

DAVID FROST'S PULPIT

Catholic Press Features

New York — TV star David Frost has come a long way, as they say, from preaching in his father's Methodist church in England to hosting his own syndicated TV talk show on more than 70 stations throughout the country.

But the topic of religion was anything but left behind, as can be ascertained by a review of The David Frost Show's guest list and, just announced, the special communications award being presented to Frost this month by Religious Heritage of America.

The 31-year-old Briton is be-

ing honored for communicating through his 90-minute weekday program the "relevance of ancient Judeo-Christian ethics to Twentieth-Century America."

"At a time when the church has been under attack from many quarters," according to a spokesman for RHA, "his perceptive interviews with religious leaders and theologians have shown millions of people how our religious heritage relates to the complexities of modern life."

Frost has not only won a reputation among TV talk-show interviewers, but he has regularly brought prominent re-

ligious figures into his new "pulpit."

Among these guests have been Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen (for a 90-minute interview), evangelist Billy Graham, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the late Bishop James Pike, the Rev. Malcolm Boyd (the "coffeehouse priest"), and even atheist Madalyn Murray O'Hair, whose views, he let it be known, he disagreed with entirely.

Even when the interviewee is not on the show because of the person's religious position or views Frost often weaves religion into the conversation.

In a 90-minute interview with Jackie Gleason, Frost got the comedian to discuss his views on Catholicism: in sum, Gleason told Frost and the TV audience that while he was not the best practicing Catholic in the world, he needed Catholicism's rules to "let me know where I stand."

He also brought religion into a lengthy conversation with Vice President Spiro Agnew, ranging from Agnew's prayer habits to Agnew's reaction to people who cite "Thou Shalt Not Kill" as justification for pacifism:

"I think I can understand it, although I would say that there are probably not many people, relatively many people, who feel that strongly about a Commandment, that this would motivate them. I think there are more people who utilize this for their own benefit than there are people who sincerely feel that."

Frost, rated by one London newspaper survey as the second most influential British product — behind the Beatles — commutes every week between New York and London, doing TV shows on both sides of the Atlantic, producing films (he had an agreement with Bishop Pike to make a film on the life of Christ, based on Dr. Pike's research), writing (he co-authored "The English," with Anthony Jay), and helping to operate a closed-circuit TV company.

The man who first came to prominence in 1961 as creator and writer of the British Broadcasting Company's satirical "That Was the Week That Was" credits most of this whirlwind activity to his strict religious upbringing.

"I was raised never to refuse a challenge and never to waste time or talent," Frost said in an interview. "I suppose I've got in me the old Methodist trait of never wasting a minute."



The son of the late W. J. Paradine Frost, a Methodist minister, David was a lay preacher at 19 in his father's church, where he used his wit in the pulpit to attract larger crowds before deciding upon a career in show business.

less than it can be for other people."

Praised by most critics for having "brought the talk show back toward its original purpose" ("Time" magazine), Frost tries to practice what he preaches, especially with regard to TV's failure to live up to its promise:

"People want more than they're getting on TV. I believe they have a larger appetite than they've given credit for... The aim of a television program ought to be to leave people a little more awake, a little more aware, a little more alert than they were at the beginning."



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As I See It

Channel 13: Nice Going!

By Pat Costa



Channel 13 has a new late afternoon lineup and a most welcome one it is.

Placing the Mike Douglas show in the 9:30 a.m. morning slot where it previously showed a movie, the station now screens a film from 4 to 5:30 p.m. and then tops it off with a half-hour of local news.

But the biggest news is that a half-hour of ABC national news now follows at 6 p.m., seen here for the first time in the station's history.

Not only does it beat the other two networks to the punch by a half-hour but it gives viewers the choice of a third national newscast.

Channel 13, which heretofore had contented itself with 10 minutes of news and weather at 7:20, following the David Frost show, is to be commended for the expanded local coverage. As for the national news, it was much too long in coming.

The local show, which featured a superfluous Hollywood segment by Rona Barrett on its first night out, also has a regular piece on an area individual.

Ray Law's "One Man's Opinion" was also included and for those of us who like to make up our minds on the spur of the moment when it comes to movies, perhaps inclusion of movie reviews would be worthwhile.

Frank Reynolds, ABC's anchorman, handles himself deftly, as evidenced when a film from Washington broke and he quickly summed up for the audience without any perceptible loss of poise.

The one jarring note in the hour was the inclusion of promotions for two ABC soap operas during the national newscast. Always in dubious taste, the soaps seemed even more ludicrous amidst the headlines.

Channel 13's afternoon movie is a welcome diversion to those tired of the lackluster "Perry Mason," "Big Valley" and "Star Trek" programming on the commercial stations plus the kids' shows "Sesame Street" and "Misterogers" on educational television.

Unfortunately a look ahead to some of the movies scheduled for the new time shows that most of them have been seen here in Rochester umpteen times already.

Why not an English comedy festival or an English thriller festival or an English anything festival?

Surely, films made in the inimitable British manner cost no more or are any more difficult to procure than "Kathy-O" or "McHale's Navy Joins the Air Force."

WOODSTOCK: Propaganda or Revival Meeting?

Catholic Press Features

St. Joseph, Mo.—If parishioners want a glimpse of what a real religious community could be like, they should see the film "Woodstock."

This was the advice given by the movie-review committee of the St. Peter & Paul parish Sodality here.

In commenting on the popular filmed documentary of the three-day music festival that drew more than a half-million young people to a farm near Bethel, N.Y., last summer, the Sodality committee remarked:

"For three days, these young people experienced a family unity where their actions were bound by no laws or restrictions. The only authority that existed was in each individual's mind.

"Peace and love were the

prominent themes—no violence or riots occurred, although complete freedom prevailed. This community lived as one — feeling, loving and caring for each other. At Woodstock there existed a sense of unity which seems to be fading out of our society today."

Interestingly, several reviews of Woodstock in the secular press used religious allegories to comment about the gathering of young people at Max Yasgur's cow farm.

"It was clearly a revival meeting," said one daily newspaper critic of the Woodstock event recorded by the cameras of director Michael Wadleigh.

"Richie Havens and Joan Baez sing with the purity and fervor of gospel singers. The crowd reacted like a congregation, not a mob."

However, not all reviewers

have shared the enthusiasm of the St. Peter & Paul Sodality movie-review committee. The National Catholic Office for Motion Pictures (which rates the film for adults, with reservations) said that as a documentary about a musical event, the film "will blast people out of their seats with six-track stereo sound and dazzle them with its images," but NCOMP disagreed that the film has much else to offer.

"In fact," said NCOMP's review, "its attempts to be a social documentary sometimes appear to fall heavily into the propaganda category. We get too many shots of how much love, peace, and happiness saturated the entire happening but not very much footage about the hard and soft drugs that stupefied so many of the young people into their agreeable state."

NCOMP objected also to the fact that "we hear too many near-inarticulate statements from the groovy youngsters and surprised but approving townspeople and too few from those in the audience who suffered miserably in the rain and hunger and bad trips, or from those whose properties were invaded by the swarms."

The Catholic film office's put-down was similar, somewhat, to the review written for The National Catholic Reporter by Protestant "theology of play" theologian Harvey Cox, who wrote:

"There is an implication (in the film) that if the rest of the world would just go away, the 'Woodstock nation' could just groove along forever in peace and joy and plenty. Food and pot and blankets certainly were shared; and the spirit of cooperation was there.

smoke' or in the Super Bowl, whether in the NBC studio or in Candlestick Park."

In such sports as football and basketball with their "rough play," baseball with its "brush-back pitch," and the general overall "brawling" action in hockey, Cargas is of the opinion that much of the violence could be controlled with better officiating, strict adherence to the rules, and enactment of some new regulations.

Concerning boxing, the television critic for AD magazine maintained that it is in "no sense respectable, no matter what Msgr. Socko who heads the CYO fight program in your community says. It not only doesn't belong on TV; it ought to be banished from the earth."

"But one pauses to wonder what might happen if the Woodstock nation had to stick it out for a month or a year. If food got short, real short? If it got very cold, not just a little rain that provided mud to slide in and puddles to splash?"

Nevertheless, Cox agreed that "maybe the Woodstock festival did show us something of the kind of life we might expect if we ever do solve the problem of sheer life-support systems for the whole global population. That time seems a long way off now, but it might come some day. And then man will indeed be free to play."

He concluded: "As a festival, Woodstock was wonderful. As an eschatological movement, a symbol of our corporate future, or even the core of a significant political-cultural movement, it fails. Don't worship it; just enjoy it."