

Children and TV - 1975

Television broadcasting is an ever-available and very influential part of a young child's life. In the United States it is estimated that the average child spends 21 hours a week viewing TV, and it becomes his window on the world. All television makes an impression on the mind of a child, for better or for worse.

Therefore the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods in 30th Biennial Assembly convened in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex in Dallas, Texas in November, 1975, calls attention to the subject of television broadcasting with the following statement:

In March of 1972, following extensive study by teams of independent social scientists working on twenty-three separate research projects, the Surgeon General of the United States, Jesse Steinfeld, made the following unequivocal statement before U.S. Senator Pastore's Subcommittee on Communications:

Certainly my interpretation is that there is a causative relationship between televised violence and subsequent anti-social behavior, and that the evidence is strong enough that it requires some action on the part of responsible authorities, the TV industry, the Government, and the citizens.

In the same hearings, leaders of the TV industry themselves noted:

Now that we are reasonably certain that televised violence can increase tendencies in some children, we will have to manage our program planning accordingly...

We agree that the time for action has come and of course we are willing to cooperate in any way together with the rest of the industry.

Despite the definitive findings and statements, the overall deluge of crime and brutality in entertainment readily available to children in daytime and evening television hours has only slightly diminished, if at all.

In view of the obvious abuses whether of excessive violence or the promotion of non-nutritional foods, we urge producers to design more creative and constructively entertaining programs for children. Toward these ends we recommend that:

- 1) Children's television be considered a public service which requires a changed attitude on the part of producers, advertisers and all connected with the television industry.
- 2) Every station shall provide an adequate number of hours of desirable children's programs every week.
- 3) More of the public be encouraged to finance public television since it tends to meet, to a larger degree than commercial television, the needs of children through a daily schedule of diversified children's programs.

We advocate that all Sisterhood members, when seeing undesirable children's programs, make their displeasure known to the stations and networks. Likewise we urge the expression of approval and appreciation to the station, network and sponsor involved in fine programs in order to encourage future programming of a high quality for the benefit of all children.