we ran a lot of stories about religion...at the same time we were nonetheless devoting far more inches to the Knicks and the Rangers and their fortunes in the basketball and hockey playoffs (Steinfels, in *Commonweal* 1995: 14).

He nevertheless saw cause for concern in a study by the Media Research Center (Johnson, et al., n.d. [1995]) that weekday prime time news broadcasts of ABC, CBS, CNN, NBC, and PBS, during 1993, had included only 212 segments on religion out of a total of 18,000 story segments broadcast. Of those, around 60 percent were about Catholics, many involving the Pope's trip to the U.S. (*Commonweal* 1995: 14). Similar proportions were found in the same Center's study of morning and weekend news and magazine programs (*ibid.*). But many complaints about lack of coverage were poorly founded, as were complaints about disproportionate coverage of negative stories.

We are faced, then, with a mixed picture. Complaints about the media's treatment of religion have a sound basis. But they are also frequently exaggerated or inflated (pg. 15).

The Newsroom Ideology

Steinfels traced a dominant ideology or "para-ideology" in the media to the "muckraking" tradition of American journalism just prior to the First World War. It was a form of rebellion, which tried to expose the supposed hypocrisy of Victorian morality and the vicious exploitation of the poor practiced by the "Robber Barons" of unregulated capitalism. A journalistic mind-set of cynicism and debunking confronted all authority and ideals, religious as well as economic and political. Accompanying this mind-set were stereotypes of religious institutions and beliefs, which still are operative in the media -- but not more strongly than in American society in general -- as well as a favorable reaction to anyone who defies authority or traditional morality.

Cokie Roberts of ABC News, a participant in the Washington forum, juxtaposed perceptions within and outside the profession regarding journalists' reporting of Congress, which she felt can be applied equally to religion reporting:

> The people inside the media think we are, by and large, being fair and balanced, and just telling the facts as they are.. And the people [in the trade or profession being reported on] ..are convinced that we are all out to get them, a bunch of biased, awful people who always get it wrong. There is truth to both sides, but part of the problem..is the nature of journalism (*Commonweal* 1995: 33).

According to Steinfels, "culture wars" are currently dividing American society between those opposing traditional moral positions and particular religious groups -- especially Catholics and Evangelical Protestants -- who publicly defend those moral standards. However, Steinfels credits the journalists' professional ethic of objectivity and balance with somewhat counterbalancing the influence of reporters' and editors' personal beliefs on the final news product (*Commonweal* 1995: 16-17).

"Media-Bashing"

The reverse side of "religion-bashing" by the media is "media-bashing" by religiously committed readers, listeners, and viewers; and it often is equally unfair,

according to Peter Steinfels. Much of it seems to involve "a great deal of frustration displaced onto the media about dealing with some of the uncomfortable realities of our lives" (pg. 22).

Carol Marin, of WMAQ-TV, Chicago, objected to the use of the words *secular reporter* as if they meant *godless reporter*. Religious elements can enter into many kinds of "secular" stories. "Secular" should mean that we look at, and report on the many parts of a complex world in an equal and even-handed way, including religion. Rapid changes in terminology -- sometimes under the oppressive rules of "political correctness" -- have caused us to "debate virtually every word we use" and have made ordinary expression uncomfortable (pg. 23).

However, Steinfels footnoted this by saying that reporters do sometimes interpret "secular" to mean leaving out any references to religion, rather than giving it equal treatment with other aspects of a story. In writing a biographical profile, they will much more readily discuss food preferences and say what kind of car a person drives than what church he or she attends (*ibid.*).

Charges of media bias sometimes take little account of circumstances. "Names make news." A false charge of sexual abuse against Cardinal Bernardin, the Archbishop of Chicago, a city 40 percent Catholic, could be downplayed and run on an inside page by the *New York Times*, but the Chicago papers had to give it major attention, whether they wanted to or not, according to Daniel Lehmann, of the *Chicago Sun-Times* (pg. 21).

Roy Larson, of the Medill School of Journalism, Northwestern University, testified to the integrity of journalists as a group:

> I don't believe that people within the church appreciate the vocational discernment and the vocational integrity of many of the people working in journalism. ..the journalists I worked with, most of them were secular monks, in many ways, with as strong a sense of discipline as any priest that I ever knew (pg.24).

Ignorance, Incompetence, Inadequate Resources

On the other hand Steinfels, himself a journalist, admits that ignorance, incompetence, and inadequate resources are significant factors skewing religion reporting. These can be somewhat offset by assigning journalists to the religion beat full time, but that would only partially offset the incompetence and ignorance too frequently found in newsrooms.

Steinfels also sees other obstacles which would be difficult or impossible to overcome: the multiplicity and complexity of religious phenomena, the limited time and space available in the media for complex explanations, and "inherited definitions of news" which often result in abiding by the "law of journalism that says the news media do not in fact tell new stories as much as find new ways to retell old stories" (pg. 19).

Dedication to Truth

Carol Marin stressed the fairness and objectivity which the tradition of journalistic professionalism demands. This applies not only to reporters who have no religion but also to those who do. In doing a story on the snake handlers of the Holiness Church of God in Jesus' Name, she came to realize that, regardless of how bizarre a religion might be, "there's no room for contempt on any level for any article of faith or any believer" in the professional behavior of a journalist (*Commonweal* 1995: 20).

Journalists tend not to be joiners, and may have to make a special effort to understand people who are. On the other hand, reporters must sometimes go against the grain of their own most strongly held personal beliefs and values when they encounter a story which must be told. Marin noted how a strongly Catholic reporter broke stories about pedophilia cases among Chicago Archdiocesan clergy at a time when the Archdiocese was not responding adequately to the problem. She received much criticism from Catholic sources but was satisfied that she had done the right thing, both ethically and morally (*ibid.*).

So Little Time

Marin commented on how the reductions in staff numbers at financially hard-pressed media organizations affect reporting, not only directly, by limiting the time spent on each story, but also indirectly, by eliminating informal discussion among colleagues which could provide valuable context and background for their own reporting.

David Neff, of the magazine, *Christianity Today*, elaborated on this theme by discussing some of the undercovered, but potentially momentous stories in contemporary religious life. These include changes in Evangelical Protestantism, the permeation of American Evangelical Christianity by the "therapeutic culture" -- religion designed chiefly to cure temporal, rather than spiritual, ills -- and the rapid spread of Pentacostalism in Latin America. They have not been well covered because editorial presuppositions have veiled their importance and directed limited reportorial resources elsewhere. Although Evangelicals comprise more than 40 percent of American Protestants, the media make them feel like "outsiders" by underreporting and stereotyping them (pp. 20-21).

Martin Marty, of *Christian Century* magazine, added that "today, the voluntary association is the religion story. ..[it] is the biggest, single, undercovered story. That story isn't known; and without it, I think, the soul of America would be lost" (pg. 25).

Understanding the Limits of Journalism

In the other keynote address of the *Commonweal* forum series, delivered in Washington, (Steinfels had given the first in both New York and Chicago), E. J. Dionne, Jr., of the *Washington Post*, commented that journalism seems to be going through a crisis of confidence, manifested in part by its questioning of its religion reporting. However, journalism has its limits, and even if it were seriously biased it could not become a major threat to religious institutions. Recognition of these limits might enable religious people to tolerate criticism from the media, "for the sorts of failures that are routinely criticized and brought to light in other human institutions." When religious groups take undue offense at relatively minor slights in the media they run the risk of discouraging journalists from reporting about religion at all, to avoid complaints (*Commonweal* 1995: 30).

Dionne summed up his remarks in four "theses": (1) There is a conflict between "the definition of truth used by journalists and the definition accepted by people of religious faith." Faith cannot be "proven" by the criteria of contemporary American journalism, "the quintessentially Enlightenment profession." (2) Journalists "need to accept that religious belief is usually built upon an intellectually serious foundation." To assume it is "nothing but prejudice or superstition" is bad journalism. (3) "Contemporary journalism needs to question whether it is confining the coverage of religion to a ghetto," whereas for many people it is more important than politics, sports, or sex, to all of which the media give ample attention. (4) "The churches cannot expect deference from the press, especially on those occasions when they choose, as they must, to intervene in secular, political controversies" (pp.28-30).

III. The Reporting of Religion

Stewart Hoover, Barbara Hanley and Martin Radelfinger. "The RNS-Lilly Study of Religion Reporting and Readership in the Daily Press." (Mimeographed Report). New York: Temple University and Religious News Service, 1989.

Stewart M. Hoover, Shalini Venturelli and Douglas Wagner, "Religion in Public Discourse: The Role of the Media - Final Report." Boulder: Center for Mass Media Research, The School of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Colorado, 1994.

The work of Stewart Hoover and his colleagues, first at Temple University and now at the University of Colorado, is one of the most large-scale, systematic, and sustained empirical studies of the relationship between the media and religion undertaken in the United States in recent years.

Stereotypes Cause Disaster

In the introduction to their most recent report (1994:1-2), Hoover's group quotes an insightful article by Bill Tammeus in the *Kansas City Star* (Tammeus 1994) which showed how the armed confrontation between government agents and the Branch Davidian religious movement near Waco, Texas, in 1993, might have been avoided if the government tactics had not been guided by misleading stereotypes such as "terrorists," "fanatical cult," "hostages," etc., and the religious motivation of the Branch Davidians had been better understood and respected.

The report notes that the set of public perceptions evident both in the government action and in media coverage of the story took a form which would enable the government to explain its actions to a broad and heterogeneous audience. Those perceptions are said to have initiated a chain of events leading ultimately to the violent deaths of dozens of innocent "cult" members (Hoover, et al., 1994: 1-2).

Journalists oversimplify to reach their heterogeneous audience, but in doing so they also provide an insecure foundation on which public policy decisions often are based -- decisions which should be founded on much more accurate information than the media provide.

Hoover's 1989 study was limited to print media. The 1994 research built on that study, reinterviewing some of the journalists surveyed earlier, as well as journalists from other newspapers. But it also extended the study to include broadcasting and, in cooperation with the Gallup Organization, carried out a national survey concerning television journalism and "new dimensions of religiosity and other attributes of media use and media interest" (Hoover et al. 1994: 7).

It also explored "the cultural and historical roots of the particular construction of religion found in American media policy and practice" to provide context and help in developing "a normative theory of religion journalism" (*ibid.*). A number of round table discussions of journalists and religious representatives were organized "to pursue a dialog intended to close the gaps of misunderstanding that exist between them" (pp. 7-8). These discussions included the one at the Freedom Forum Media Studies Center, highlighted above (Freedom Forum 1994).

Journalistic Conventions and Religious News

"Religion is covered, as is the case with all journalistic 'beats,' according to a set of *received definitions and conventions*" (Hoover, et al. 1994: 9). Some of these were identified for print journalism in the 1989 report. Because they take the "theory of secularization" for fact, journalists tend to treat religion as "a residual category of life," at the margins of public discourse. Consequently, religion is felt to be private, like a hobby, "outside the realm of acceptable public modes of knowing and doing" (*ibid.*). Religion also is not verifiable with the empirical methods journalists use to verify other stories. There are too many religions, with varied and complex histories and doctrines which are difficult for the journalist to either understand in depth or to explain coherently to a heterogeneous audience. Many journalists have experienced religion as "inherently controversial," and fear that any treatment will draw criticisms. Finally, the special status of religion vis-a-vis government in the United States has given many journalists the mistaken notion that the press, as well as the government, must constitutionally separate itself from religion (pp. 10-11).

In short, as Hoover and his colleagues summarize it:

The received view of religiosity *vis a vis* media coverage

would hold that religion is a private matter, that it is receding in influence, that its adherents are largely concerned with their own particular faith and that they construct that faith within rather rigid historical and institutional boundaries (1994: 15).

Religion, at least in America, can no longer be covered "primarily as an institutional story," since much that is "religious" is now taking place outside the boundaries of institutional religions (Hoover et al. 1994: 9). This increasingly individual religion nevertheless has effects which are expressed in the public sphere -- perhaps increasingly so (ibid.). The situation is confused by the fact that "just at the moment when journalism seems to be taking religion more seriously, the character and nature of religion is rapidly shifting" (ibid.). To develop a policy on covering religion journalists need to define "religion," and that is more and more difficult to do.

The State of Religion Coverage

Signs by which to predict the future of religious news coverage in the United States are ambiguous. Only 67 newspapers had full-time religion writers at the time of the study. Nevertheless, the authors were cautiously optimistic that news media, particularly broadcast media such as ABC and National Public Radio, are becoming more conscious of the importance of religious news and more serious about the way they cover it (Hoover et al., 1994: 21).

There are many possible ways to cover religion, and each newspaper, station, or network must adopt the methods which fit its own situation. The authors do feel that religion has to be handled on a basis that is broader than that of merely local and personal interest. Furthermore, they feel that the adequate reporting of many religious stories requires a specialist, who can bring to the story the background knowledge necessary to handle its complexities (pp. 23-26) and also can serve as a resource person for the rest of the staff when they must deal with religious events (pg. 28).

The report recommends considerable revision in the "model policy and practice" with which journalists approach religion. It suggests that religion be approached broadly, recognizing that religion exists outside religious institutions as well as within them. At the same time, writers should avoid an anti-institutional bias. Journalists also should abandon the sociologically discredited "secularization hypothesis," that religion is "fading away" as a natural result of social evolution.

Although religion's effects on politics, economics,

education and other social institutions need to be reported, religion should also be reported as important in and of itself. Possibly most important, news media should develop policy guidelines for handling religious news to give themselves greater self-assurance in dealing with religion whenever the occasion arises (pp.26-30).

Professionalism at Issue

Whatever the journalists' personal religious beliefs and practices, the key question, here, is whether they let those personal factors influence their reporting of religion. Hoover feels that religious critics of journalists' religious reporting often do not give due credit to the corrective role of journalistic professionalism.

> What most of the critics seek to deny...is the role that journalistic or professional values might play in ensuring that, in spite of personal preferences and attitudes, professionalism would dictate an approach which might still afford religion fair treatment (Hoover et al., 1994: 35).

But no one claims that journalists can be perfectly objective. All have pre-existing values, and those of many journalists are liberal, reformist and progressivist, according to a long tradition of American journalism. Although Dart and Allen have shown that there is much competent religious news coverage, "their approach fails to fully appreciate the extent to which religion continues to face challenges within the news business," according to Hoover et al. (1994: 36). The problem cannot be solved by professionalism alone, because the perspective of the newsroom "is more deeply rooted in the status of religion in American public discourse in general" (ibid.).

Increasing Urgency of Values and Meanings

The 1994 report of Hoover and his colleagues closes with the note that religion is, in fact, moving to a more central position in news reporting. One reason is that religions directly address the questions of value and meaning which are assuming increasing urgency in modern life. Part of this sense of urgency grows out of the personal, family experiences of "ageing" journalists.

> Many of our informants have observed, for instance, that as the age cohort that dominates in many newsrooms has begun to get older, and to have older children, the importance of values and of solutions to this crisis have

seemed more pressing. There is also the issue of the crisis of meaning itself. To the extent that it can be said to be 'new,' more and more newsrooms are addressing it, and religion is thought to be at least implied in these considerations (Hoover, et al., 1994: 134).

The mass media still face the issues of controversy and complexity which have caused them to shy away from religious coverage in the past. It is easy to make a mistake, and hard to know what to do when someone complains. But, "the question of complexity seems to be tailor-made for good journalism, rather than an excuse for avoiding it." And "there is a general consensus that controversy also should be a reason *for* covering religion, not for avoiding it. The fact that there are competing claims, and that there is activism and struggle in the world of religion, makes it 'good copy'" (Hoover, et al., 1994: 139-140).

IV. Islam: The Most Abused Religion?

Media, Culture and Society, Vol. 15, No. 1 (1993). Special issue: "Islam and Communication," edited by Philip Schlesinger and Hamid Mowlana (cited as "*MCS* 1993").

Hamid Naficy, "Iranian Cinema under the Islamic Republic." *American Anthropologist*, vol. 97, no. 3 (September 1995), pp. 548-558.

Polarized Views

Many Christians feel that their beliefs are distorted by the mass media, but with regard to Christian churches at least there seems to be some middle-ground for possible understanding, where improvements in coverage might take place. If Islam is mentioned at all in the press, it is likely to be distorted or even maligned. Michael A. Maus, of Minnesota Public Radio, says that Muslims accordingly are grateful for news coverage which simply tries to be fair (in Freedom Forum 1994: 17).

The perspectives of Islam and the Western secular press are at such polar extremes that there seems little if any hope of rapprochement. "Fundamentalism" may have some meaning when applied to various Christian groups, in which there is room for differing degrees of belief and practice. Islam is subject to differing interpretations, too, but all true Islamic belief and practice must ultimately at least claim to abide by the strict letter of the *Qur'an*, and anything less is inadequate.

Furthermore, "secularism" and "secularity" have no legitimacy in Islamic belief, in which all dimensions of life -- religion, economics, politics, etc. -- form an indivisible unity. According to some of the research cited above, the "average" western journalist, by contrast, tends towards extremes of both relativism and secularism -- if not materialism and agnosticism -- which seemingly make it impossible for him or her to begin to comprehend the Islamic position, let alone sympathize with it.

Recurrent in Muslims' criticisms of Western media is the complaint about its total dedication to consumerism and, implicitly, to materialism. Azizah al-Hibri, a Lebanese teaching at the University of Richmond (Virginia, U.S.A.) has seen American television "become unabashedly consumerist within the last two decades," and she says that even religious worship on television "has lost its introspective spiritual dimension and has been transformed into a consumerist business" (in Shayon and Cox 1994:21-22).

Riffat Hassan, a Pakistani teaching in Religious Studies at the University of Louisville (Kentucky), makes a distinction between a healthy modernization and a very questionable Westernization, both being introduced into Muslim countries by television. One result is a distorted view of the West. "Muslim stereotypes of what is Western need as much correction and qualification as Western stereotypes of what is Islamic." She feels that aspects of the medium, itself, are destructive of the foundations for life as a "complete human being" (*Insan al-kamil*) of upcoming generations (in Shayon and Cox 1994: 44-46).

A Clash of Philosophies

Hamid Mowlana (in *MCS* 1993: 9-27) characterizes the currently dominant manifestations of the two opposing views as the "Information Society Paradigm" and the "Islamic Community (*tawhid*) Paradigm." He says that "the philosophy and theory of information and communication have replaced transcendental discourse as the prime concern of philosophical

reflection in the West," so that even though the advocates of the "Information Society" see it as bringing about "a general flourishing state of human intellectual creativity," it nevertheless "runs counter to the basic conception of Islamic community and a number of the principal tenets of Islam" (pp. 12-13).

Islamic Community calls for a unity of God, human beings and the universe "that determines the parameters of information," rather than being shaped by information. The transcendental order rules the natural order, and the Islamic Community Paradigm "does not allow itself to be subservient, in whole or in part, to any other paradigm" (pg. 13).

Mowlana does not see an intrinsic conflict between Islam and modern means of communication, as such. Islamic countries were, after all, the leaders of world technological development -- including revolutionary developments in communications technologies -- at a time when Europe was culturally and technologically backward. But he perceives a conflict between the value systems of the Islamic Community Paradigm and the Information Society Paradigm which is irreconcilable. A major factor in this conflict is the economic and political hegemony of the "North" which is built into the latter paradigm and, according to Mowlana, is bringing about a South versus North "Cold War" (pg. 26).

Demonic Media

Akbar S. Ahmed, a Pakistani anthropologist teaching at Cambridge, thinks that many Muslims view the mass media as a kind of "demon" -- paralleling Jean Baudrillard's characterization, "The Evil Demon of Images." This Western demon has suddenly descended upon the Islamic world, bringing an influx of Western images, values, and ideas, which are shocking to adults and are having an unknown -- but probably profound -- impact on youth. It is an inescapable demon, with its American-oriented news even following travellers from country to country -- from home to airplane to hotel -- courtesy of CNN! (Ahmed, as interviewed by Philip Schlesinger in *MCS* 1993: 34-35).

Ahmed feels that a backlash is nearly inevitable, with the globalization of American ideas and images resulting in an anti-Western reaction which could involve the rejection of many good things from the West because of their association in the mass media with sex, violence, and other undesirable media contents. Many Muslims interpret the cultural invasion by the Western media as "a conspiracy to destabilize Muslim societies" (*ibid.*, pp. 36-37).

"Damned If You Do"...or Don't?

Ahmed cites his own experience as moderator of a BBC documentary on Islam, *Living Islam* (1993) to illustrate the complexity of the problem the media face in covering Islam. According to him, potential U.S. buyers rejected the program because it did not match their own stereotypes of the Islamic world. Sunni Muslims objected to the inclusion of Iranian Shiite content. Pakistanis initially reacted against the program as "another Western plot" to undermine Islam; while Indians saw the presence of a Pakistani with the film crew as evidence that the program was somehow intended to promote Pakistani political ends. In fact, the 30-member British film crew, which had started out in a generally neutral frame of mind to present aspects of Islam as objectively as possible, ended up taking a much more pro-Muslim position on controversial issues such as the turmoil surrounding Salman Rushdie's "blasphemous" novel, *The Satanic Verses* (*ibid.*, pp. 37-38).

Ahmed takes note of the difficult circumstances under which media people must work, especially when outside their home territory or culture. Unlike anthropologists, who spend considerable time in a locality, getting acquainted with the situation in depth, film crews must get into an unfamiliar situation and out again according to a pre-set, and usually very confining schedule. They can do little, on the scene, to alter the script they have been given -- a script often developed thousands of miles away and already reflecting the presuppositions, and possibly the stereotypes and prejudices, of their masters in the media hierarchy (pg. 41)..

For an extended review of *Living Islam*, see Titus (1995).

Iranian Film: Quality in Post-Revolutionary Context

Anthropologist Hamid Naficy (1995) has surveyed the history and current status of the domestic cinema industry in Iran. He says that the Islamic revolution was not opposed to cinema as such, but Islamic leaders have been anxious to ensure that it reflects the values of that revolution. In 1979, prints of 2,000 films (foreign as well as domestic) existing in the country were reviewed, and exhibition permits were granted to only 200. Restrictions on domestic productions "cast a pall of despair and uncertainty over the entire entertainment industry" (pg. 549). The problem of how to portray women on the screen was so contentious that it caused "filmmakers immediately after the revolution

to ignore women altogether so as to avoid controversy" (pg. 550).

However, "since the mid-1980's there has been a steady move toward rationalization and reorganization of the film industry with the aim of encouraging local productions" (pg. 551). Working within this somewhat moderated framework, filmmakers have begun to evolve a new cinema. To illustrate the kinds of films being produced Naficy includes in the article a "Selected Filmography" of eighteen films, mostly released between 1985 and 1989, with a description of each. "While this cinema embodies much of the aforementioned postrevolutionary values, there is also considerable contestation with the official ideology in the films themselves" (*ibid.*).

Transformations of Islam

Ziauddin Sardar (in *MCS* 1993: 43-59) stresses the importance of communication and "knowledge" (*ilm*) in Islam. The first verses of the *Qur'an* revealed to the Prophet Mohammad emphasized the importance of reading and "the use of the pen" in the transmission of knowledge (pg. 44). Although the Prophet, himself was illiterate, he insured that every word of the *Qur'an* was written down in as many media as possible. He surrounded himself with "a group of 45 scribes who wrote down his sayings, instructions and activities" (pg. 45).

The "urge to know" in Islam is credited with much of its successful and rapid transmission, from Arabia outwards, to China, Southeast Asia, Spain, and the west coast of Africa in a few short decades. The paper-manufacturing industry and the copyist's art flourished under Islam, but printing did not fare so well. The rising power of the religious scholars (*ulama*) would have been threatened by the mass production of printed books; and, in any case, they insisted that it would be irreverent to reproduce the word of God by mechanical means (pg. 53).

The Power of the Scholars

Much of the rigidity of recent Islamic society and law is seen, by Sardar, as due to the dominance of the religious scholars during the past five hundred years, resulting in two un-Islamic tendencies in Islamic practice and thought. Not only did the *ulama* become a quasi-clerical class, but they also brought about a kind of secularization process, distinguishing religious knowledge from general knowledge. "By relegating *ilm* to the domains of religious knowledge and dogma and by 'forbidding' printing, the *ulama* unmade the knowledge-based Islamic culture within a century" (pg. 54).

An Electronic Islamic Reformation?

However, Sardar believes that the power of the *ulama* is now threatened, not only by printing but also by the availability of the *Qur'an* and other religious texts on compact disks and in other electronic media. The technological revolution in electronic media may trigger in Islam a "reformation" comparable to that set off by printing in sixteenth-century Western Christianity (cf., Edwards 1994). Independent study and interpretation of the *Qur'an* and the whole range of other Islamic sources is now possible for anyone with the inclination, time, and linguistic aptitude to undertake it, bypassing the traditional scholars.

Sardar sees drastic changes as not only likely but imminent: "The Islamic culture is set to be remade on the basis of the original understanding of *ilm*, an understanding that involves the use of new communication technologies in empowering ordinary people" (MCS 1993: 57).

V. Bishops, Abortion and Sex

Michael A. Russo. *The Church, the Press and Abortion: Catholic Leadership and Public Communication.* Cambridge, MA: The Joan Shorenstein Barone Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy, Harvard University, 1991.

Michael A. Russo. "The Bishops and Abortion: A Case Study in Reporting Church News." *Concilium.* 1993, No. 6 (December), pp. 91-98.

Jack C. Doppelt. *Guilt by Allegation: Lessons from the Cardinal Bernardin Case: Rapporteur Summary.*

Washington, DC: The Annenberg Washington Program in Communication Policy Studies, 1994.

The Hottest Issue

At no point does the confrontation between religious groups and the secular press become more intense than on the abortion issue. The Catholic Church is not the only religious body opposed to legalized abortion, but it is the largest and one of the most resolute and powerful. But, as Don Wycliff of the *Chicago Tribune* told the Chicago *Commonweal* Forum, "the Catholic Church's position on abortion has not won it a lot of friends. It has made a lot of enemies" (*Commonweal* 1995: 19).

This is especially noteworthy because abortion is not primarily a religious issue but a moral issue -- a question of human rights and their protection or violation, which transcends religious affiliation or doctrine. The fact that it has been categorized as a religious issue by the mass media, following the lead of "pro-choice" advocates, may in itself say something about the way journalists tend to create their own versions of reality.

"What's This 'Natural Law' Stuff?"

Helen Alvaré, spokesperson of the U.S. Catholic Conference -- the secretariat of the U.S. Catholic hierarchy -- discussed that point in the Washington *Commonweal* Forum. She stressed that religious people have to explain clearly why they are addressing questions of concern to the secular world. She said, "the reason I do it in the area of abortion, is because I don't believe I'm speaking about revelation or theology directly. I believe I'm communicating natural law." She quoted a reaction she often gets when explaining the issue in that way: "I thought this was about mortal sin for you guys. What's this natural law stuff?" She added, "It's my responsibility and the church's responsibility to make the world understand when it is that we are speaking theologically, and when it is that we are speaking from natural law" (*Commonweal* 1995: 35).

In a recent interview in *America* magazine (Martin 1995), Ms. Alvaré said she agreed with Father Avery Dulles, S.J. (1994), when he said that "the media tend to reduce all religious issues to 'either-or' and 'black and white'," while actively looking for controversy, despite the many times church statements and actions have confounded such stereotyping. She attributed this media unfairness to ignorance of religion and of moral theology, to the personal lack of religion of many reporters, and to a media tendency to dichotomize

issues into left/right or Democrat/Republican (Martin 1995: 12). The only solution to the problem, as she sees it, is persistence on the part of religious people, spending more time "meeting with members of the media, supplying their needs for timeliness, interest, background, people to talk to" (Martin 1995: 14).

Leadership Styles

Father Michael Russo, of Saint Mary's College of California, has studied the differing leadership styles manifested by three major figures in the U.S. Catholic hierarchy in their public statements about the abortion issue, Cardinal Joseph Bernardin, Archbishop of Chicago, Cardinal John J. O'Connor, Archbishop of New York, and Archbishop Rembert G. Weakland, O.S.B., of Milwaukee.

Marvin Kalb, Director of the Joan Shorenstein Barone Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy, at Harvard, suggested that Russo do the research on how the press covers the Catholic Church's approach to abortion, because Kalb recognized that the abortion issue has polarized Americans in a political, but at the same time a deeply personal way (Kalb, "Preface," in Russo 1991: 1).

Cardinal Bernardin

Cardinal Bernardin, who might be regarded as the "centrist" among the three prelates, aimed "to build a type of 'consensus,' a meeting-ground wide enough for all to stand on without shouting or rancour" (Russo 1993: 92). In a 1989 press conference to discuss the U.S. Catholic bishops statement that "No Catholic can responsibly take a 'pro-choice' stand when the 'choice' in question involves the taking of innocent human life," Bernardin found the reporters interested mainly in what punishment might be meted out to "pro-choice" Catholics, while the bishops had not even discussed penalties, only natural law and conscience.

Although the bishops had disagreed among themselves about just what a "pro-choice stand" might mean and what tactics they should use, Bernardin seems not to have adequately explained those differences. Russo felt that Bernardin actually "reinforced for the larger public the idea that abortion was a 'Catholic' issue," which he had not intended to do (1991: 14, and 1993: 93).

Cardinal O'Connor

Cardinal O'Connor took an outspokenly "pro-life"

stance. His use of the secular press is more straight-forward and spontaneous than Bernardin's. He summed up his attitude towards the media in talking with reporters soon after his appointment as Archbishop, in 1983, as follows. "I will use you in every way I can. I would like to be able to talk personally and individually with everyone in New York and everyone in the United States but I can't do that. So I will use you" (Russo 1991: 19, and 1993: 94, quoting a 1990 interview with O'Connor).

O'Connor's direct approach also has had mixed results. He quickly became a high-profile media celebrity, but occasional mistakes aroused the ire of editorial writers. For example, a comparison of abortion to the Holocaust prompted a *New York Times* editorial writer to conclude that the Cardinal "had to adopt 'a change of tone' if 'he means to instruct the community at large'"

O'Connor's plunge into the media "minefield" on abortion and other controverted issues led to a continuing duel with the New York press, in which O'Connor senses such deep-seated prejudices affecting abortion that they cannot get it right even when they try. In his interview with Russo, O'Connor said that the most important thing to which the press should aspire is "the truth, objectivity, the truth!" (1991: 20). He went on to relate this to his experiences in New York:

"To me the most irresponsible thing a reporter can do, or an editor, is not to do his or her homework... to take a story whatever the data are, ...and twist it to fit his or her preconceptions. That I suppose with the New York press corps is my most severe disappointment" (O'Connor, as quoted by Russo, 1991: 20).

The Cardinal went on to distinguish between newspapers.

"In the tabloid press ...for every story that rakes me over the coals there is going to be one that praises me. I don't get a sense with those two tabloids of a philosophical hostility ...I think that the *New York Times* has tried harder and harder to be fairer to the church. [But] they are so steeped in that abortion ideology that they're never going to...do a decent editorial on abortion. But on the church in general they are trying a lot harder.' With a smile, he said, 'They still mess it up!' (Russo 1991: 20).

O'Connor's high-decible debates with the East Coast "quality press" reportedly have aroused complaints among other bishops that an impression has been created that he and the New York media "are all too frequently determining the church's public agenda" (Russo 1991: 28, quoting Goldman [1990]).

Archbishop Weakland

Archbishop Weakland is often characterized as the leader of the "liberal wing" of the U.S. Catholic hierarchy. He was apprehensive about the strident character of some of his fellow bishops' statements and attitudes during their 1989 discussion of abortion. He felt that the opinion of women should be heard and decided to organize public meetings in his archdiocese for that purpose -- a decision he made during a telephone interview with the religion editor of the *Milwaukee Journal* while the bishops' meeting was still in session. These "listening sessions" became a "media event" in themselves. Although it elicited favorable secular comment, Weakland's open, and highly-nuanced position was subject to a broad range of possible misinterpretations.

Weakland has had a long, generally friendly relationship with journalists, and feels most comfortable with the liberals among them (Russo 1991: 38). Nevertheless, the distortions in reporting of his "listening sessions" and a subsequent public statement caused him some disquiet.

"If they read the *New York Times*, then they got one impression. If they read *USA Today*, they got another impression... How do you ever get anything under control after it's out there... We as a church haven't learned yet how to deal with all of that. I don't think we know how to do that effectively" (Weakland, as quoted by Russo 1991: 38).

The interplay between church and press is a relatively new phenomenon -- at least in terms of two millennia of church history -- but Russo sees it as a continuing situation to which the church will have to adjust. "This connection between church and press is not simply an extra feature.. Rather, it is the pervasive culture in which their [the three archbishops'] messages and moral teachings are understood" (1993: 97).

Guilt, Innocence, and Libel:
Walking a Thin Line

In recent years, the Catholic Church in the United States and Canada has been hit by several scandals involving sexual abuse of youths by priests and religious brothers. An even greater scandal, in the eyes of many, has been the "cover-ups" apparently carried

out by several bishops when their priests were accused of such crimes. Sometimes the cover-ups resulted in the even greater scandal of the bishop allowing the guilty individual to return to parish or other work where he had continued access to young people and could continue the abuse. In such cases, there is no room for mistakes: believing a false accuser would harm an innocent party, but failure to remove a genuine abuser from the community not only is unjust to his past victims but endangers others in the future.

A Question of Reportorial Ethics

In November 1993, an AIDS patient filed a lawsuit against Cardinal Joseph Bernardin, Archbishop of Chicago, charging that Bernardin, then Archbishop of Cincinnati had sexually abused him during the 1970's. The incident was "recalled" by the accuser under hypnosis two decades after the alleged event. Four months later, the suit was dropped, and the accuser apologized for his false allegation.

The Annenberg Washington Program, Medill School of Journalism, and the Northwestern University School of Law, all of which belong to Northwestern University, sponsored a conference, on May 24, 1994, to discuss the role of the media in the case of Cardinal Bernardin. The ethical implications of the actual behavior of the media were considered, as were their broader implications for journalists faced with reporting on similar charges of wrongdoing against public figures.

The two panels, of 12 panelists each, and the audience contributed a wide range of perspectives on the case, its circumstances, and its ethical implications.

The church's earlier handling of cases of child abuse by the clergy was criticized by many as tending to protect guilty priests at the expense of both the abused children and possible future victims. Too often, men whose guilt was acknowledged were put through counselling sessions of doubtful value then reassigned to roles where they fell back into their earlier abusive behavior. In cases where the charges were false or doubtful, publicity was rightly avoided, in order not to hurt the reputation of an innocent individual; but the same attitude had prevailed in cases where guilt was more obvious, and the culprits should have been legally charged. Lutheran Bishop Sherman Hicks, a member of one of the panels stressed that churches need to have well-worked-out policies in place to deal with such matters, "so practices are not left up to the arbitrariness of individuals" (Doppelt 1994: 12).

"The media were fair" -- (mostly)

The media were treated gently by the panelists for their reporting of the Bernardin case. Given the high status of the accused, intensive publicity was inevitable. The suit was filed just before Cable Network News (CNN) carried a documentary on child abuse in the Catholic Church. CNN was accused of "manipulation," but the program had been in preparation for several months before this particular accusation became known to the program's producers. The way the allegation against Bernardin was used by CNN in its promotion of the program was subjected to stronger and more justifiable criticism, as was the linking of the Cardinal's name to the title of the program, "Fall from Grace," which seemed to prejudge him as "fallen."

An exclusive investigative report by WLS-TV, Chicago, one week after the story broke, was instrumental in raising doubts about the case in the mind of the accuser's lawyer, which helped him pose some pointed questions to his client and may have contributed to dropping the case. The *Chicago Tribune* also ran stories questioning the foundations of the case.

The plaintiff's attorney admitted to welcoming press coverage, and encouraging it by tactics such as timing the suit to coincide with the start of the annual bishops' conference.

Damage was done to reputations in this case, but the Cardinal got off relatively easily, compared to someone less prominent, such as a school teacher, who would have fewer resources -- including less access to the mass media -- with which to fight a false charge of this kind (Doppelt 1994: 10).

Facts and Contexts

The editor concludes that news media should be increasingly aware not only of "the facts" but also of context which may cast a different light on a case. One contextual factor is the "litigation explosion." Journalists also should know that civil suits are not necessarily based on fact, "and that lawyers can be creative or manipulative far beyond the ultimate merits of a case" (Doppelt 1994: 20).

And they ought to know that publicized allegations can leave an indelible imprint on a person's character and reputation. At the very least, news organizations should think twice before publishing the inflammatory allegations made in a lawsuit if they would have been unwilling to publish them before the lawsuit was filed (*ibid*.).

VI. Trends in Religion on U.S. Network TV

Thomas Johnson, Sandra L. Crawford, Tim Graham, and Steve Kaminski. *Faith in a Box: Television and Religion* (Media Research Center Special Report). Alexandria, VA: Media Research Center, n.d. (1995).

The Media Research Center, which describes itself as "a conservative research and education foundation dedicated to bringing political balance to the media," carried out extensive content studies of the major broadcast and cable networks, first in 1993, and again in 1994, to determine the extent to which they included religious themes and whether their treatment was positive, negative or neutral.

Entertainment Television, 1994

The section of the report on entertainment television, by Johnson and Crawford, found a substantial improvement from 1993 to 1994, both in the number of references to religion and in positive treatment of it. The research studied 1,674.5 hours of original prime time programming in 1993, and 1,716 hours in 1994. Portrayals of religion more than doubled, from 116 in 1993 to 253 in 1994. Only 27.6% of those portrayals could be typified as positive in 1993, while 43.5% were positive in 1994. Negative portrayals dropped from 42.2% in 1993 to 23.3% in 1994 (Johnson et al. n.d. [1995]: 1).

Positive treatments of aspects of religion in 1994 and 1993 (in parentheses) were: Faith 74% (63%), Institution and Doctrine 45% (50% -- but negative portrayals dropped from 50% to 23%); Laity 44% (18%); and Clergy 28% (15%). Negative views of the clergy dropped from 59% in 1993 to 31% in 1994.

Although the data indicate some improvement, "religion is not on Hollywood's radar screen to any meaningful degree, and... hostility -- even bigotry -- aimed at religion remains alive" (pg. 9).

The authors suggest that more religion is needed in entertainment TV if it is to reflect real life, and that increased support for religious themes not only would be good for society as a whole, but also would be "good business" (pg. 10).

Television News, 1994

Graham and Kaminski found "a continuing pattern of neglect" of religion on network news in the United States. The 225 stories on religion or religious issues found on five network news programs in 1994 was a 6% increase over 1993. The Catholic Church was covered most frequently in both years, but 24 stories on the Cairo population conference tended to attack both Catholics and Muslims as "'distracting' the Cairo conference with their anti-abortion stance" (in Johnson, et al. n.d. [1995]: 18).

TV news stories on abortion -- a "religious" issue, according to the construction of many journalists (as noted above) -- concentrated on violence against abortion clinics. Only one report appeared in the two year period concerning an attack on right-to-life activists, "though many incidents were documented in 1994" (pg. 20). The authors found extensive evidence of a strong "pro-choice" bias, with a clear effort to extend guilt for anti-abortion violence to all opponents of abortion.

Except for abortion and the "religious right" negative news reporting on religion had declined between 1993 and 1994, but "the media continue to miss the story of a religious and moral resurgence across the country.." (pg. 25).

The authors suggested that all networks should follow the lead of ABC in hiring a full-time religion reporter to help assure balance and accuracy in their news about religion.

VII. Religion and Television in Britain

Michael Svennevig, Ian Haldane, Sharon Spiers and Barrie Gunter. *Godwatching: Viewers, Religion and Television*. London/Paris: John Libbey and the Independent Broadcasting Authority, 1988.

Barrie Gunter and Rachel Viney. *Seeing is Believing: Religion and Television in the 1990s*. (Independent Television Commission, Television Research Monograph). London/Paris/Rome: John Libbey, 1994.

Chris Arthur. *Religion and the Media: An Introductory Reader*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1993.

Andrew Quicke and Juliet Quicke. *Hidden Agendas: The Politics of Religious Broadcasting in Britain, 1987-1991*. Virginia Beach, VA: Dominion Kings Grant Publications, Inc., 1992.

Openness to Religion..

Religion has played a prominent role in British broadcasting since its beginning, with the first religious service on BBC radio broadcast from St. Martin's-in-the-Fields Church on January 6, 1924. The relationship of the mass media to religion in Britain, with its established church, has been less ambiguous than that which has prevailed in the United States, where, as has been noted above, "separation of church and state" has sometimes been interpreted as extending to separation of religion from the media. While the Anglican Church has played a central role, the need for fair access to air time by other Christian churches has generally been acknowledged (Wolfe 1984). Similar access has been extended, in recent years, to non-Christian religions, as well.

Independent television has followed the lead of the BBC in its treatment of religion. At intervals of about every five years the Independent Broadcasting Authority held consultations on religious broadcasting (Svennevig, et al. 1988: [ix, but unnumbered]). IBA's concern about religious programming has continued under its successor, for television, the Independent Television Commission (ITC).

..With Exceptions

Both the BBC and ITC lean towards the mainstream Christian denominations -- Anglican, Roman Catholic, and the traditional Protestant denominations -- as well as Judaism and the more clearly-defineable ethnic minority religions in the U.K., such as Islam and Hinduism. The British broadcasting structure is less favorable to American-style "tele-evangelization," which is feared to hold potential for "exploitation or abuse," however that may be defined.

Whilst the Government and Parliament wished to create an environment in which responsible religious broadcasting could flourish, they wished also to prevent some of the more controversial features of 'tele-evangelism' from becoming commonplace on British screens and to limit access to television by groups about whose activities there is widespread public concern (Gunter and Viney 1994: 3).

Prohibitions on direct recruitment ("evangelization") by religious broadcasters and on appeals for donations effectively banned the televangelists from both the BBC and the independent terrestrial channels in the U.K. This was criticized as "censorship" by those who saw it as an infringement on the right to proselytize. "Those who preach an evangelistic gospel claim that the ITC restrictions declare them 'persona non grata'" (Quicke and Quicke 1992: 8).

Advocates of more evangelistic broadcasting cited a case in which an "unacceptable" film by the Salvation Army was replaced by one on an Anglican Dean who made wine. This was seen as the gatekeepers banning a particular religious expression they did not personally like and replacing it with "one they found congenial -- middle class, broadminded on the right things, acceptable to the liberal establishment" (Quicke and Quicke 1992: 103, quoting columnist David Guy in *Christian Weekly News*, Nov. 20, 1987).

Vox populi

U.K. public opinion, however, shows some ambiguity about the ways religion should appear on television. Gunter and Viney found relatively little support for "allowing" either "emotional film to support their [religious broadcasters'] statements" or "forceful preaching or statements about their faith", except among Black Pentecostal groups. Muslims polled favored allowing emotional film, but not "forceful preaching" (1994: 91). A small majority (55%) of the whole sample opposed allowing religious groups to pay

for their own programming on BBC, ITV or Channel 4; but a large minority (45%) felt they should be allowed to do so on cable or satellite channels (pg. 102).

However, the negative opinions should be balanced against the 60% of the total sample who felt that "people should be able to promote their religious beliefs on television as and how they choose, with the minimum of restriction" (pg. 97). Also, a large majority felt that minority religions should have access to television, and a smaller majority thought religious organizations should be able to run their own TV channel (pg. 94). Majorities thought television could help people better understand their own and others' religions and could promote harmony among different religious groups (pg. 99). Less than 20% agreed with the view that "Religion is not the sort of thing which should be on TV" (pg. 95).

Religious Content in General Programming

A sizeable majority of all religious categories in the same survey favored broadcasting of religious services or meetings (Gunter and Viney 1994: 91). Although only 38% of the total sample (about the same as in the 1988 study) agreed that "it would be good to see more portrayals of religious people in plays, drama and soap operas," those who had a religious preference favored such portrayals, with the exception of the Jewish respondents (39% agreed) (*ibid.* pg. 93; *cf.*, Svennevig, et al. 1988: 56).

A small majority of the total sample (56%) felt that "all too often television portrays negative stereotypes about different religious groups, but this view was substantially less common (43%) among those who "never" attended "a religious meeting place" (Gunter and Viney 1994: 99).

Humor was felt to be acceptable in religious drama, although some felt there should be more stress on religion as part of everyday life, rather than on comic, dramatic or unusual aspects of belief (pg. 33).

In the 1988 study, only 15% agreed with the statement that, "On the whole television tends to be against religion", but 27% said it "tends to concentrate too much on the extreme or way out forms of religion" (Svennevig, et al. 1988: 56). In the same study, 64% said that the amount of religious coverage was "about right", and only 5% said there was too much religious coverage (pg. 57).

Some UK Trends

Svennevig et al. (1988: 58) compared their data, gathered in 1987, with those of a 1968 study (ITA 1968) and found "considerable change in many attitudes over the last nineteen years."

Significantly larger proportions in 1987 agreed with the statement, "I don't want to have religion crammed down my throat" than did in 1968. Many more also felt that "religious programmes on TV are aimed at those who are religious" -- suggesting that programming had become less evangelistic and more affirming, or tended more to preach to the already-converted. Few, in either year, felt that "religion is not the sort of thing which should be on TV."

Theological Assumptions

Colin Morris, former Head of Religious Broadcasting and Controller of BBC Northern Ireland, has explored "The Theology of the Nine O'Clock News" (in Arthur 1993: pp. 137-146), as an index of some of the theological assumptions underlying British newscasting.

As elsewhere, "good news is no news" in Britain. Morris sees an implication in this of a fundamental and genuinely theological perspective that a "normal" world is one in which "God's good creation" including human society goes along in a routine, happy and unremarkable way until something bad -- and therefore newsworthy -- happens! Evil, drama, excitement, and "news-worthiness" depend on their opposites being taken for granted. Evils, both natural and man-made, abound on television, but a saving feature is that they are never portrayed as out of control. Instead, they appear as a challenge, and goodness wins out.

Pictures that make us shudder at natural calamity sometimes humble us before the sheer goodness and self-sacrifice of the human response (pg. 140).

Television as a medium is crude -- requiring gross actions to make an impression through its small screen -- and possesses a "pagan vitality" which "seems to generate a life and direction of its own, almost independent of human agency" (pg. 139). Thus, it "heats the blood" of program-makers who "are tempted to accept the medium's bare existence as self-justifying." This and other factors, not the least of them the upbeat impression editors tend to give to even the most disastrous news, adds to the unreal picture of the world which television news communicates. Some distortion -- even serious distortion -- seems inevitable, but viewers have to make sense of it and integrate it with their own spiritual lives.

It is the news which drives most believers, with particular urgency, to penitence and intercession, because it thrusts at them in stark and up-to-the-minute form the perennial questions about meaning, destiny and purpose (Morris, in Arthur 1993: 146).

VIII. Latin America

Michael Tangeman. *Mexico at the Crossroads.* Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1995.

Pedro Gilberto Gomes. *A Comunicação Cristã em Tempo de Repressão.* São Leopoldo, RS, Brazil: Editora Unisinos, 1995.

Clarêncio Neotti, OFM. *Comunicação e Igreja no Brasil.* São Paulo: Paulus, 1994.

Latin American mass media are under the control of each country's socio-economic elites. The same can be said of almost every country in the world, but the extremes of rich and poor in Latin America make media control more evident, and perhaps more politically significant there than in most other places. The attitude of the media towards religion is closely linked to this pattern of media control. If the church, or parts of it, appears friendly to the elites it will tend to "get a good press" from the elite-owned media. If it starts to emphasize "the preferential option for the poor" which was voiced in conferences of the Latin American Catholic bishops (CELAM) in 1968 and 1979, the media will almost automatically react negatively.

Mexico

Although anticlericalism has been endemic in most Latin American republics since their revolutions against Spain in the nineteenth century, that of Mexico has been especially tenacious. In January 1992, the most oppressive of the constitutional provisions against religious education, religious orders, open-air liturgies, property ownership by religious entities, and legal status of churches and religions were rescinded by the Mexican Congress. But problems remained, especially in the persons of some of the bishops and many priests, who took the "preferential option for the poor" seriously. Those who advocated "liberation theology" were looked upon with even greater suspicion. Potential conflict over these issues was exacerbated by the very same Congress which had enacted the laws for religious liberalization, since at about the same time it passed other laws which worked against the interests of the poor and in favor of the rich (Tangeman 1995: 82).

Unrest grew, especially in the southern state of Chiapas, where open rebellion flared on January 1, 1994, when Mexico entered the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) with the United States and Canada. NAFTA was viewed as harmful to the peasants' economic situation by many peasant leaders and progressive elements in the church.

Following the lead of various government sources in trying to find scapegoats for the rebellion, some of the most powerful mass media attacked "liberation theology Catholic priests and their deacons," especially priests of the diocese in the vicinity of the rebellion, Dominicans, and Jesuits, who had been supporting the peasants' demands for justice both regionally and nationally. In turn, the Televisa network and its national financial daily, *Summa*, singled out individual priests by name as alleged combat leaders of the rebellion, even though they later proved to have been engaged in appropriately religious activities far from the conflict (*ibid.* pg. 103). The national magazine *Impacto* is said, by Tangeman, to have created out of whole cloth a "Chihuahua Armed Command guerrilla group" alleged to have been supported by the Jesuits in the northern state of Chihuahua. In late July 1994, the national daily *Excélsior* ran a banner headline, "Plan for Violence in 12 States; Includes Priests and Guerrillas," aimed to discredit a poll-watching effort promoted by the Jesuits (1995: 91-95, 103-106). Nevertheless, the reporting of atrocities by the military in Chiapas appeared uncensored on national television, which did much to promote sympathy for the rebels among the general Mexican population, according to Tangeman (pg. 94).

Brazil

A similar uneasy history of media-church interaction has prevailed in Brazil, the largest country of Latin America and one of the earliest centers for the spread of liberation theology.

Gomes (1995) documents the development of the União Cristã Brasileira de Comunicação Social (UCBC, the Brazilian Christian Union for Social Communication), from its establishment in 1970 to the end of the military dictatorship, in 1983. This ecumenical effort was, in part, a response to the censorship imposed by the regime and its persecution of journalists, which had started in 1964. The churches, particularly the Catholic Church, were the only institutions strong and independent enough to keep alive the idea of a democratic media in the face of the repression.

The period corresponded to the explosive growth of the mass media in Brazil, which, among other events, saw the birth of the Brazilian media company Globo, destined to become one of the world's media giants. It also corresponded to the ferment in the Catholic Church occasioned by the Second Vatican Council.

The Council resulted in a new Catholic readiness for ecumenical collaboration made possible its participation with Brazil's strong mainline Protestant denominations in the struggle for a free mass media which would retain the possibility of reflecting Christian values.

Neotti documents some of the media attacks on bishops, clerics and others in the church who were speaking out in favor of the poor during that same period. Bishop Helder Camara, long a central figure in defending the poorest of the poor in Brazil, was targeted for special attacks, including completely fabricated stories alleging that he had Communist connections (Neotti 1994: 153). Similar attacks on clergy who stressed social justice continued in the right-wing press through the 1980's (pp. 155-156), and the broadcast media also participated. As in Mexico, many of these attacks involved outright falsifications, some of them quite transparent (pp. 158-159).

IX. Cinema

John R. May and Michael Bird (Eds.). *Religion in Film*. Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1982.

Les J. Keyser and Barbara Keyser. *Hollywood and the Catholic Church: The Image of Roman Catholicism in American Movies*. Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1984.

Daniel Burke, FSC (Ed.). *CCICA Annual 1995: The Church and Popular Culture*. Philadelphia: Catholic Commission on Intellectual and Cultural Affairs/La Salle University, 1995:
  O'Brien, Dennis, "The Metaphysics of Pop: Going Whose Way?", pp 7-28.
  Andrew Greeley, "God in the Movies: Film as a Source of Revelation?", pp. 42-61;
  Raymond A. Schroth, S.J., "The Body of Christ: Three Films." pp. 102-114;
  James T. Fisher, "The *Clerks* of American Catholic Popular Culture." pp. 115-125.

It seems almost impossible for film makers to avoid direct or indirect, conscious or unconscious references to religion. The more serious a film, the closer it gets to ultimate human concerns, and therefore to religious themes. Consequently, any discussion of religion in the cinema must be satisfied with barely scratching the surface of a vast topic.

Hierophany
May and Bird (1982) mobilized a number of film scholars to study both the more theoretical aspects of religion in film and its concrete embodiment by various directors.

Michael Bird points out in his introductory essay that the portrayal of religion in film is an attempt to manifest the sacred -- something essentially invisible and immaterial -- through the visible and material. This manifestation, or hierophany, is similar to that attempted by any sacred art or ritual, and the difficulties it poses are much the same. The medium is limited to what it is capable of doing: expressing the spiritual and transcendent through indirect representation by material symbols. For example, it can
  disclose those spaces and those moments in culture where the experience of finitude and the encounter with the transcendent dimension are felt and expressed within culture itself (May and Bird 1982: 4).

European directors have addressed what Andrew Greeley has called "the God question" more directly than has "Hollywood." Some of the more direct American efforts have been blatant and exploitive, especially when they approach the sacred through its opposite, the demonic. But that theme has recurred

throughout American literature, with Herman Melville's novel *Moby Dick* as perhaps the most notable example, and it can be used effectively, to describe God through his absence -- i.e., through describing evil.

John R. May finds that many U.S. film directors have been successful in suggesting the divine through the depiction of evil -- Francis Ford Coppola's portrait of a Mafia family in *The Godfather* is among the most successful (pp. 79-100). Other authors in the same volume probe the religious implications in the films of other "secular" directors, from the overt religious meanings in the films of Ingmar Bergman, through the surrealism of Buñuel, to the seemingly unlikely productions of Alfred Hitchcock, Charles Chaplain, and others.

Serious film, like serious literature, finds it difficult or impossible to avoid addressing "the God question."

Going My Way? ..or Not?

Les and Barbara Keyser (1984) deal specifically with the image of the Catholic Church which Hollywood projected from 1916 to the early '80's. D. W. Griffith's 1916 epic, *Intolerance*, established certain "Catholic" stereotypes, which have reappeared in many later Hollywood films.

Catholics are immigrants; they live in crime-ridden ghettoes; they are desperately trying to be assimilated; their parents cling to traditional values; their women are conscience-stricken virgins with repressed sexual desires; and their religion demands ritual, statues, penance, and unnatural postures... the older generation can never be assimilated... The immigrant church, as Catholicism was frequently labelled, had to change dramatically, the message seems to be, if it was to survive in the American metropolis (pg. 10).

Cecil B. DeMille "riled Catholic sensibilities" by stressing the villiany of the clergy in his 1916, *Joan the Woman*, essentially a pro-French propaganda film about St. Joan of Arc.

The pictorial treatment of these clerics makes them seem as implacable as they are inhumane. Their posturings make the cassock and cowl the very image of cruelty, vanity, self-indulgence, and inscrutability (pg. 19).

The authors also felt that *Joan the Woman* foreshadowed later film treatments of saints in establishing "a disturbing equation between Catholicism, spiritualism, and suppressed sexuality"

(pg. 20).

The pre-Second Vatican Council Catholic Church provided film makers with a wide range of highly visible stock characters -- priests in collars, nuns in habits, etc. -- who could be manipulated in many ways for purposes of secular entertainment. In the United States during the 1930s and 40s film treatments of sex, violence and religion were sanitized by the Motion Picture Production Code, given teeth by the Catholic film pressure group, the Legion of Decency (Keyser and Keyser 1984: 57; see also Balio 1989: 287-288). Until the Code's, and the Legion's collapse, in the 1960's, most treatments of the clergy in American films were positive -- with the pastor and curate portrayed by Barry Fitzgerald and Bing Crosby in *Going My Way* (1944) being perhaps the ultimate example of this trend. Even comic treatments tended to be sympathetic.

The down side of this was superficiality and trivialization, which became the fate of nuns in almost all their Hollywood characterizations of that period. One outstanding exception singled out by the Keysers was *The Nun's Story* (1958), by Jewish director Fred Zinnemann, which the authors call "the finest film about the Catholic religious life ever made, a masterpiece in its conception and its execution" (pg. 151).

Getting Serious

The decline of formal and informal censorship, after Vatican II and certain organizational changes in the American film industry in the 1950's, eventually led to an increase in sensationalized and unsympathetic treatments of religious subjects; but the freer atmosphere also encouraged deeper explorations of their implications. Zinnemann followed *The Nun's Story* with *A Man for All Seasons* (1966), which again addressed the challenges of moral decisions in a Catholic context.

That context continued to be a reservoir from which powerful film material could be drawn. Pauline Kael, movie critic of the *New Yorker* magazine, noted in a 1975 talk that some of the outstanding American directors of that period, producing some of the most exciting films, had come from Catholic backgrounds, such as Robert Altman, Francis Ford Coppola, and Martin Scorsese (as cited in May 1982: 27). Andrew Greeley, priest-sociologist-popular novelist, is quoted favorably by Dennis O'Brien as suggesting an affinity between a Catholic worldview and popular culture which might help explain this productivity.

'The other three great [religious] traditions (Protestant, Jewish, Islamic), each in their own way, are structured on sensibilities that emphasize the radical discontinuity of God and the world... [T]he Catholic religious sensibility sees the whole of creation as a metaphor: everything is grace.''

Greeley finds grace everywhere from Bruce Springsteen's lyrics to Madonna's lingerie -- much to the dismay, he assumes, of traditionalist Catholic piety (O'Brien 1995: 7; quoting Greeley 1988: 94).

In a more recent essay Andrew Greeley suggests Bob Fosse's *All That Jazz* (1978) as "perhaps the best religious film ever made" (1995: 51). Greeley feels that Fosse's account of a near-death experience is an especially insightful exploration of the nature of God and (in this case) "Her" relation with the human individual. In that and the other nine films Greeley reviews in this article God takes many forms, arising from Jewish, Catholic and Protestant theologies, and is played by many actors and actresses. The images they convey conflict at many points, but Greely sees value in them as possible theophanies for some viewers, depending on the religious experience each brings to the viewing. "She [God] has found in pop culture a way to disclose Herself so that people will know what She is really like and love Her more" (pg. 61).

Raymond Schroth (1995: 103) notes that many "Jesus movies", despite their good intentions, are simply bad movies. He suggests that this is

> partly because those who know the most about Jesus -- scripture scholars and theologians -- know little about film. And those who know film, like most intellectuals, are alienated from organized religion, or know Jesus only insofar as his image impinges on their art (pp. 103-104).

Schroth, a communications professor at Loyola University, New Orleans, has praise for *The Last Temptation of Christ* (1988), in which Martin Scorsese, himself once a seminarian, brought together both subtle theological insights and one of the outstanding contemporary filmmaking talents to make an honest and complex picture which many found "outrageous." The Canadian film, *Jesus of Montreal*, which Schroth also reviews, brings together aspects of faith and contemporary temptation. Instead of sex, the contemporary Satan urges the actor playing Jesus in the shrine passion play "to 'be somebody,' to be 'in,' to be 'on TV'!" (pg. 108). Finally, *The Bad Lieutenant*, "which critics have dubbed one of the most brutal films in the history of American cinema," preaches a "wild Christian logic" which is open to the alternative interpretation of the "madness" of the principal character (pg. 113).

Schroth sees considerable value in these three unconventional films, which many might find sacrilegious. He feels that their misinterpretation comes from a defect in our usual perception of Christ.

> We have lost the broader understanding of the Incarnation wherein God reveals himself not just in the historical body of the man Jesus, but also in the flesh of the basest of human beings, and especially in the handiwork of artists -- novelists, painters, and filmmakers who, rather than shrink from the scandal of God's physical presence, dare to depict it in new ways (pg. 113).

James T. Fisher has targeted Kevin Smith's "no-budget" film, *Clerks* (1994) for his analysis. Although not overtly a "religious film," Fisher thinks that "*Clerks* deserves a central role in any discussion hovering around the interface of American popular culture and Catholic life as it is lived by many in this country" (pg. 116).

Made in northern New Jersey, by a director who has been chided by a *Village Voice* reviewer as "'an unreconstructed altar boy,' who 'goes to Mass every Sunday'" (Fisher 1995: 116), the film portrays a "lost generation" of post-Vatican II Catholic youths deeply embroiled in contemporary pagan, consumerist pop-culture, but constantly, on their own terms and in their own (largely scatological) words, debating the ultimate questions of life which, for whatever reasons, they find themselves ill-equipped to answer. *Clerks* is "a meditation on the conditions affecting religious experience in everyday life," with a sense of "profound moral earnestness", and

> a paradoxical spirituality in which elements of the sacred are not only inextricably linked to the profanations of everyday life, their meaning is *embedded* in the surreptitious, offhand quality of expression that marks this film and much of the vital Catholic art and folklore of contemporary America (pg. 121).

X. The Public Forum and Public Religion

Knut Lundby, "Olympic Mediation of Religion in Modern Media Cultures." A paper for the Pre-Conference Seminar, *Theory and Practice at the Intersection of Media, Religion and Culture*, at the 44th Annual Conference of the International Communication Association, Sydney, Australia, July 1994.

Robert Wuthnow, *Producing the Sacred: An Essay on Public Religion*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994.

The Olympic Quest for Symbolic Unity

The restoration of the Olympic Games with the participation of athletes from many cultures and religions is perhaps the outstanding international example of an event in the secular public forum which has taken on a quasi-religious aspect. This is perhaps understandable, both in view of the intimate connection of the Games with religion in ancient Greece and the highly developed rituals with which the modern Games are surrounded.

Knut Lundby, of the University of Oslo, has studied the opening ceremony of the Lillehammer Winter Olympics of 1994 as a manifestation of "a media culture with religious elements" (Lundby 1994: 1).

The purpose of the opening ceremony's structure, as defined in the Olympic Charter, is not religious: "to celebrate and to initiate and to keep the Olympic Idea and the Olympic Vision" (pg. 3). But, in practice, religion-like references follow, "beyond the rational, visible, day to day routines" (*ibid.*). The transcendental experience the Games inspire in a large mass of people would be difficult to distinguish from a religion by almost any criterion. The Olympic Hymn, sung in the opening ceremony, contained a reference to the Greek god Zeus. The Norwegian planners of the ceremony introduced a role for the "vetter"--"peace-loving creatures" from Norse mythology. Sami (formerly "Lapp") chants, with distant pagan origins, also were brought into the ceremony, together with a "Devil's Dance", an "exorcism", Gregorian chant, and a Lutheran pietistic hymn.

Public objections focused on the Olympic Hymn, with its prayer to Zeus, which, however, had to be kept because it was prescribed by the Olympic Charter. Other religious elements were retained, as well, but "played down in preference to more diffuse and general symbols, to build a higher symbolic unity than those performed by specific religious traditions" (pg. 22).

Lundby says the symbolic experience of the opening ceremony could "give rise to religious connotations" and "such a piece of modern media culture may mediate religious feelings and references" (pg. 20).

The way religion is dealt with in the mass media actually is only one dimension of the broader functioning of religion and quasi-religious phenomena within the total society. Wuthnow is not particularly concerned with the mass media, but he focuses on the "sacred" realm, where religion, patriotism, and other values belong which in some way transcend the merely material or utilitarian. The "sacred" is, for Wuthnow, "the symbolic frameworks that are set apart from everyday life, giving a sense of transcendent, holistic meaning" (1994: 3).

Some have seriously suggested that unifying national events, such as the annual "Super Bowl" football game in the United States (cf., Gregor Goethels in Arthur 1993: 27), and even international events, like the Olympics or the World Cup, take on a "sacred", quasi-religious function. But to be sacred an activity must have certain characteristics. Wuthnow follows Emile Durkheim (1967[1915]) in stating two of these: (1) the sacred must be ritually set apart from everyday life, and (2) it also must be linked closely to the sense of power which derives from doing things in concert with others.

The Super Bowl, and similar media events, do not have these two characteristics. They are, in fact, defined as "entertainment" -- an identity enhanced by their appearance on television, a medium routinely associated mostly with entertainment by the audience. Furthermore, the environment in which the Super Bowl is watched is "profane" -- typically one's own living room -- not set apart as sacred.

"In an otherwise secular society the church must in fact be different" (Wuthnow 1994: 58). A sense of congregational unity also is lacking in the essentially individual and one-way experience of watching television, and the experience of God or at least of transcendence, implicit in a religious congregation, also is mission. By the same criteria, televised religious services may have more in common with the Super Bowl than they do with services in a church (*ibid.* 57-58).

Perspective

This review of recent writing on religion in the mass media has necessarily contained more references to essays and opinion than it has to "hard research." One reason for this is that, apart from the dedicated attention of a relatively few scholars, little "hard research" actually is being done on this topic.

Nevertheless, as has been noted above, colloquia which offer informed scholars and practitioners a chance to discuss the topic and to have their views challenged by equally well-informed peers may, in fact, offer a better-rounded idea of the interactions between the media and religion than more narrowly defined "hard research" projects might be able to do.

The picture which has emerged in our survey of the field remains ambiguous.

In the early days of the electronic media, the opinion of many in positions of religious authority was that the broadcasting of religious services would be "sacrilegious", or nearly so (Wolfe 1984: 7). Wuthnow's more contemporary view, that broadcast religion partakes of the "entertainment" character of the media, has some validity. The sacred, to remain sacred, seems to need some segregation from daily life, in at least some respects, and to focus on the transcendent. Nevertheless, the church (or synagogue or mosque) now lives in a mass-mediated environment, which it must encounter and "use" -- to echo Cardinal O'Connor -- to get its message out to the world and to maintain an effective presence there. Furthermore, if religion is not even mentioned, on TV especially, it will simply cease to have much relevance or "reality" for millions. Much of our experience of "reality" is shaped by the media.

A Unique Dialogue

The dialogue between mass media and religion which has been developing over the past two centuries is unique in human historical experience, because nothing like the mass media existed before the appearance of the first broadly-circulated newspapers. Now, however, the media have grown to become a major fact of both human life and of religious experience. A religion which cannot cope with the media is at a real disadvantage both in defending its public image and in communicating its message to the world.

On the other hand, serious attention by the media to serious content cannot help but encounter the same ultimate questions which preoccupy religion. The only way they can be avoided is by cultivating superficiality, as many of the media seem to be trying to do in modern consumer societies. Television, with the cultural definition it has acquired as chiefly "entertainment," may be more successful in this cultivation than feature-length cinema, since the latter requires a greater investment of time, attention and sometimes money by its audience than does television. A substantial proportion of that audience is almost certain to want something worthwhile for its investment.

It is doubtful, however, that even television can ever stay completely banal for very long or across its whole spectrum of channels. So even television is likely to encounter religious issues, from time to time, and to incorporate them into its offerings.

It seems clear, especially from the views expressed in the various forums conducted on the topic in the past two years, that news media are beginning to pay greater attention to religion, to recognize that their own record of reporting religion has been badly flawed, and to show some signs of trying to improve religious reporting. It also seems clear that journalists face a difficult task in correctly understanding the many subtle complexities of even the major religions and accurately interpreting them to their audiences. They need help in this from the clergy, who are often ill-prepared by both inclination and training to work constructively with the mass media.

In the various forums cited, the theme appeared over and over again that journalists must learn more about religion and the clergy more about the media. This is more than a pragmatic question, since moral considerations enter into media distortion -- of religious content, on the one side, and of ill-informed and excessively harsh criticisms of media contents, on the other.

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AFTERWORD

Causes of media bias

Apparent or actual bias in the mass media against religions or particular denominations arises from several sources. The following are just a few of them.

"Liberalism"

One bias is the "liberal" orientation of many journalists and creative writers. They often embody various aspects of the libertarian ideology of the Enlightenment, as filtered through the culture and historical experience of their own social milieu. In some cases this can involve a "knee-jerk" anti-clericalism which affects their attitudes about religion in general. Nineteenth century theories of social evolution, in the Enlightenment mold, projected the disappearance of religion as society became more "rational." Sociologists have long regarded those theories as obsolete -- based as they were only on the past, with no reason to think such trends would continue into the future -- but some journalists fail to realize they are passé.

Cynicism

In other cases, as in the United States, journalism may have a tradition of "muckraking" which has turned up so much corruption in high places that all authority figures, including those of the churches, have become suspect. To this cynicism may sometimes be added the influence of a prevailing hegemonic ideology of "political correctness," in which a whole range of moral questions are not arguable. The "correct" answers are set by the ideology, and an independent writer is able to call them into doubt publicly only at the peril of his or her professional survival.

Consumerism

Over the past several decades, too, consumerism has come to be an unquestionable ideology in many countries -- especially the technologically most advanced. Anything or anyone questioning the materialistic and hedonistic premises of consumerism is, in effect, questioning the economic foundations of contemporary culture itself, and may therefore be barred from sympathetic consideration.

Exploitation of the Poor

In other contexts, such as many places in Latin America, the media are controlled by an upper class which is sensitive to any threat to its economic and social dominance. These conservative media are almost bound to support their owners against bishops, clergy and religious, or other religiously-motivated people who try to defend the interests of the poor at the inevitable expense of the rich.

Complexity

The complexity of religious questions -- especially in a pluralist society, where there may be hundreds of religions, each with its own history and theology -- is overwhelming to many journalists, who lack the time to study them deeply. Even when the facts are known, they require so much background and explanation that neither time nor space are adequate to explain them fully in most media.

"Religion is a Private Matter"

Since the truth of religion cannot be empirically proven, it is considered "unarguable" and therefore "unimportant" in many circles. Accordingly, some in the media would regard it as not relevant for discussion in the public forum and therefore to be disregarded.

Media Illiteracy of the Clergy

Perhaps the greatest single bar to an appropriate presence of religion in the mass media is the inability of the clergy and others with an interest in religion to deal appropriately with the media. This may be because they fear misquotation or because they recognize the difficulty of explaining complex religious matters adequately within the narrow strictures of time, space and format available to the media. But more often it is because they have not taken the trouble to gain an accurate understanding of the media and to learn the skills necessary to use it effectively. Despite decades of experience with the electronic media few seminaries or schools of theology have developed systematic programs to acquaint their students with how to use them effectively.

Some Solutions

The clergy, as leaders of the church as community, should start with themselves and those for whom they are directly responsible in trying to solve the problem.

Seminary Training

Some seminary administrators may shy away from

developing communication training for their students because they think it will be expensive. But appropriate media training is not a question of "hardware." The most important communication skills to teach are those which do not require expensive studios or other production facilities: writing, how to prepare for interviews, the do's and dont's of how to act before the TV cameras, media organization and structures, the limitations of the media in what can and cannot be communicated through them, cinematic and other media conventions to enable the student to "read" the media correctly, and an understanding of the ethics which govern journalists and other media professionals -- possibly imposing upon them serious obligations which conflict with the short-range interests of religious institutions.

Limiting Criticism

There is plenty in the mass media to criticize, but criticism loses its effectiveness if it is too frequent, and especially if it is based on erroneous premises. An understanding of media conventions is important so that misunderstandings can be avoided and criticism limited to only those cases in which the media have been most clearly in the wrong.

Maintaining Good Relations

The clergy, in particular, should try to meet and maintain friendly contacts with relevant media people in their own geographic area or field of interest. An attempt should be made to demonstrate a sympathetic understanding of the professionals' perspective and problems, and to provide accurate information to them when it is needed. The need of the media for *reliable sources* should never be underestimated, and an effort by religious organizations to respond to it, by maintaining files and dossiers, issuing press releases, and other means, often will do much to establish good relations.

Media Presence

Although much of the review article in this issue has been devoted to discussions of the difficulties the Catholic Church, in particular, has had with the press, Catholics probably get the most media coverage of any religion, worldwide, both in news and entertainment. Much of it is negative, but much also is favorable.

Muslims and fundamentalist Protestants, on the other hand, appear to get very little favorable publicity, at least in the Western mass media. The coverage they get often depends on negative stereotypes which are difficult to break. Nevertheless, they do get mentioned. They "exist" in the media.

On the other hand, Jews, "mainline" Protestants, Buddhists and Hindus may be the worst off in terms of media presence among the major religions. The coverage they get is usually favorable, but they do not get much of it and, in fact, are largely ignored by both news and entertainment media. They may not have a "bad press," but to have *no* press may be worse in terms of influence in the contemporary electronically mediated world.

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Current Research

Argentina

The Department of Communications, Instituto Superior Evangélico de Estudios Tecnológicos (Camacuá, 282, 1406 Buenos Aires; Tel: +54 1 631 1882), directed by Gerardo C. Viviers, maintains a documentation center, as well as doing teaching and research, on religious journalism, from an evangelical Protestant perspective.

Australia

In November 1994, The Deakin University Centre for Human Rights,(Deakin University, Glenferrie Road, Toorak, Melbourne, Victoria 3217; Fax: +61 (052) 272 018) in association with the Institute for the Religions, the School of Literature and Journalism, and the School of Social Inquiry, of the same University, sponsored a conference on "Media in a Multifaith Society", dealing with Australian and international media coverage of religion and spirituality. The University is considering the introduction of a post-graduate diploma in religious/ethnic journalism.

Brazil

Ismar de Oliveira Soares (Department of Communication and Arts, School of Communication and Arts, Universidade de São Paulo, Av. Prof. Lúcio Martins Rodrigues, 443, Cidade Universitá, CEP 05508-900, São Paulo, SP, Brazil; Tel: +55 011 818 4477; Fax: +55 011 813 0596) has recently been studying the politics of communication in the Catholic Church in Brazil. Aspects of the Church's communication which he finds deficient include the lack of a common theoretical referent, a need to improve collaboration among Church communication organs, a need to create small groups to expedite communication on the local level, inadequate leadership training, and inadequate provisions for feedback.

Chile

The Organización Católica International del Cine Y Del Audiovisual-América Latina (OCIC-AL), (Av. Brasil, 94, Santiago de Chile), the Latin American branch of OCIC, operates a documentation center stressing religious cinema and broadcasting throughout Latin America.

Educación y Comunicaciones (ECO) (Carrera 246, Santiago de Chile; Tel: +56 2 696 1847) does research on Latin American mass communication relevant to the Catholic Church, and maintains an archive of popular bulletins and other documents.

Colombia

Centro de Comunicación Educativa Audiovisual (CEDAL) (Apartado aéreo 54085, Calle 61, 18-52, Cundinamarca, Bogotà; Tel: +57 1 2 123 101), Gladys Daza Hernández, Director, does research on Church activities in alternative communication and *comunicación popular*.

Costa Rica

Centro Nacional de Acción Postal (CENAP) (Apartado Aéreo 7315, 1000 San Jose) does research and teaching concerning religious journalism and the Catholic Church, as well as mass communication in general.

Dominican Republic

Sáez Ramo, José Luis, S.J. (Av. Correa y Cidrón, 28, Ciudad Universitaria, Apartado Postal 76, Santo Domingo; Tel:+1 809 532 5628; Fax: +1 809 533 2332) has written extensively on film studies, with some concentration on religious and political aspects.

Ecuador

León Calderón, Hugo Andrés (CIESPAL, Av. Diego de Almagro, 2155, Quito; Tel: +593 2 234 031; Fax: +593 2 502 487) has studied the media of communication of the Catholic Church, especially in relation to popular (alternative) communication and political communication.

Iran

Hamid Naficy (Rice University, Houston, TX, USA--No further contact information available) has published several articles on the Iranian film industry since 1987.

Italy

Scuola Superiore delle Comunicazione Sociali, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore (Largo A. Gemelli, 1, 20123 Milan) is intensively involved in research and teaching in all aspects of religious communication.

The International Documentation and Communication Centre (IDOC) (Via S. Maria dell'Anima, 30, 00186 Roma, Italy; Tel: +39 6 686 8332) gives religious communication, especially of the Catholic Church, a prominent place in its research and publication, as well as in its document collection.

José Martínez de Toda y Terrero, S.J. (Centro Interdisciplinare sulla Comunicazione Sociale, Pontifical Gregorian University, Piazza della Pilotta 4, 00187 Rome; Tel: +39 6 6701.1; Fax: +39 6 6701.5413) has been involved in research on tendencies in Catholic journalism and radio, with special emphasis on Latin America.

Norway

Knut Lundby (Department of Media and Communication, University of Oslo, PO Box 1093, Blindern, N-0317 Oslo; Fax: +47 22 69 47 90) has co-edited with Stewart Hoover a forthcoming book, *Rallies, Rituals and Resistance: Rethinking Media, Religion and Culture*, to be published by Sage in their "Communication and Human Values" series.

Portugal

The Department of Social Communication, Universidade Católica Portuguesa (Palma de Cima, 1600 Lisbon; Tel: +351 1 726 41 22) carries on teaching and research and maintains a documentation center relevant to religious communication in Portugal.

Russia

Maria M. Lukina (Senior Lecturer, Apostle Paul Centre, Faculty of Journalism, The Lomonossov Moscow State University, 9 Mokhovaya Street, 103914 Moscow, Russia; Fax: +7 095 203 2889 or +7 095 203 3225; Tel: +7 095 203 3217 or +7 095 132 0049 (pr); e-mail: < stpaul@glas.apc.org >) has been doing research on religious and Christian media in Russia and religion in broadcasting and the press. She is planning research on Russian audiences of religious media and a content-analysis of Christian values in mass media texts. Her earlier publications include "Models of Christian Radio in Russia" (in, *Journalism in 1993,* Moscow: Moscow State University, 1994) and "Christian Broadcasting in Modern Russia" (in *The Magazine of Moscow University,* Journalism Series No. 3, 1995).

Lubov V. Kashinskaya of the same Centre (Associate Professor; Fax: +7 095 203 2889; Tel: +7 095 203 3428 or +7 095 591 8303 (pr)) has been doing research on religious and church press in Russia, and has written on "Freedom of Conscious: the Law and Life (in *The Magazine of Moscow University,* No. 1, 1992), and "The Press System of the Russian Orthodox Church: The Typology of the Christian Press" in *The Typology of Russian Periodicals* (Moscow 1995).

The Faculty of Journalism of the Lomonossov Moscow State University, under its Dean, **Professor Yassen N. Zassoursky,** will host the "Second Ecumenical Mass Media Colloquium" at the Apostle Paul Centre of MSU, on October 6-7, 1995. Like the first colloquium, in October 1994, it will discuss "the problems which are common for all the participants of this rapidly developing sector of mass media," with the aim of creating "a kind of regular forum of Christian journalists at which they could meet, express their opinions, listen to their colleagues, exchange experience, propose their ideas for discussion." Students of the "religious department of the Faculty of Journalism of MSU" also will take part. Contact: Dr. Maria M. Lukina (address above).

Spain

Norberto Alcover Ibáñez, S.J. (Pablo Aranda, 3, 28006 Madrid, Spain; Tel: +34 91 562 4930; Fax: +34 91 563 4073) specializes in film criticism and in the role of the Catholic Church in Spanish social communication.

The **Comisión Episcopal de Medios de Comunicación Social,** of the **Spanish Episcopal Conference (Conferencia Episcopal Española)** (Añastro, 1, 28033 Madrid; Tel: +34 91 766 5500; Fax: +34 91 766 7981) has a documentation center containing material on Catholic communications activities and religious journalism. It publishes a guide to Catholic media communication in Spain, *Guía de los medios de comunicación social de la Iglesia Católica en España.*

The **Facultad de Ciencias de la Información, Universidad de Navarra** (Apartado de Correos 177, 31080 Pamplona, Navarra; Tel: +34 948 10 56 00; Fax: +34 948 10 56 36) conducts research and teaching and has a documentation center, with special emphasis on mass communication related to the Catholic Church.

The **Facultad de ciencias de la información, Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca** (Compañía, 5, 370089 Salamanca, Castella-Lleó; Tel: +34 923 21 65 81; Fax: +34 923 26 24 56) **Maria Teresa Aubach Guiu, Dean,** has conducted research on religious journalism and the Catholic Church in Spain and maintains a documentation center.

Facultat de Ciències de la comunicació Blanquerna. Universitat Ramon Llull (Valdonzella, 21, 08001 Barcelona, Catalunya; Tel: +34 (93) 302 79 22; Fax: +34 (93) 302 77 58) is a newly-founded (1994) faculty with Catholic Church connections and a strong interest in mass media research.

Institut Catòlic D'Estudis Socials de Barcelona (ICESB) (Enric Granados, 2, 08007 Barcelona, Catalunya; Tel: +34 93 435 2800; Fax: +34 93 451 3708), directed by **Maria Martinell i Taxonera)** includes Catholic Church communication activities and mass media in its sociologically-oriented research.

Instituto de Sociología Aplicada de Madrid (Claudio Coello, 141, 4o, 28006 Madrid) includes Catholic Church dommunication among its wide range of interests.

Mercedes Gordon Péres (Fac. Ciencias de la Información. Complutense University; Avda. Complutense, s/n, 28040 Madrid, Spain; Tel: +34 91 394 2101; Fax: +34 91 394 2055) is involved in both theoretical and applied research in journalism education, with special interest in religious journalism.

Juan Antonio Martínez Bretón (Fac. de Ciencias de la Información; Univ. Complutense de Madrid, 28040 Madrid; Tel: +34 91 244 0696; Fax: +34 91 394 2055) has writen on the influence of the Catholic Church in Spanish cinematography (see "Additional Bibliography").

Isidro Sánchez Sánchez (Department of History, Faculty of Letters, Universidad Castilla-La Mancha; 13071 Ciudad Real, Castella-La Mancha; Tel: +34 926 25 58 00 or 25 01 75) has written extensively on the comparative historical evolution of the spanish press, with special attention to the

Catholic press.

Jesús María Vásquez Rodríguez (Claudio Coello, 141, 28006 Madrid; Tel +34 91 562 0239 or 562 1325) analyzed press coverage of the visit of Pope John Paul II to Spain, in 1992, and continues to include religious communication among his interests.

United Kingdom
Chris Arthur (Department of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Wales, Lampeter, Lampeter, Dyfed, SA48 7ED, Wales; Tel: +44 (0)1570 424708; Fax: +44 (0) 1570 423641; Fax: +44 (0)1570 423641) recently published an essay review of books on religion and media in *Religious Studies Review* (Vol. 21, No. 2 [1995], pp. 98-104), and contributed a chapter to a forthcoming book, edited by Stewart Hoover and Knut Lundby (see "United States" and "Norway)." He is in the early planning stages for an edited volume gathering various religious perspectives, both Christian and non-Christian, on media ethics.

James McDonnell (The Catholic Communications Centre, 39, Eccleston Square, London SW1V 1BX; Tel: +44 171 233-8196; Fax: +44 171 931 7497) is doing research for a paper on "Religious Images on British TV," to illustrate the ways in which the media typically present religious and church issues.

The World Association for Christian Communication (WACC) (357 Kennington Lane, London SE11 5QY, England; Tel: +44 171 582 9139; Fax: +44 171 735 0340; e-mail: < wacc@gn.apc.org >) promotes and supports research and publication on all aspects of religious communication.

United States
Stewart M. Hoover (Ctr. for Mass Media Research, Campus Box 287, University of Colorado, Boulder, CO 80309; Tel: +1 (303) 492-4833; Fax: +1 (303) 438-0585; e-mail: <HOOVER@COLORADO.EDU >) has been directing a multi-project study of aspects of the relationship between the mass media and religion in the United States, in collaboration with **Douglas Wagner**, of the same Center, and **Shalini Venturelli** (International Communication Program, School of International Service, The American University, 4400 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20016-8071; Tel: +1 (202) 885-1635; Fax: +1 (202) 885-2494; e-mail: < SVENTUR@AMERICAN.EDU >). Hoover is organizing a conference on "Media, Religion, and Culture," scheduled for January 11-14, 1996, in Boulder. He and Knut Lundby co-edited a forthcoming book in the Sage "Communication and Human Values" series, *Rallies, Rituals and Resistance: Rethinking Media, Religion and Culture.*

The Medill School of Journalism and **Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary** are collaborating in two programs on the campus of Northwestern University to train future journalists of religion and to work with practicing journalists through the Center for Religion and the News Media to improve understanding of the "religious beat" and improve relations between the press and faith communities. Contacts: **Jeffrey H. Mahan**, Asst. Prof., Practical Theology & Media in Contemporary Culture, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, 2121 Sheridan Road, Evanston, IL 60201; Tel: +1 (708) 866-3956; **Richard Schwarzlose**, Professor, Medill School of Journalism, Northwestern University, Fisk Hall, Evanston, IL 60208; Tel: (708) 491-2066; or (about the Center) **Roy Larson**, Center for Religion and the News Media, 2121 Sheridan Road, Evanston, IL 60201; Tel: +1 (708) 866-3960.

Venezuela
Jesús María Aguirre, S.J. (Andrés Bello Catholic University, Urbanización-La Vega, 28068A Caracas; Tel: +58 2 564 9802 and 451 0851; Fax: +58 2 561 8205 and 442 3897) writes on a wide range of communication topics, including religious journalism and religious discourse.

Jeremiah O'Sullivan Ryan (INVECAPI, Camejo a Colón; Torre La Oficina, 7° piso, apdo 3445, 1010 A Caracas; Tel: +58 2 563 7181; Fax: +58 2 563 4625) has written extensively on Catholic Church communication in Latin America, with special emphasis on alternative and participatory communication (see "Additional Bibliography").

BOOK REVIEWS
by W. E. Biernatzki, S.J.

Anderson, Rob, and Veronica Ross. *Questions of Communication: A Practical Introduction to Theory.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994. Pp. xvi, 320. ISBN 0 312 06776 3 (pb.), n.p.

This book can be used either as a textbook or to provide a general background of communication theory. It explores the various efforts which have been made to explain how com-munication works, how perception is being changed by developments in communication technology, why communication is successful in some situations but not in others, ethical judgements affecting communication, and related questions.

The authors say the book was designed for students and teachers, not researchers or theorists. It meets "..the need of our own students to study theory in an involving, personalized and practical way -- while recognizing that *ideas* themselves can be exciting" (pp. iii-iv).

Anderson and Ross put communication into an ethical framework requiring both openness to others' situations and readiness to evaluate all knowledge claims against other sources of information.

Various chapters deal with the flow of communication, its context, its relation to personal experience, rules and cooperation, communicative interdependence, rhetoric, the influence of mass media, and a return, in the final chapter, to ethical considerations. The views of various theorists are brought into the discussion where they are relevant, culminating in an overview of the major theoretical perspectives in the field.

A section, "You the Researcher," closes each chapter by presenting suggestions for small research projects to illustrate and test the theories covered in that chapter.

Arnett, Ronald C. *Dialogic Education: Conversation About Ideas and Between Persons.* Carbondale,IL/Edwardsville,IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1992. Pp. ix, 267. ISBN 0 8093 1804 0 (hb.) $29.95.

Arnett describes his topic in the first sentence of the Introduction: "This book-length essay examines a noble vocation: college teaching centered on undergraduate instruction" (pg. 3). It explores the role of dialogue in creating a constructive teacher-student relationship to improve university education by improving that key dimension of communication.

Dialogue -- symbolized, at the secondary school level, by U. S. President James Garfield's depiction of the teacher sitting on one end of a log and the student on the other -- is essential to real education, but it cannot be forced. As Arnett describes it, "Dialogue is an invitation, not a demand, nourished not so much by the guarantee that it will happen as by patience" (pg. 4). Hopefully, dialogic education fulfills the reasons why people become teachers: "a love of inquiry and a joy at working with people in the learning process" (pg. 9).

But Arnett senses that these high ideals have broken down in recent years -- on the side both of teachers and of students. As discussions among teachers and administrators about the practicalities and politics of academic life have increased "conversations about ideas and about students have seemed to grow more quiet" (*ibid.*).

Since dialogue is chiefly promoted by openness and availability, more concrete remedies for promoting it are elusive, but the time-honored aims of a good education are not far off the mark. As the author states them:

> The goals of dialogic education reveal the importance of accumulation of information and a recognition of the following: the importance of having a value base or ground from which to meet and interpret history and current events in one's personal and professional life, as well as in the larger world; the importance that time plays in the nurturing of relationships; and the hope that a student will develop a philosophical foundation open to revision and capable of assisting with the inevitable challenges that will be met in the course of a lifetime. (pg. 27)

An element which should govern the whole academic endeavor, as well as the subsequent life of the graduate is civility. Arnett implies that this quality is too-often absent from academic life today. He quotes Harold Barrett's description, in *Rhetoric and Civility: Human Development, Narcissism, and the Good Audience* (Albany, NY, 1991) of what civility entails:

> "The civil person recognizes that situations outside the self and the demands of self are distinct and separable.

Common patterns of civil behavior are acts of 'persuading, soliciting, consulting, advising, bargaining, compromising, coalition building, and so on' -- as opposed to 'such forms of behavior as coercing, confronting, deceiving, manipulating,' etc." (pg. 154, quoting Barrett 1991, pg. 147)

Following Neil Postman, Arnett feels we can still learn from the Athenian ideal, the "Athenian myth" (not necessarily from Athenian practice) of a leadership model based on principles, reason, competence, and hard work, supplemented by a high level of personal virtue, integrity, and genuine caring for others. Some of these elements are not prominent in the value system of the job market in which today's graduates must compete. But the "Athenian myth" did guide "the pragmatic dreamers who penned the Declaration of Independence and later the Bill of Rights." Arnett hopes it will become more important in the future. "It seems that some myths are not only worth keeping, they are sometimes worth building institutions and even countries around" (pg. 168).

Bendazzi, Giannalberto. *Cartoons: One Hundred Years of Cinema Animation*. Translated by Anna Taraboletti-Segre. Bloomington and Indianapolis/London: Indiana University Press/John Libbey, 1995. Pp. xxiii, 514. ISBN 0 253 31168 3 (hb.) $89.95; ISBN 0 253 20937-4 (pb.) $39.95.

Animated cinema is as old as cinema itself, the first animated shows being presented in Paris in 1892. Its antecedents actually predate the motion picture and even photography, since optical toys simulating motion by showing drawings in rapid succession date at least from 1825.

The first commercial animator, Emile Reynaud, ultimately lost out to competition from "Lumière style" cinema, in Paris, because he objected to photographic reproduction of physical reality. Something of the same feeling among audiences has nevertheless given animation its staying power alongside photographic cinema, allowing it to develop into the vast international industry it is today.

Early development of animated films took place on both sides of the Atlantic. The first entirely animated feature film (a little over one hour) was made in Argentina, in 1917. Animated film quickly became industrialized in the United States, where it made the breakthrough to sound with Walt Disney's, *Steamboat Willie*, "starring" Micky Mouse, in 1928. The center for American animation had moved to Hollywood by

the 1930's, and the patterns of the larger motion picture industry exerted a strong influence on animation. The earlier connection with newspaper comic strips survived only in "Popeye the Sailor" cartoons, "while Donald Duck and Bugs Bunny imitated Charlie Chaplain and Buster Keaton" (pg. 84).

In Britain, animation got off to a slow start, being largely restricted to advertising uses until the middle 1930's. After a period of innovation in the 1920's, Soviet animation went through a period of decline, but revived again as "socialist realism" stimulated art for the service of the state, in the 1930's. Domestically-produced Japanese animated films were popular by 1920. The original companies were forced to consolidate, but intensive government demand for propaganda films in the 1930's and 1940's gave the industry the experience it needed to become a major world center for animation after the Second World War. Between the wars, France, Germany, and Hungary made noteworthy contributions to the art, although Hollywood drew off some of the artists.

Canada, aided by the innovative policies of its National Film Board, became an important center during and after the Second World War. State funding also stimulated the animation industry in Eastern Europe, but its creativity began to flourish only with the gradual fading of Stalinism, from the late 1950's. In South America, Argentinian leadership in animation was soon challenged by the developing Brazilian industry.

Animation in East Asia, apart from Japan, has not manifested much originality, but the growing world demand for television animation, in particular, has made work for foreign clients into an important industry in several countries. The 400 artists of South Korea's Dong-Seo Animation Company, for example, are able to complete two-and-a-half hours of animated film per week -- an incredible feat when the amount of work required is considered. By 1983, more than 10,000 professional animators were employed in Tokyo, alone (pg. 412).

The labor-intensive character of cinematic animation has changed since 1990, when rapid developments in computer technology began to overcome the dependence on "mathematical structure, based on rigid geometric shapes" which had previously made computer animation "a poor means for character animation production" (pg. 441). Now, however, "computer animation continues to be the most exciting change in the industry" (pg. 443). Inevitably, this will affect the role of the traditional animation artist, but some of the systems are designed more as aids to the

artist than as his or her replacement. Furthermore, the improved capability already is leading to increased use of animation in the cinema and television industries (*ibid.*).

Cahn, Dudley D. (Ed.). *Conflict in Personal Relationships*. Hillsdale, NJ/Hove, UK: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1994. Pp. xi, 235. ISBN 0 8058 1277 6 (hb.) $59.95; ISBN 0 8058 1278 4 (pb) $22.00.

A rising interest in the study of interpersonal conflict among communication scholars appears to be in response to a rising incidence and increasing variety of interpersonal conflicts in society.

The ten papers which comprise this volume approach the topic first in terms of the types of personal relationships involved (seven chapters), then according to three types of approach to the study of interpersonal conflicts and their resolution (three chapters).

The papers using the first orientation deal with intimate same-sex relationships, physically aggressive romantic relationships, intimate intercultural relationships, and relationships in schools, in marriage, between parents and dependent children, and between adults and their aging parents. Chapter 8 deals with a communication approach to everyday argument; chapter 9 with a competence-based approach to interpersonal conflict; and chapter 10 with a holistic approach to dispute resolution in a community mediation center.

The editor feels that the book's chief value lies in the wide variety of types of personal relationship treated and in its inclusion of research from sources which are otherwise not easily accessible, as well as in its interdisciplinary character.

Christ, William G. (Ed.). *Assessing Communication Education: A Handbook for Media, Speech and Theatre Educators*. Hillsdale, NJ/Hove, UK: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1994. Pp. xi, 403. ISBN 0 8058 1622 4 (hb.); ISBN 0 8058 1623 2 (pb.).

The complexities of modern life, and especially the magnitude of organizations and inter-organizational relationships, have created a preoccupation with assessment in many circles. Taxpayers and others who provide funds want to determine whether their money is being well-spent. Administrators who establish policies want to determine the degree to which they are being adhered to at lower echelons and whether they

are producing the results intended. Indexes of success must be formulated to test results in situations which are too vast and complex for face-to-face evaluations.

Communication education is no exception to the "assessment fever" which diverts so much of the potentially constructive energies of large organizations. The editor of this volume feels that, while the demand from above is intense, little has appeared in print which will help communication educators develop effective strategies to measure their success. Accordingly, he has assembled sixteen papers by authorities in the field to make the process both more understandable and more workable.

Clifford, Brian R., Barrie Gunter, and Jill McAleer. *Television and Children: Program Evaluation, Comprehension, and Impact*. Hillsdale, NJ/Hove, UK: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1995. Pp. xii, 251. ISBN 0 8058 1682 8 (hb.); ISBN 0 8058 1683 6 (pb.).

Most of us have mixed feelings about television, recognizing its values but feel perturbed, annoyed, or even frightened by its deficiencies and potential for harm. This ambiguity is heightened when the impact of television on children is considered. The young are eager users of the medium, but they are the least well-equipped by experience to deal with it.

Clifford, Gunter and McAleer present the results of empirical research which they hope will contribute to a more accurate knowledge about "children's ability to understand and learn from television programs" (pg. 1). The research was carried out by the authors and their colleagues from their home bases at the University of East London (Clifford) and the Independent Broadcasting Authority (Gunter and McAleer) in a series of related studies from 1988 through 1990. Subjects were drawn from both primary and secondary schools in an outer London borough with "a wide ethnic and social mix" (pg. 23). The methodology used involved a wide variety of both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Television genres studied included drama, science and quiz programs. The hypotheses and findings are drawn from and weighed against the extensive literature from the many earlier studies in this field.

The conclusions of the research reinforce the view that the fund of experience the viewer brings to TV viewing greatly influences the way he or she will be affected by that viewing. Although informational programs can be valuable sources of information, and are appreciated by children, "as they get older children

develop a low-involvement relationship to such programs" (pg. 216). Older children, with more knowledge, gained more from the "essentially decontextualized items of information" in quiz programs, while less age difference appeared in informational or drama programs, which were more integrated (*ibid.*). Younger children showed greater ability to understand and remember program content than had been anticipated on the basis of earlier studies. They also quickly develop likes and dislikes regarding particular program genres. In short, "the general knowledge that a young viewer brings to the viewing situation is crucial in predicting what he or she will take away from it" (pg. 226).

Crook, Stephen, Jan Pakulski, and Malcolm Waters. *Postmodernization: Change in Advanced Society.* London/
Newbury Park/New Delhi: Sage, 1992. Pp. viii, 264. ISBN 0 8039 8327 1; ISBN 0 8039 8328 X (pb.).

Sociological theories of social change have tended to fall into three patterns, typified by Durkheim's stress on functional differentiation, Marx's view that society is evolving through a period of capitalist commodification of social relationships, and Max Weber's idea that change is characterized by increasing rationalization of relationships. The authors, from their vantage point at the University of Hobart, Tasmania, think that the passing of "modern" society and the advent of "postmodern" society make these three classical perspectives obsolete. The trends of change which they chart can no longer be projected with confidence into the future.

Even Tasmania, remote and conservative though it may be, is feeling the effects of the transition from "modern" society to something new, and equally pervasive and far-reaching. In postmodernization, the processes of modernization continue, but with an increasing scope and intensity which erodes the stability created by the earlier phases of the same processes. The three classical patterns also transcend themselves -- into hyper-differentiation, hyper-rationalization and hyper-commodification -- which, however, look like de-differentiation, de-rationalization and de-commodification. Beyond a certain point, evolution of the processes becomes de-evolution: organization and disorganization going on at the same time. With the paradox of simultaneous hyper-differentiation and monocentric organization, "post-modernizing change becomes multidirectional and

unpredictable." Social boundaries are eroded, and cultural processes have greater effect.

The effects of postmodernization are described in detail for each of six areas of life: culture, state, inequality, politics, work organization, and science and technology. The mass media play an important role in postmodern society. In relation to inequality, for example, classes and other categories fragment, and

..mass media play a crucial role in the simulation of multiple and cross-cutting identities which are situated in equally multiple 'imagined communities' or 'simulated power blocs'. Membership of these is a function of taste, choice and commitment, and the categories are therefore fluid in relation to one another and indeterminate at the boundaries (pg. 222).

Deacon, David, and Peter Golding. *Taxation and Representation: The Media, Political Communication and the Poll Tax.* London/Paris/Rome: John Libbey, 1994. Pp. viii, 216. ISBN 0 86196 390 3 (ISSN 0956 9057) (hb) £18.00.

In 1990, the Conservative government imposed a new tax to finance local government in Britain. The official name of the tax was "Community Charge," but in form it was a poll tax -- a head tax on each person in the community. So it was popularly called "the Poll Tax."

Trouble might have been anticipated, because the last time a British government had tried to impose a poll tax, in the 1370's and 80's, rebellion ensued. The rebels under Wat Tyler captured London and other major cities, and the Archbishop of Canterbury, who had the misfortune of also being the Chancellor of the Exchequer, was beheaded by them on Tower Hill.

This work is not concerned with the pros and cons of the tax, itself, but with the communications which went on about it, both within and outside the mass media. The government made use of all possible media channels to try to convince the nation that the Community Charge would be in the best interests of all, while opponents of the tax were at least equally vigorous in arguing against it.

After briefly reviewing the history of the Community Charge, from its origin in Conservative frustration over what they regarded as the "irresponsible" use of funds by Labor-controlled local councils, through the imposition of the tax with subsequent boycotts and rioting, to a final government backdown and conversion of the Community Charge to a "Council Tax," which was somewhat more palatable to most and

more easily administered.

The authors, a lecturer and professor, respectively, at the University of Loughborough, represent a "political economy" theoretical perspective which is almost necessarily critical of Establishment initiatives. In this case, however, they only reflect the general negativity of the British public towards the tax. Hostility to the Community Charge had spread to "all media sectors by 1990," and was especially strong in the local media, which was closer to the critical protests of the population. However, a more important factor than the media in the demise of the tax may have been dissent within the Conservative Party, itself (pg. 196). Nevertheless, the authors traced a significant covariation of media interest in the issue and public opinion regarding its salience (pg. 194, Fig. 7.1). They recognize that "this suggests the media were of primary significance in setting the public agenda," but they want to avoid "proposing a crude transmission model of media influence" (pg. 195).

In the authors' view, the research suggests several "lessons" about political communication. Clearly communication factors have to be given more attention in explaining policy outcomes. Also, a proper understanding the role of the media in the political process requires going beyond the study of election campaigns to "attend more closely to the 'natural history' of issues in the public domain" (pg. 201). Furthermore, it should be recognized that the advantage of a 'primary definer,' such as, in this case, a government which had "authority, unique access to both information and journalists, and control over timing," can lose that advantage by political vulnerability which erodes ideological credibility. Finally, this case shows that, while the media can select aspects of a debate for emphasis or deemphasis, its influence "is largely dependent upon the degree of coherence in the views of authoritative sources." That is, "the power to create and distribute meaning still resides with centres of material and political power...But this power is exercised dynamically." And, "the citizen is both witness to and participant in that process" (pp. 202-203).

Fensch, Thomas. *The Sports Writing Handbook, Second Edition*. Hillsdale, NJ/Hove, UK: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1995. Pp. xv, 257. ISBN 0 8058 1528 7 (hb.) $49.95; ISBN 0 8058 1529 5 (pb.) $19.95.

When this book was written the jury selection process

for the O. J. Simpson trial was still underway, but, as the author makes clear in the preface, the handwriting already was on the wall saying what that and similar cases presaged for sports writers. The line between "regular" news and sensational aspects of sports news is becoming indistinct. Fensch describes several recent stories in which sports has invaded the general news pages and broadcasts.

These stories and more throughout the country mean that sports writers must compete more and more with radio and TV competitors for the best story of the day. To do that, reporters need to be armed with all the best skills and writing techniques possible (pg. xiv).

Chapters are dedicated to the key features of reporting and writing, starting with interviewing and observing, without which there would be nothing to write. Chapter three deals at length with the next most important component, the "story lead," which must fill many functions including information, education and entertainment, to attract the reader to the story and convince him or her that it is worth reading.

No longer can sportswriters rely on grotesque cliches and "insider" jargon. And no longer is mere description enough. Fans can get the bare facts more quickly from TV sports channels. The sportswriter must supply depth and background to convince the reader that the story has value. Chapter four, "Quick 'n' Dirty guide to Sports Leads," continues with hints on how to find and develop good leads from the raw material of interviews, observations and background.

The remaining chapters discuss outlining, transitions, article structures and the various genres with which the sportswriter might have to deal, as well as some common stylistic errors to be avoided.

Appendixes supply glossaries of both journalistic terms and sports terms.

Fuller, Linda K. *Chocolate Fads, Folklore and Fantasies: 1,000+ Chunks of Chocolate Information*. New York/London /Norwood, Australia: Harrington Park Press (Haworth), 1994. Pp. xvii, 276. ISBN 1 56023 027 4 (pb.) $19.95.

Chocolate, among its many other uses and functions, is a medium of communication. Heavy sales of chocolates around Valentine's Day support their reputation as a way to communicate romantic sentiments. In Japan, a 1984 survey found a well-developed, if recent, custom of girls giving chocolates

to boys on Valentine's Day. Girls with no boyfriends and boys with no girlfriends receive sympathy gifts of chocolate (*dojo-choco*) from parents or other compassionate friends. A third form of Japanese communication is through gifts of chocolate given to male superiors to show loyalty (pg. 186).

Chocolate is a favorite subject for magazine articles. Fuller devotes a four-page appendix (pp. 241-244) to a list of North American magazines which carried feature articles on chocolate in the period from 1979 to 1992.

But this is mainly a book about popular culture, rather than communication. And, as with many pleasant customs, chocolate can have its risks. Early missionaries in the New World warned of the threat, and bishops publicly criticized some Spanish ladies in the colonies of the Western Hemisphere who had gone so far as to have quantities of it carried with them to church, so they could indulge immediately after Mass (pg. 179).

"Chocoholism" is not unknown in contemporary civilization, where Americans eat 3 billion pounds of it per year (100 pounds a second). But they are abstemious compared to the Swiss, whose 22 pound annual per capita consumption more than doubles the mere 10 pounds of the Americans (pg. 179), and the Belgians appear to surpass everyone, at between 23 and 24 pounds per person per year (pg. 145).

The use of chocolate began in the Amazon or Orinoco basins possibly 4,000 years ago, but the Mayans seem to have been the first to grow it on plantations, about 600 AD. The Aztecs believed the god Quetzalcoatl had brought it to them from Paradise. Columbus took some cacao beans to Spain in 1502, but Hernando Cortez was its real European popularizer, inspired by Montezuma, who is said to have drunk "50 jars" of a chocolate drink each day (pg. 168).

This is a book for chocolate-loving browsers; but reading it with too much of the substance within reach is not advised!

Guba, Egon G. (Ed.). *The Paradigm Dialog*. Newbury Park, CA/ London/ New Delhi: Sage, 1990. Pp. 424. ISBN 0 8039 3822 5 (hb.); ISBN 0 8039 3823 3 (pb.).

The editor, a statistician and Professor Emeritus of Education at Indiana University, isolates three major basic belief systems, or paradigms, which have replaced conventional positivism as contenders to be the philosophical underpining for the social and psychological study of pedagogy. The three options are postpositivism, critical theory, and constructivism. All three reject positivism, but "united in what they oppose, they are nevertheless divided, sometimes sharply, on what they espouse" (pg. 9).

All but two of the papers comprising this book formed the backbone of the "Alternate Paradigms Conference," held in San Francisco, March 25th and 26th, 1989, "to clarify the rival alternatives that have emerged" (*ibid.*). The two exceptions are introductory and concluding chapters by the editor.

The conference was structured around eight "issues" each of which was interpreted, in 24 of the chapters, according to each of the three new paradigms. The "issues" were labeled as accommodation, ethics, goodness criteria, implementation, knowledge accumulation, methodology, training, and values.

The introductory chapter sets the stage for the following discussions by succinctly describing the "basic beliefs" of positivism and its three alternatives. For example, in his own characterization of their ontologies, positivism is "realist," both postpositivism and critical theory are "critical realist" in the sense that they hold that reality and natural laws can only be partially understood, and constructivism is relativist, since for it realities exist as socially and experientially based mental constructs. The paradigms also differ in their epistemology and in the methodologies deemed appropriate to them. Guba regards himself as a constructivist, and so sees the aim of the dialog as forming yet another new paradigm, more informed and sophisticated than its predecessors (pg. 27). The contributors who advocate other paradigms disagree with the editor on many points.

The 21 pages of references provide an extensive bibliography on the subject.

Guillet, Paul, p.m.é. (Ed.). *Videos on Religious Themes: International Catalog*. Brussels: OCIC (Rue de l'Orme, 8 - B - 1040 Brussels, Belgium), 1992. Pp. 260. No ISBN. No price.

Guillet, Paul, p.m.é. (Ed.). *Catalogue international de vidéos à thèmes religieux*. Brussels: OCIC, 1991. Pp. 230. No ISBN. No price.

In 1988, OCIC, the International Catholic Organization for Cinema and Audiovisual Media, published a tri-lingual volume, *600 vidéos à thèmes religieux*, containing information about more than 600 religiously-relevant videos for sale by various producers and distributors, in English, French, and

Spanish. That single volume sold out quickly, so the present series of separate volumes in the three languages, was planned almost immediately, intended to supply more information about a much larger number of productions.

Each catalogue contains only videos available in its respective language, 640 in English and 550 in French. Most are by producers who specialize in religious subjects, but the English catalog, in particular, includes some commercial feature films. A uniform format for all entries includes spaces for such information as a synopsis of the plot or description of the contents, year of production, standard (NTSC, PAL or SECAM), form (VHS, Beta, 16 mm., etc.), cost, etc.; although information is often incomplete. In most, or all cases, the address of the producer or distributor is given. Lengths of the productions range from five minutes to mini-series and "Jesus of Nazareth" (6 hours).

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Gunter, Barrie, Jane Sancho-Aldridge and Paul Winstone. *Television: The Public's View 1993*. London/Paris/Rome: John Libbey, 1994. Pp. vi, 114. ISBN: 0 86196 402 0; ISSN 0962 7928 (pb.) £16.00.

Britain's Independent Television Commission (ITC), and before it, the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA), has conducted a survey of public opinion on a wide range of broadcasting-related topics annually since 1970. Each survey has included a series of core questions, from which to build up a set of longitudinal data. This volume reports the findings of the third survey carried out under the auspices of the ITC, since the "Commission" replaced the "Authority," in 1991.

The main survey was carried out through face-to-face interviews with a sample of 1,000 adults from households with television sets in 104 sites throughout the United Kingdom (pg. 111). Topics covered included the ways television, video, etc., are used in the home, viewing habits, and opinions about program quality, impartiality, standards of acceptability, regulation, and preferred sources of news. Responses stating interest in different types of programs showed national news and recent films at the top, closely followed by nature and wildlife programs, local news and international news. Only 22% showed much interest in church services, and only 19% in other programs about religion. Among the satellite/cable respondents, 11% indicated "regret" that they had subscribed, and 13% doubted that they would re-subscribe to the services, but the large majority said they were satisfied (pg. 42).

Respondents gave a heavy preference to television over newspapers and radio as a source of national and international news. TV news was perceived as most complete, accurate, quick, and clear by more than 75%, and most fair by 72% (pg. 60). Television also was given high "impartiality" ratings by the respondents. Almost ¾ths said the medium's news and current affairs programs are impartial to religious groups, but significant bias was alleged against single parents (29% said "biased against"), the unemployed, ordinary workers, and police (19%) (pg. 71). Those surveyed objected more to bad language in programs than they did to violence and sex/nudity (pg. 88). Most felt the degree of regulation on British television, both terrestrial and satellite/cable, was "about right" (pg. 104).

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Hargrave, Andrea Millwood. *Radio and Audience Attitudes: Annual Review 1994* (Broadcasting Standards Council Public Opinion and Broadcasting Standards - 5). London/Paris/ Rome: John Libbey, 1994. Pp. viii, 104. ISSN 0960-3999; ISBN 0 86196 481 0 (pb.) £12.50.

The Annual Research Reviews of the British Broadcasting Standards Council (BSC) give detailed treatment to a selected topic each year. The "powerful present and.. bright future" manifested by radio in the 1990's made it an appropriate topic for the 1994 Review (pg. vii).

Three sections present (1) findings on attitudes towards radio from research in England undertaken by MORI Ltd. for this issue of the Review; (2) six essays by informed observers and radio professionals; and (3) data on trends in audience attitudes towards "issues within the BSC remit" -- violence, sex, bad language, etc. This is the fourth year in which the data on trends in section three have been collected and reported by the BSC.

The survey findings showed a more positive attitude towards radio than towards television. Radio content was not regarded by the respondents as a major danger to children, largely because they used it mostly for background music. Listening to speech-based radio was seen as a "luxury" which requires intensive application of attention and would, consequently, have a greater impact on its audience than music. In such cases it was seen as "'live' programming.. that created a level of excitement which was not present in television" (pg. 28).

Sue Stoessl, Head of Broadcasting Research Services

at the BBC, notes, in her essay on "Children and Radio," that radio no longer is a "natural medium" for children, as it was before TV and in television's early days, when one young boy had "said that he preferred radio because the pictures were better" (pg. 46).

Over the four years of the study of trends, the percentages of respondents concerned about violence, sex and bad language have remained more or less constant. Much more concern was expressed about violence on television than about sex, and significantly more about bad language than about sex.

Husband, Charles (ed.). *A Richer Vision: The Development of Ethnic Minority Media in Western Democracies.* Paris and London/Paris/Rome: UNESCO and John Libbey, 1994. Pp. x, 149. ISBN: 0 86196 450 0 (Libbey; pb.) £18.00; UNESCO ISBN: 92 3 102941 X.

In the introduction, Husband considers "ethnicity and media democratization within the nation state" from a critical perspective. The six chapters analyze the access of ethnic minorities to media roles and their involvement in the media in, respectively, the United States, the Netherlands, Australia, France, Norway, and the United Kingdom.

Successes are acknowledged, but the emphasis of the book is on inadequacies in media power structures which effectively continue to marginalize minority groups. Minority employees characteristically occupy lower paying and lower status positions, but opportunities for advancement differ widely, even among the six countries studied.

In the United States, movement of minorities into the mainstream media is slow and the positions they occupy tend to be more visible than powerful -- minority performers are abundant, producers much less so. Change is heavily dependent on the perceived economic potential of particular minorities -- resulting in rapid growth of Japanese- and Korean-oriented media and the much slower development of African-American controlled media.

Initiatives to provide ethnic minority media in the Netherlands have been short-range and generally ineffective, according to L. M. Bovenkerk-Teerink, the author of the chapter on that country.

By the 1980's, Australia had begun to embrace cultural pluralism and to welcome immigrants from Asian nations. Ethnic media are relatively well-developed, but discrimination persists, according to author Matt Ngui.

France has had both a strong sense of cultural superiority and a large minority population, whose chief access to media expression is their own minority media with its limited audience.

Norway rigorously controls immigration, especially from the Third World, and only 3.4% of its population are foreign citizens -- mostly European or North American -- according to S. I. Ananthakrishnan. He regards local radio as one means by which the need of minorities for media expression might be partially satisfied.

Ali Hussein notes that xenophobia is resurgent in Britain, as in other European countries. "Black" is defined, for the British context, as "diverse ethnicities who experience a common context of struggle in the face of their experience of White British racism" (pp. 130-131). After a difficult struggle, "Black" film and video production has established a stable, albeit marginal position in the British media industry.

McDermott, Patrice. *Politics and Scholarship: Feminist Academic Journals and the Production of Knowledge.* Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994. Pp. ix, 198. ISBN 0 252 02078 2 (hb.) $36.95; ISBN 0 252 06369 4 (pb.) $13.95.

In seeking both legitimation for their relatively new academic orientation and forums in which their views can be expressed and they can meet the publication requirements for academic advancement, feminist scholars have created several new journals during the past 25 years. The author concentrates on three of those journals in an effort to study the interaction between the demands of scholarship and of political action on the academic side of the feminist movement. The journals -- *Signs: A Journal of Women in Culture and Society, Feminist Studies,* and *Frontiers: A Journal of Women's Studies* -- are based at universities (Chicago, Maryland, and Colorado, respectively) and fit the criteria of "academic" publications current in contemporary America (pg. 2).

Despite the "patriarchal" character of the university, feminist scholars not only have been able to use university publishing infrastructures to develop their own journals but also, McDermott believes, university sponsorship "has enabled feminists to sustain the development of critical theories that have done much to reorient traditional scholarship" (pg. 7). "Their journals use the interpretive authority conferred by their participation in the univesity to legitimate feminist knowledge through rationalist codes" (pg. 145).

The problem of integrating the political with the scholarly is as difficult to solve in the feminist journals as in publications on other strongly "activist" social themes. For example, both *Feminist Studies* and *Signs* employ the "symposium" form on a regular basis, but some find it uncomfortably "confrontational" (pg. 141).

The political and academic sides of feminism remain linked, and the author feels that the establishment of "an authoritative and autonomous study of women in contemporary American society" has "helped create 'an oppositional public arena' for articulation of women's needs and critical opposition to male-defined society, not from the margins but from the heart of dominant sanctioned discourse" (pg. 183).

Ossman, Susan. *Picturing Casablanca: Portraits of Power in a Modern City.* Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 1994. Pp. x, 246. ISBN 0 520 08402 0 (hb.) $40.00; ISBN 0 520 08403 9 (pb.) $15.00.

This is an ethnography of the city of Casablanca, focussed on the role the picture, in its many forms has played in the city's development. In the period before the French Protectorate, the Islamic aversion to reproduction of human likenesses had limited the development of representative art. Performance art, too, was limited to family and village story-telling. Consequently, the coming of the French meant a nearly simultaneous introduction of "pictures" on a broad front -- painting, photography, theater, magazines, and, very soon, the cinema. These innovations brought with them European conventions of framing, as well as of representation. Rectangular limits began to replace the situationally determined limits of traditional decoration or calligraphy.

Louis Lumière produced the first film made in Morocco, *Le chevrier marocain,* in 1895 (pg. 7). At the end of the Second World War, both the French Protectorate government and its critics perceived the dominance of Egyptian films in Morocco as "dangerous", and the Centre Cinématographique Marocain was established to encourage domestic film production (pg. 9).

Television followed, and now in Casablanca's homes, walled and with no windows on the streets, "television is the only intruder of interior spaces" (legend under plate no. 8).

Conflicts with Islamic morality multiply, especially as rooftop dishes proliferate to pick up European direct satellite broadcasts. Islam enters the scene, sometimes abruptly, as muezzins' calls to prayer are cut sharply and incongruously into the middle of secular programming (pg. 104). Ambiguity abounds as secularizing tendencies go on under the surface life of one of the world's most fully Muslim societies. Within Islam, itself, a dialogue continues between Sufi mysticism and Salafite reformism (pp. 9-10).

The many modes of picturing in Casablanca interact with the power structures of Moroccan society. The ever-present portrait of the king is only the most ubiquitous of diverse examples. Such symbols may sometimes be only façades, veiling real power relationships, but Ossman feels that they often become active participants in world events (pg. 183). In this role they can become the nuclei or frames of references for differing views of the world. The different ways in which Moroccans met the dilemmas posed for them, as Muslims and Arabs, by the Gulf War illustrate the ways conflicting frames of reference can manifest themselves within one society and even in single individuals (pg. 188).

Reeves, Geoffrey. *Communications and the 'Third World.'* (Studies in Culture and Communication series). London/New York: Routledge, 1993. Pp. xiv, 277. ISBN 0 415 04761 7 (hb.) £37.50; ISBN 0 415 04762 5 (pb.) £12.99.

Reeves has written a comprehensive outline of the situation of developing countries vis-a-vis the electronic media revolution, both in respect to the mass media and telecommunications. The book's intellectual milieu is that of British critical-cultural and political economy theories. The problems highlighted by those theoretical positions are discussed, but a wide range of other approaches are given equal consideration.

An Introduction includes this theoretical context, as well as statistical comparisons of various media in representative countries. Developments affecting the "media imperialism" thesis and the "New International Information Order" (NIIO or NWICO) since the MacBride Report (*Many Voices, One World,* 1980) receive thoughtful and nuanced treatment. Individual chapters are devoted to data, advertising, news, fictions, "sounds", and to folk and alternative media.

The author emphasizes the wide variety of conditions among the so-called "Third World" countries which often make them more different from each other than some of them are from the long-industrialized countries. Those differences affect their communication industries and telecommunications policies, as well as

other institutions. Domestic factors interact with international influences to give each country a unique blend of communication systems with its own set of attendant problems and possibilities. Reeves therefore feels that "Third World" is not a useful concept for understanding the world communication picture.

Tambling, Jeremy (Ed.). *A Night In at the Opera: Media Representations of Opera*. London: John Libbey, 1994. Pp. iii, 310. ISBN 0 86196 466 7 (pb.) £17.50.

The contributors to this volume, sponsored by the Arts Council of England, range through the whole field of what the three visual electronic media -- cinema, television and video -- have done, do, and might do with opera. Both traditional grand opera -- Verdi, Mozart, Wagner, etc. -- and operas commissioned for television in the USA and UK are discussed.

Lawrence Kramer's contribution (pp. 253-265) analyzes the film which, in the words of Will Bell in the Preface (pg. ii), "says it all about opera": the Marx Brothers' comedy, *A Night at the Opera*. The movie plays on the absurdity of most operatic plots -- in this case, *Il trovatore* -- using that absurdity to advance the film's own comic ends while providing substantial slices of music in the process. The author finds many subtle ideological and sexual meanings in the movie, some of which -- though not all -- might surprise both Verdi and the Marx Brothers.

Ping-Hui Liao's reflections on the proposed production of Puccini's *Turandot* in Beijing highlight another dimension of grand opera, "the exclusionary mechanisms of the opera in the international public sphere" (pg. 303). Recent efforts, such as Zeferelli's 1992 production of *Turandot* in New York, have tried to internationalize and postmodernize opera, and internationally televised operas often "presume a homogeneous contemporaneity in terms of which dis-junctures and differences are made subservient and hence subject to, rather than becoming the subject of, the global cultural economy" (*ibid.*). But the origins and composers' intentions of many operas make them resistant to such internationalization -- Verdi and Wagner being noteworthy examples. Liao notes that audiences receive such productions in diverse ways, with ambivalent, rather than homogeneous results.

Apart from a select bibliography, at the end, bibliographies and filmologies are left to individual chapters.

Watson, Graham, and Robert M. Seiler (Eds.). *Text in Context: Contributions to Ethnomethodology*. Newbury Park, CA/London/New Delhi: Sage, 1992. Pp. xxvi, 225. ISBN 0 8039 4253 2 (hb.) £33.50; ISBN 0 8039 4254 0 (pb.) £16.95.
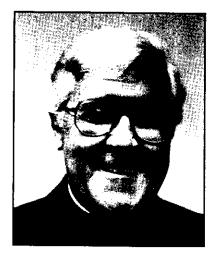
Discourse analysis tries to understand language use in everyday life. The contributors of the papers in this volume had met with around a hundred similarly-minded scholars in Calgary, Alberta, August 23-26 1989, to discuss this dimension of human communication. The wide interest already generated in the topic by that time is suggested by the representation of 42 institutions in Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom at this First International Conference of the Discourse Analysis Research Group.

Many behavioral disciplines converge in discourse analysis, and University of Manchester Sociologist Rodney Watson suggests that no real common ground can be found among them, and that to search for it or for some overarching theory would be to contradict the basic premises of ethnomethodology. Instead, the basis for discussion should be procedural, "established by the members' practical purposes rather than simply being generically problematic at the analytic level" (pg. 18).

As if in response to this warning, or invitation, the papers range widely. One is autobiographical, answering the question, "Who am I as ethnologist?" Another aims at "respecifying Newton's and Goethe's Theories of Prismatic Color." Another is devoted to "mishearings." Others deal with openings in telephone calls to centralized emergency service numbers, extended sequences, collaborative computer editing, psychiatric records, references to deviance in referral talk, and an article by Harold Garfinkel, one of the shapers of ethnomethodology, and D. Lawrence Wieder on "Two Incommensurable, Asymmetrically Alternate Technologies of Social Analysis." The latter article is concerned with the differences between classic analytical approaches and the approach of ethnomethodology.

New Director of the Centre for the Study of Communication and Culture

Rev. Paul J. Duffy, S.J., has been appointed Executive Director of the Centre for the Study of Communication and Culture and, ex officio, Publisher of *Communication Research Trends*. Father Duffy is Australian and a member of the Australian Province of the Society of Jesus, which he headed as Provincial Superior from 1979 to 1985.

He comes to the CSCC with a strong background in the social sciences and communications work. Trained as a political scientist and sociologist with extensive studies in philosophy and theology, he has worked in television, radio, and the print media. He holds a B.A. and M.A. (first class honors) from the University of Melbourne and has taught political science at the Universities of Melbourne and Sydney. Since 1989, he has been teaching at the United Faculty of Theology, Melbourne.

In 1986-87 Father Duffy carried out an extensive survey of the Australian Catholic Church's communication activities, a "National Enquiry into the Church's Communication Apostolate." He is the author of two books, *To Bring the Good News: Evangelization and Communications* (1987) and *Word of Life in Media and Gospel* (1991), and has co-authored, with Clive H. Porter, a forthcoming book, *Working with Wisdom*, on leadership in the workplace.

Two periods of research at the CSCC have given Father Duffy experience with its work. In 1985 he spent four months, August to December, at the Centre, then located in London. After the CSCC's move to Saint Louis, he again used its resources during a ten week visit, August to October, 1994.

We, at the CSCC, welcome Father Duffy's appointment. He brings to the job a sympathetic understanding of the international focus of the Centre and the goals it was established to attain, as well as of the methods it has evolved over the past eighteen years to attain them. These, of course, include *Communication Research Trends*.

This journal will continue bringing you information about research developments, as it has in the past. The only changes we foresee will be improvements occasioned by the Editor's newly-acquired freedom from the burdens of the Acting Directorship of the Centre and his consequent ability to devote more attention to *Trends*, its quality of content and its timeliness of publication.

-- Brother William E. Biernatzki, S.J.
Editor