

Prophetic Observer

Go, set a watchman,
let him declare what
he seeth
Isa. 21:6



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Keeping Time On God's Prophetic Clock

L-772



United States

"The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night" (2 Pet. 3:10)

Megamedia: The Ominous Concentration of Media Control

Headline from Broadcasting Magazine (August 7, 1995): **The Dawning of Megamedia: Broadcasting's \$25 Billion Week - Disney buys Capcities/ABC for 18.5 billion, Westinghouse buys CBS for 5.4 billion, House passes deregulatory telcom bill but raises ownership limits and endorses V-chip.**

Local and national newspapers and news magazines trumpeted the news - the largest media mergers in history were taking place. In just two days (July 31 and August 1), both ABC and CBS networks were sold to new owners and the term "megamedia" came into reality.

According to press reports, this fast pace was not simply a week that was, but was a week that will foreshadow the future of all of telecommunications, including the broadcast media. Broadcasting Magazine, the influential trade magazine, called it the start of the "Megamedia Age".

The mergers were occurring on the business side of the media structure while the Congress of the United States was changing the media structure itself. What importance does this have in the prophetic chain of events? This is one more step toward the soon return of Jesus Christ as the preparations are being made for the takeover of humankind by the one-world ruler, the Anti-Christ. Let us take a look at the two major mergers and the new federal rules for com-

munications.

The company that was supposedly built on family values, the Walt Disney Company, is a major player in the entertainment industry worldwide. Under the direction of Michael Eisner, Disney has attempted to broaden its audience appeal to its movies by adding gay themes, violence, nudity, sex, profanity, the occult, and other sinful portrayals. While the Disney image has been partially retained as wholesome (if one ignores the rock music, historical inaccuracies of story-lines, occultic themes, feminism, animal rights, etc. found in the Disney fare), the Walt Disney Company has achieved other images in other divisions of the huge company. Already controlled by Eisner and Disney are Touchstone, Miramax, and Hollywood film companies; Hollywood Records; the Disney Channel; KCAL-TV in Los Angeles; Walt Disney and Touchstone Television; Buena Vista Home Video International; and Disney Interactive. The Walt Disney Company also owns Disneyland, Walt Disney World, and part of Tokyo Disneyland and Disneyland Paris. All of this along with the Disney Store, Walt Disney Records, Walt Disney Publishing, the Mighty Ducks National Hockey League team, the Disney On Ice Shows and partial ownership of the California Angels baseball team, and a new video dial-tone programming and delivery company

were the empire before the purchase of Capcities/ABC.

Now to have some idea of the impact of this merger, look at the elements of the media that ABC brings with its acquisition: ABC TV network and 10 of the most watched television stations in the United States, the ABC Radio Networks and 21 of this nation's most-listened to radio stations, controlling interest in ESPN and ESPN2 sports cable TV networks, a partial ownership of A&E Television Network and Lifetime Television, Fairchild Publications and Magazines, many weekly newspapers, and daily newspapers including the Fort Worth Star-Telegram and the Kansas City Star. Turning our attention to CBS and Westinghouse, Westinghouse hopes to purchase CBS, depending on a possible challenge by Ted Turner to outbid Westinghouse. Compared to the Disney/ABC merger this takeover looks small, but in reality has great impact since one of the big three television networks is being taken over. Westinghouse has been a quiet player in the media game since the start of broadcasting in the United States. It has a number of divisions including Electronic Systems, Power Generation, Thermo King, the Knoll (office furniture) group, and Government and Environmental Services. Westinghouse also has Westinghouse Broadcasting or Group W, which owns 8 television sta-



tions, Group W productions, Westinghouse Broadcasting International, 18 radio stations, Group W Videoservices, and Group W Satellite Communications.

CBS brings with it the CBS Broadcast Network, 7 television stations, CBS Entertainment Productions, CBS Enterprises, CBS Video, CBS Broadcasting International, CBS Newspath news service, CBS Radio Networks, 21 radio stations, CBS Books, and partial ownership of Fox Home Videos and the Family Channel.

These lists are lengthy and do not include (by name) various subsidiary organizations that are marketing to small groups, such as Christians. Also there are joint ventures with various groups and companies that are not in the listing. Imagine how complicated the CBS merger would look if Ted Turner and his companies get involved and manage to pull off a buy-out.

On the regulatory side of the broadcasting and communication busi-

ness, the U.S. Congress was busy changing the face of the industry. The Senate has passed a new telecommunications bill that has some differences with the House bill. Here are some of the provisions of the new House-passed measure: any one company or person may own as many radio stations as they wish and as many television stations that cover up to 35% of all U.S. homes while permitting multiple stations to be owned in the same market and permitting ownership of cable, telephone, wireless cable, or newspaper with the TV and radio; extends TV license to 7 years and radio license to 10 years; allows telephone companies to own cable TV systems and cable TV systems to own telephone companies, opens all communication ownership to all foreigners. This legislation would also require all manufacturers of television sets to install a "V-chip" to control the violent programming which must be rated as such by the program producer.

Both these mergers and the new

federal legislation are a continuation of the trend that we have seen for the past few years, allowing for a greater concentration of media, and power, in the hands of fewer people. The new federal regulations will allow an even greater concentration of media power than ever before. They will also allow a non-U.S. citizen to form public sentiment and U.S. policy by manipulation of the media. With the power to persuade in the hands of a few, or of one, think of the impact upon the lives of those under that influence. Considering the diluted power that has already corrupted the media, think of the future with an undiluted media power in the hands of one that hates good and loves evil.

These activities in the media are just one more sure sign of the soon rise of the man of sin and the even sooner coming of the Lord Jesus Christ! Are you ready for Christ's return? Jesus Christ is coming soon!

—Kenneth C. Hill

Will the Gospel be Censored?

Is Congress subtly inching closer to silence the message of Jesus Christ? On October 28, 1993, President Clinton signed into effect Public Law 103-123, the Treasury, Postal Service, and General Government Appropriations Act for 1994.

This law contains The Revenue Forgone Reform Act, Title VII, which amended 39U.S.C. 3626. These amendments add further restrictions to items mailed at non-profit third-class postage rates.

A summation of this law was given in the Friday, May 5, 1995 edition of the Federal Register:

The 1993 amendments established new content-based restrictions on

matter eligible for special bulk third-class rates. In order for material that advertises, promotes, offers, or, for a fee or consideration, recommends, describes, or announces the availability of any product or service (other than insurance, travel, or financial instruments, which were the subject of restrictions in previous legislation and rule-making) to qualify for mailing at the special bulk third-class rates, the sale of the product or the service *must be substantially related to* the exercise or performance by the organization of one or more of the purposes constituting the basis for the organi-

zations authorization to mail at such rates . . . [and] the Postal Service views its role as the *administrator* of these laws.

In 1994, this law was amended yet again. The amendment allows an exception for advertisements in printed materials that meet the content requirements for periodical publications as prescribed by the postal service.

In a recent postal seminar held by The National Federation of Nonprofits in Dallas, Texas, a temperance lecture was given by an attorney for the association. The speaker's concerns were that if non-profit mailers simply create periodical look-a-likes, that they would all be attending another meeting to dis-



cuss the 1996 amendments.

"For whom was this 1994 amendment intended?" seems to be the question. According to local postal authorities the vast majority of authorized non-profit mailers are categorized "Religious." Churches and ministries operate on limited budgets supplied by donations from its congregation or constituency. The remainder of the non-profit organizations generally operate with funds comprised of revenue from the private sector and government grants. Was pressure applied by lobbyists from these large non-profit corporations and organizations (e.g. universities, museums, Public Interest Groups, etc.)? The question is valid in that, from a strictly economic viewpoint the effects of governmental regulation are felt more strongly by those at the lower end of the economic ladder.

Substantially Related

The entire scope of this legislation rests upon this vague, elusive phrase "substantially related." The origin of this terminology can be found in the Internal Revenue Code, Section 513(a):

The term "unrelated trade or business" means . . . any trade or business the conduct of which is not *substantially related* (aside from the need of such organization for income or funds or the use it makes of the profits derived) to the exercise or performance by such organization of its charitable, educational, or other purpose or function constituting the basis for its exemption under section 501 . . .

Another reference is contained in the Income Tax Regulation, Section 1.513-1(d)(2):

1. A trade or business is related to an exempt purpose only if the activity has a *causal relationship* to the achievement of the exempt purpose, and

2. For the conduct of trade or business from which a particular amount of gross income is derived to be substantially related to purposes for which exemption is granted, the production or distribution of the goods or the performance of the services from which the gross income is derived must *contribute importantly* to the accomplishment of those purposes.

In its role to police advertisements in non-profit mailings, the Postal Service has added sections in the Domestic Mail Manual 5.6(a), in an effort to define "substantially related advertising." U.S. Postal Publication 417(D-2) states guidelines for what is and what isn't "substantially related" to churches and other religious organizations:

Generally Substantially Related

These are generally considered substantially related:

- ♦Books, magazines, pamphlets, papers, or tracts about:
 - Church teachings or philosophy.
 - Lives of prominent church leaders.
 - Family life consistent with church concepts.
- ♦Religious items . . .
- ♦Religious broadcasts and television programs.

Borderline—Key Factors

These items generally require analysis of key factors:

- ♦Items with a generally religious theme but no direct connection to the particular church.
- ♦Items exempt if the organization can show that they are related to a temporary religious program . . .
- ♦Food items unless used in a specific religious observance.

Generally Not Substantially Related

These items are generally considered not substantially related:

- ♦Nonreligious books or treatises (for example, scientific or nonreligious technical topics).
- ♦Livestock production.
- ♦Nonreligious arts and crafts.

Business Mail Entry managers will make the initial evaluation as to whether the product or service specified meets the criteria for "substantially related." If the evaluation given denies non-profit rates the local postmaster will have the authority to uphold or contradict the decision. If further action is deemed necessary, an appeal may be filed with the Rates and Classification Service Center in Memphis. In order to enter the appellate process the mailer must first pay the higher postage rate. Also, a second and final appeal may be made to the RCSC in Washington, D.C.

Effects Upon the Church

This seemingly legitimate law places mailing restrictions upon non-profit entities who may have expanded themselves beyond their designated mission and purpose and are competing in commercial markets. However, when this law is placed in brighter light, churches and ministries may be the ones to suffer the brunt of this legislation. Is it possible these regulations were orchestrated by the same "separation of church and state" zealots responsible for the removal of prayer from public schools?

The 1993 and 1994 legislation imposes significant mailing restrictions, and nearly every religious non-profit organization will feel the effects. According to Business Mail Authorities at our local Postal Center, these restrictions are a compromise. The original intention of the legislation was to eliminate non-



profit mailing rates completely.

Ministries and churches, the largest percentage of non-profit mailers, will feel the financial repercussions with losses in revenues due to the higher rates or by added costs in trying to comply with these complex and sometimes confusing restrictions. How many newsletters will be taken out of circulation due to this financial burden? In larger ministries, revenues previously used for missions and edification may be redirected to overhead. Smaller ministries, however, will probably not have those options.

Censorship by postal authorities is the key issue to address. The entire scope of this legislation places the local postal worker in the position to determine whether the contents of a product or service made available to a Christian organization's membership is deemed

religious by nature. By postal service guidelines, scientific or technical subjects are restricted. Have subjects such as evolution, genetics, astronomy, psychology, archaeology, communications and computer technology been removed from Christendom? What of issues affecting today's world such as abortion, the New World Order, the New Age Movement, the Occult, education and government, are they forbidden as well? Does the local postal worker have the qualifications necessary to make an unbiased judgment on these matters? Or are these issues already restricted simply by subject in relation to postal guidelines?

Undoubtedly this is censorship. The Gospel suffers when the availability of information to the Christian reader is hindered. President Clinton, in the aftermath of the Oklahoma City bomb-

ing, stated:

We hear so many loud and angry voices in America today whose sole goal seems to be to try to keep some people as paranoid as possible and the rest of us all torn up and upset with each other. . . They spread hate. . .

Is this law an attempt to silence some of these "loud and angry voices?" How long will it be before the Church is silenced?

In II Thessalonians, Paul describes a falling away of believers from God's Word in the last days (The Apostasy). Also, he proclaims that this will pave the way for the Antichrist. "Let no man deceive you by any means: for *that day shall not come*, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition" (2 Thessalonians 2:3).

—C. Harvey and B. Parr

One Flesh

This past month a fellow Oklahoman, Micky Mantle, died within one month after receiving a liver transplant. Although this sports hero had received just about every baseball award possible, as death approached he lamented wasting his life on alcohol and other lustful pursuits. The best medical science and a new liver could not help. Micky Mantle, in his few remaining days, appealed to all people everywhere to make provisions to donate organs for others. But organ transplants are only a temporary reprieve from the sentence of death; because, unless the Lord comes first, all will die. The reader will die—maybe a few days later, or maybe a few days before, the author of this article. Compared to eternity, these few days, one way or the other, make little difference.

In commenting on the death of Mantle, a news cast on the FOX Network, the evening of August 9, 1995,

reported that doctors have concluded that an organ transplant from husband to wife or wife to husband has a better chance of success than from one blood relative to another (sisters, brothers, mother to son or daughter, or father to son or daughter). Considering DNA, genes, and all hereditary factors, this was amazing news.

Of course, that a man and wife probably eat the same food could be a factor, or even possibly that they attain emotional stability and maintain the same physical patterns, could be reasons to consider. Where a oneness that God ordained in marriage is reached, it has been noted that the man and wife are compatible in dress, speech, and even looks. God's Word is once more proved to be authoritative and infallible, even in medical science: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Genesis 2:24).

—Noah W. Hutchings

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