

**The General President of the Wesleyan Methodist
Church Writes on . . .
THE TELEVISION CONTROVERSY**

Dr. Roy S. Nicholson

The question of the proper attitude toward television has provoked an unpleasant controversy among some Christians. Television's phenomenal growth has been astonishing, and yet its possibilities have not been fathomed fully. Its "entertainment" phase amounts to only 15 percent of the industry, authorities report; however, 99 percent of the controversy centers about that 15 percent. That television can be harmful none will deny. That it also may do good some will admit. It appears beyond question that television is now permanently established as a medium of communication. Therefore the Christian's concern is of more than passing interest.

Some seem to consider television as having only the potential to do harm. They have condemned it without any exceptions or modifications. That position assumes that television is an unmixed evil, a device of Satan. Such a position tends to raise questions in many minds concerning the accuracy and fairness of their judgment on other matters in which these people say they speak with authority. For example, some owners of television sets do not view, or permit others to view, programs which involve scenes of improper conduct, immodest exposure of the person, improper poses of the body, prize fights, the so-called "soap operas", etc. Their use of television is restricted to that which is educational, cultural and mentally and morally constructive. To deny that phase of television's possibilities is to be unrealistic.

What we urgently need is to cultivate a correct attitude which governs the Christian's use of television. The indiscriminate viewing of "everything on television" is as censurable as the indiscriminate reading of every magazine or book, or looking at every cartoon or picture printed. Some radio programs also are unfit for a Christian's ears. Anything unfit to hear is unfit to see. Therefore, we need to create a moral "conscience" which produces genuine convictions as to what one will see, hear, read, or discuss, whether he is at home or visiting in a neighbor's home. To adhere kindly to one's convictions is an effective witness which the Spirit may use in His dealings with another about such matters.

Before any Christian acquires a television set, some principles of Christian stewardship deserve his careful and prayerful attention: (1) Can he afford to make the financial investment? Will such a purchase embarrass him financially, restricting his support of Christ's cause? This IS a vital, but often overlooked, point! (2) If he can afford the investment, are sufficient programs of the character he may view with a clear conscience available in his area to justify his investing in a television set? (3) If the investment is justifiable, does he have the time to spare for viewing proper programs of interest without interfering with the cultivation of his private devotional and spiritual life? This, too, is an item which has been neglected to the detriment of many souls.

There is a further consideration which obligates both parties to this controversy to display Christian charity: Will one's ownership of a television set create a spirit of division and controversy which will cripple his Christian influence? Immediately some will vehemently affirm that it will. Others, who feel that those taking that position desire to boast over compelling submission to their ruling, may dispute the affirmation and, insisting upon personal liberty, react in a manner that is also hurtful. Owners of television sets and opponents of television—especially those professing holiness—must manifest the spirit Paul advocated in I Corinthians 13 and Romans 4, and beware

lest the attitude taken toward the other does not prove destructive to both (Galatians 5: 14).

Above all, the most important thing is for each one to know God's will as to the details of his daily living. The Holy Spirit will make that clear as one seeks earnestly to know God's will. If our brothers and sisters do not please us exactly in some points not essential to salvation, let us not criticize them, but love and pray for them.

Wesleyan Methodist.

BEGIN THE DAY WITH GOD

Every day should be commenced with God, and upon the knees. He begins the day unwisely who leaves his room without a secret conference with his Heavenly Father. The true Christian goes to his closet both for his panoply and his rations for the day's march and its inevitable conflicts. As the Oriental traveler sets out for the sultry journey by loading up his camel under the shade of the palm tree, and by filling his flagons from the cool fountain that sparkles at its roots, so does God's wayfarer draw his fresh supplies from the inexhaustible Spring.

Morning is the golden time for devotion. The mercies of the night provoke to thankfulness. The buoyant heart that is in love with God makes its earliest flight, like the lark, toward the gates of heaven: Gratitude, faith, dependent trust, all prompt to early interviews with him who, never himself slumbering, waits on his throne for our morning orisons.

We remember Bunyan's beautiful description of his Pilgrim's lodging overnight in the "Chamber of Peace," which looked toward the sunrising, and at daybreak he awoke and sang. If stony Egyptian "Memmon" made music when the first rays kindled on his flinty brow, a devout heart should not be silent when God causes the outgoings of his mornings to rejoice. No pressure of business or household duties should crowd out our prayer.

—Theodore L. Guylor.

CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST . . . from Page One

pulsations of a new and blissful life be felt through every fibre and atom of the being. It is not the old life that rises, but a new life is breathed forth by the Holy Ghost. "I am crucified with Christ, it is no longer I that live, but Christ that liveth in me." (R.V. Am. Committee). "Dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ."

He who enjoys this repose is brought so intimately into sympathy with Jesus Christ that he is all aflame with zeal, and aroused to the utmost activity to save lost men. As a venerable preacher, widely known, quaintly expressed it, "I enjoy the rest of faith that keeps me in perpetual motion."

MISSIONARY VISION

Lord God of Hosts! Open Thy people's eyes
That they may see earth's whitened harvest field
Widespread. May note the precious grain that lies
Unreaped. Open! that they may see the promised yield
Perish because no sickles touch the grain,
Making Thy Son's great sacrifice in vain.

Lord God of Hosts! Call forth our young and strong
Into Thy harvest field where die the lost
In sin's black night of fear and hate and wrong.
Lord! call them forth to toil at any cost
To Self and gain and home and life;
Baptize them for earth's final strife.

—From "Heart and Hand"

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EDITORIALS

THE CHALLENGE ACCEPTED

Rev. and Mrs. Glendon Kierstead sailed for Africa in August . . . Lic. Reginald Kierstead sailed for Africa in October . . . Miss Uta Chase is tentatively scheduled to sail for Africa early in '58 . . . Rev. and Mrs. Karl Gorman are likewise tentatively scheduled to sail for Africa in the Spring of '58 . . .

These announcements bespeak the rapidly expanding foreign missionary programme of our Church. A 50% increase in our staff of missionaries in one year! Salary increases, building of new churches, purchase of property, erection of a medical clinic, raising funds for passages, etc., these and other expenses related to our missionary work lay very heavy financial demands upon us.

How can we meet, and continue to accept, the challenge of an expanding missionary programme? By catching the vision of the importance of this work, and giving sacrificially that the needed financial resources may be provided. And both these things are happening in our churches and among our people.

Individuals are feeling the challenge of the missionary work and are giving generous sums, \$100.00, \$500.00, \$1,000. Some are making provisions in their wills for bequests to missionary endeavour. Some plan to leave properties to be sold as a means of financing missionary projects.

Another significant trend in our churches, is that of requests for permission to assure full responsibility for missionaries and their support. Already such permission has been granted to some churches and others are making application. One church decided to undertake support of one missionary, with the hope of asking permission to support both the man and his wife, and after the first year, the missionary giving of the church increased so much, that request was made to send the couple to the field and support them. And at Sandford, N. S. the challenge to undertake support of a missionary was accepted with the people pledging more than \$900.00.

So the challenge, though very great, is being accepted. It is ever enlarging, so we pray that our faith and vision may keep pace. Other churches would do well to consider support of a missionary or missionaries. It is amazing how God honours the venturing of a missionary church!

CHRISTMAS IS COSTLY!

We are once more in the Christmas month of our calendar year. And what a wonderful month it is! Songs honouring the Saviour's birth fill the air, the spirit of goodwill permeates the atmosphere of our communities, and we are filled with thoughts and plans of what we may do to make others happy.

Few people can really afford what is involved in the Christmas celebrations. Meeting the current expenses is a problem with most and there is usually "too much month at the end of the pay". Purchasing gifts, food, fruit, etc., for the Yuletide calls for sacrifice, and sometimes we must work hard and plan carefully for weeks following the season in order to balance the budget.

And a genuine Christmas celebration will always be costly. To have those things which make for an exciting, heart-warming season will surely mean that we spend more than we can afford to. It is the desire to do more than the budget will allow for that belongs to the spirit of Christmas. Discretion should be exercised, but love will have the last word.

The first Christmas was very costly. The gift of God was painfully expensive. He could not "afford" to give as He did, but He gave just the same. Reason said "it is too much", but love's urge prevailed. For the redemption and happiness of a fallen creation, God would give extravagantly, and He did. Just one thing he desired—that the Gift offered be accepted, and the blessings purchased be enjoyed. And that is the spirit of Christmas.

If you have a real Christmas this year, a truly "Merry Christmas", it will be costly. The kind you can afford will hardly be good enough. And the peculiar joy the heart knows in giving that others may be blessed, will more than compensate for any sacrifice involved!

"MEN AFLAME"

The dearth of "men aflame" in the pulpit is the sure sign of evangelical decay, says Dr. Ravenhill, a British evangelist. The doctor has no quarrel with learning but he is violently opposed to barrenness. He contends that when a preacher can preach without burning himself out, he is through. This is abundantly proven by the short span of life of the preachers of early Christianity. Few of them lived beyond forty. Said a fellow pastor of his dead comrade, in writing his obituary: "His very vitals went into his ministry. Only the great Physician restored him after the almost complete exhaustion that followed his message to his people." We are told that Whitfield was often carried on a stretcher or improvised couch from place to place, while he preached. Bishop Asbury so burned himself out with his sermons and exhortations that he had to be lifted on his horse at times, as he rode on to the next appointment. Today the ordinary preachers is the best risk of the insurance companies. What does it mean? —Selected

HOLLYWOOD'S BEST

Hollywood recently conducted its annual "academy award", to announce those judged as the best in their industry. It was no surprise to anyone that an adulteress was selected as their very best actress. The **Detroit Times** expressed it, "Ingrid Bergman, who fled to Europe to escape the moral indignation of America movie-goers, was accepted back today with open arms as the 1956 academy award winner for best actress." This is the same actress who, seven or eight years ago, bore a son for Italian movie director Roberto Rossellini while still married to Dr. Peter Lindstrom, an American surgeon. She did not