

Proper Basis For Business

The flood of studies on violence is rising. Commissions, conferences, findings of psychology, journals and newspapers are making their contribution to the current discussion on the place of violence in society. Some claim that violence in the media has no particular influence on the behaviour pattern of society; others say that this is not so.

One argument is that the mass media only report on what is happening within society. They mirror behaviour but do not shape it. This last argument is groundless. Television, which plays such an important role in the lives of so many, has many violent programs. Murders, beatings and other antisocial activities are regular fare. Programs on commercial television are generally mediocre, many are not even that. No civilization in history has so openly displayed its moral shallowness, its alienated spirit and poverty of public conscience as ours, despite its excellence in technological and scientific achievements. TV prime time is projected mainly for commercial reward, networks reflect no real values.

In the present climate of secular humanism all questions of moral absolutes are avoided. The hunger for profits decides what type of program should be produced. Apparently all that it takes to sell a product regardless its merits is repetition.

The *Wall Street Journal* told about a test made by DuPont. Researchers showed 127 women slides of landscapes interspersed with occasional nonsense syllables such as "Bit" or "Gah." Then the women were told to take a free pair of stockings from boxes labeled with the syllable they had seen. Twice as many chose from the box marked with the nonsense syllable they had seen most often. The violence seen on TV influences the viewers.

They are being influenced in their conduct by repetition of violence seen on programs as well as in their purchasing habits. Corporations are eager to get prime time for the advertising of their products. Advertising pays; and we are paying for these ads and TV programs through the increased cost of the products. Sidney Margolius, in his book *The Innocent Consumer Vs. The Exploiters*, says: "The intense commercialization of television today has proved to be one of the most powerful forces raising the prices of many of the things you buy. If there is no such thing as a free lunch, there also is no free TV entertainment." The overall goal of television has been put forth very bluntly by Les Brown, head of the U.S. Variety's TV and radio section: "Programs come into being to attract an audience. Not to feed their minds, or to elevate them morally or spiritually but to deliver them to the advertiser..."

Many studies on the rise of violence show the cause and effect of violence on TV. At a meeting of the American Psychiatric Association, over 80 per cent of these present agreed with the statement that "when the environment tolerates violence, violent

behavior is apt to happen." In France, Interior Minister Michel Poniatowski said: "Whether fiction or not, one fact seems certain: Television contributes to violence." Television does mold minds. North York (Toronto) Board of Education recently conducted a survey among 630 students and found 15 per cent of them watched eight hours of television a day and 50 per cent of them unrestricted by the parents on their choice of programs. Violence is being taught and many are naively appalled at the success of the instruction. TV ignores its sense of responsibility to the public which pays for its entertainment. It aids the anti civilizing trend of today.

Justification of violence is never legitimate. One human life, seen before God, is priceless. We must return to the roots of order, to the perception of a purposeful moral existence under the living God. One of the perils of our times is that our Western civilization is being cut off from its Christian roots. But the greatest commandment still is: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." (Matt.22:37-40)

The worship of the Almighty God and not the "almighty dollar" should be the basis for business. Camus wrote: "We all carry within us our places of exile our crimes our ravages. But our task is not to unleash them on the world; it is to fight them in ourselves and in others."

TV should not run away from its responsibilities. For the good of the nation the TV enterprise should put curbs on its greed and be courageous enough not to broadcast programs which encourage violent behaviour. Unworthy programming is an unsatisfactory course for the TV industry to take.

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