

FR. HENRY ATWELL
**Toward
Tomorrow**



President Nixon and Vice-President Agnew have frequently expressed their dislike for a sizeable segment of the news media.

Television stations are currently faced with the possibility of losing their licenses if they don't cut network news reports and features which offend government viewpoints.

Even a good number of TV viewers and newspaper readers complain about "all the bad news" as if the reporters and newscasters were somehow themselves to blame for it.

Which isn't really anything new!

The Bible (2 Samuel: 1: 4 through 15) tells how a survivor from the battle in which King Saul was killed brought the news to David who promptly ordered one of his attendants, "Come, strike him down," and the poor reporter was struck "a mortal blow."

That fellow certainly didn't report any bad news ever again.

Second guessing news reporters — and taking it out on them — is an old American habit, especially on the part of military officials.

General William Tecumseh Sherman court-martialed a front-line reporter for releasing facts. Sherman wanted kept secret. He said people who insist on factual news are like "the drunkard whose natural tastes have become so vitiated that nought but brandy will satisfy them."

Sherman's Civil War vitriol may be passe but the attitude behind it is still prevalent.

When the Pentagon Papers were published last year, a reporter asked General Maxwell Taylor, "What do you make of the people's right to know when decisions of this dimension are taken?" Taylor replied, "I don't believe in that as a general principle."

Back in Sherman's time, we had Ab-

raham Lincoln who suspended the sentence for the convicted reporter.

And even before that, there is the episode when 20 editors were arrested for opposing the terrorizing Alien and Sedition Acts, but it was the Vice-President Thomas Jefferson who came to their defense.

Today, however, there is no one in such high office to speak out for the freedom of the press. Newsmen, rather, are criticized, shut out from news conferences, by-passed.

Press freedom, after all, is not a privilege for the press. It is the necessary source for a free people. A manipulated press, a limited press, a frightened press is prelude to tyranny.

And when one freedom is eroded, all others are threatened.

If government can intimidate the way news is reported, then soon other aspects of freedom will be intimidated too — assembly, speech, religion. We have just emerged from war in Vietnam because we were convinced of the "domino theory" that if one nation falls to Communism, then all other nations are in danger of falling too. Does not that theory also hold true in mankind's continual struggle to maintain freedom?

The news media in America do need a monitor, of course. But experience shows that the best monitor in most situations is self-discipline from within rather than surveillance or control from outside, especially if that outside force is an anonymous governmental bureaucracy.

Jesus once insisted, "The truth shall make you free," and St. Thomas Aquinas coined the adage, "Omne verum a quocumque dicatur a Spiritu Sancto est — All truth, no matter who says it, comes from the Holy Spirit."

I hope more Americans realize that the fate of many freedoms is at stake when either the public or the government plays the David game.



FR. PAUL J. CUDDY
**On The
Right Side**

Cheers for the Jews! From my seminary days I have speculated wistfully that if all the Jews would become Catholics, the whole world would be united in Faith, proclaiming the sovereignty of the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob through the Word Made Flesh. Why? Because the Jews as a race, have intelligence, patience, resiliency, humor, dedication — and salesmanship. With the Revelation given to the Church, they would have the Greatest Product in the world to sell. Consider what only 12 Jews plus one Rabbi, the Apostles and St. Paul, accomplished in so short a time. Consider the perfect Mother, the Jewish Mary. Then ponder over the change in the world if the 14,500,000 Jews in the world embraced the Catholic Faith, with its unity and holiness and Revelation. This is wishful thinking: and we live in a real world.

The TV section of D & C for Feb. 11 features an article on the TV show "Bridget Loves Bernie." It says, "There's no love lost between Jewish groups and the network and producers of the show. . . . A number of Jewish groups, led by the Synagogue Council of America, which represents the orthodox, conservative and reform branches of Judaism, have criticized the show because, they say, it promotes interfaith marriage which is forbidden under Jewish law."

The fact is that in the show the Irish Catholic Fitzgeralds come off badly. Mrs. Fitz is an unloveable, dim-witted socialite. Mr. Fitz is an unprincipled tycoon. The Irish parents reach for the bottle more frequently than for their beads to solve their problems. Their religion is tribal rather than spiritual. One would have to be anti-semitic not to love Mother Steinberg with her genuine motherly concern for her family. Pappa Steinberg comes through as a likable, loyal Jew harassed by the religious and social complications of his son's marriage. Uncle Moe would melt anyone's heart. I had friends like Uncle Moe in my decade of military service. I liked them greatly and they reciprocated.

I recall in 1943 when I was Post Chaplain at an Alabama Air Base, a Jewish soldier wanted a memorial service, Kaddish, on the anniversary of his father's death. To have Kaddish service a minyan, i.e. ten male Jews, was needed. All the soldiers could find were nine. Not because I was Post

Chaplain, but because I wanted the son to have the anniversary service for his father. I drove over the Base and picked up the tenth Jew! The Kaddish was held. And the Chaplain was "in like Flynn," or maybe "like Steinberg." Yet what I did was not to be "in like Steinberg," but to do what Our Lord taught us to do.

The TV article continues: "The Jewish groups want the program discontinued." Rabbi Kelman noted: "We all face a subtle dilemma because there has always been in the Jewish community a great tradition against censorship." To me the Jewish groups are facing a fact of life correctly. I recall reading a few years ago an article in the D & C about the greatly honored Rochester Rabbi Bernstein, who said that for years he had been a complete pacifist. However, he continued, when the Jews began to be imprisoned and slaughtered by the Nazis, he could not but advocate American military involvement against Hitler's Germany. It was a pragmatic inconsistency: but to me it was a rational advocacy.

Rabbi Irving Lehrms, president of the Synagogue Council, said: "The program deeply offends the sensibilities of American Jews. We believe that it is an example of tasteless programming which contributes nothing but mischief and misunderstanding to any consideration of the complex problems of intermarriage."

In this I believe the Council is perfectly correct. It recognizes the fact that mixed marriages have added problems, both in faith and in domestic life. Religion should bind families together; not separate them. This is not mentioned much today; yet it should be proclaimed from the house-tops.

Two books I recommend for understanding at least the American Jews are: "My Rabbi Doesn't Make House Calls" by Vorspan, which portrays the humor and experiences which coincide with normal Catholic parishes; and Amen: Diary of Rabbi Martin Siegel, written by a liberal Rabbi, which concludes with a note of sadness comparable to the experience in ultra-liberal Catholic circles.

In the meanwhile, CHEERS FOR THE JEWS, who with candor and honesty, face the problem of inter-faith marriages, and are doing something about it.

What in The WORLD . . .



Is Going On In The Church?

BE INFORMED
READ
Your Award Winning
Courier - Journal
Every Week