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**A CRITICAL SURVEY OF PERIODICAL LITERATURE  
IN THE CHRISTIAN HOME**

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**A Thesis  
Presented to  
the Faculty of the Department of Christian Education  
Asbury Theological Seminary**

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**In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Religious Education**

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**by  
Jay Kingsley Stein  
May 1950**

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

Three years ago a teacher in a public highschool in a small town in Southern Illinois became disturbed about the type of periodicals which were coming into the school library. It was her duty to take the incoming magazines from the desk in the library and to place them in their proper places on the periodical shelf. Almost without exception the students had already looked through the periodicals and with pencil or ink had marked and emphasized pictures portraying nudity, love, and sex. This experience created an interest to find out what was in the periodicals. As a result a brief survey was made of the incoming magazines for a period of about three months. The results of that survey were not preserved and nothing further was done until this critical survey was attempted.

Very little has been done in this field. Only one other project similar to this one has been available. Bernard Palmer,<sup>1</sup> a writer for Christian Life magazine did a similar project in the small town of Holdrege, Nebraska, in January, 1949.

It was the purpose of this study (1) to establish

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<sup>1</sup> Bernard Palmer, "Muck in Your Magazines," Christian Life, 10:8, 9, 10, 39, 40, 41, April, 1949.

criteria for the evaluation of literature in the Christian home; (2) to report the results of the survey made in Christian homes of the Free Methodist Church; (3) to give an evaluation of the secular periodicals reported through the questionnaire; and (4) to make observations which developed out of the survey.

## CHAPTER II

### THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING LITERATURE IN THE CHRISTIAN HOME

There was a time when so little reading matter existed that the Bible and religious literature had almost no competition. Clean and wholesome books and periodicals were at hand for the eager and inquiring reader. They were easier to secure than injurious publications and, consequently, were more widely read.

Today the situation is drastically changed. Modern printing presses are pouring out hundreds of books and magazines each year. Publications with hundreds of thousands of readers come into both Christian and non-Christian homes. The problem today is not to find something to read, but to be a discriminating reader.

To print books of a certain type has become profitable business. The greatest profits are to be gathered from the production and sale of literature which is primarily sordid and sensational. Some of the printed matter available to us today is disgustingly base. Those who produce it know how to stay just within the law, or they would be serving prison sentences for violating the statutes passed to preserve a decent society. Much more of this literature is fairly clean, but it pictures life in more or less pagan terms. As one reads it, he finds himself coming to feel that there is nothing to life except the selfish, the sordid, and the temporary.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cewthon Asbury Bowen, Literature and The Christian Life, Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, New York, pp. 67, 68.

## I. IMAGERY

Before setting up a criteria for religious literature it is necessary to look into the most influential phase of periodicals which may be termed "imagery." In a report made by a group of religious education students it was asserted that "civilization moves in the direction of its dominant imagery."<sup>2</sup> This fact history has established. War-minded leaders had vividly portrayed the imagery of military struggle before the minds of a nation's youth; in time that nation rushed to arms. Remote and undisturbed peoples of the earth were seized by the imagery of economic adventure and achievement; then these nations awoke. Every individual has been influenced by skilful propaganda and glaring advertisements in favor of modern motor cars, airplanes, television and multitudes of appliances and gadgets.

Powerful imagery led our nation to reach such heights of moral idealism as to banish the liquor traffic as an outlaw against society. Then a different imagery furnished by those interested in the liquor traffic became dominant, and a generation began to mock at a "noble experiment."<sup>3</sup>

Recently, a modern educator, not religious, made a provocative statement to a group of English teachers. He said, "Shall we do anything about the picture magazines—Life, Look, and others? . . . Often a series of pictures

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 69.

<sup>3</sup> Loc. cit.



conveys an idea more quickly than five pages of solid type."<sup>4</sup>

In April, 1949, Evelyn Perloff from Ohio State University made a study of both male and female readers of the Saturday Evening Post to find out the extent to which illustrations influenced the reading of the articles. She states in her report, "It was clear, however, that female Post readers preferred articles with many illustrations as compared to those with no illustrations. Both men and women were equally influenced by this variable when its effect on starting readership was determined, . . ."<sup>5</sup>

## II. IMPORTANCE OF BASING CRITERIA UPON CHRISTIAN IDEALS

Laura Katherine Martin,<sup>6</sup> associate professor of Library Science in the University of Kentucky, in her book entitled, Magazines for School Libraries, gives criteria for evaluating magazines. Her evaluation is excellent for its purpose, but its criteria are not sufficient for Christian reading matter.

Since the Christian is wrestling "not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against

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<sup>4</sup> H. E. Finch, "How to Teach Students to Read Mass Magazines Critically," English Journal, 38:391, September, 1949.

<sup>5</sup> Evelyn Perloff, "Prediction of Female Readership of Magazine Articles," Journal of Applied Psychology, 33:176, April, 1949.

<sup>6</sup> Laura K. Martin, Magazines for School Libraries, H. L. Wilson Company, New York, 1946, pp. 187, 188.

the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places,"<sup>7</sup> it has been necessary to set up criteria based on Christian standards with reference to such authorities as Martin.

### III. THE CRITERIA

A basis for the criteria to be employed in Christian evaluation of literature is found in Paul's admonition to the Philippian Christians: " . . . whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report . . . think on these things."<sup>8</sup>

### IV. EXPOSITION OF THE CRITERIA

The problem of the people of Philippi with whom Paul was dealing is very similar to the one facing the Christian reader today. Paul had previously denounced the subtle reckonings of the teachers. By denouncing these, he promised to the Philippian Christians the peace of God which is to be the guardian of their thoughts and imaginations; however, "they

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<sup>7</sup> King James Version, Bible, Ephesians 6:12.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., Philippians 4:8.

must do their part in bending their minds to worthy objects."<sup>9</sup>

"There is to be no vacuum, called peace. These 'hearts and thoughts' are to be active, discursive, reflective, 'reckoning,' 'calculating,' 'reasoning out' λογισμοί innumerable things—all with a view, of course, to the lifelong work of serving God and man."<sup>10</sup> Their minds are to be "occupied with all that . . . man truly calls virtue, all that has the praise of his conscience."<sup>11</sup> Robertson, in commenting upon the six adjectives picturing Christian ideals states, "Without these no ideals can exist. They are pertinent now when so much filth is flaunted before the world in books, magazines and moving-pictures under the name of realism."<sup>12</sup>

In examining New Testament criteria the Greek lexicon is a source of help.

Criteria 1. True. "ἀληθῆ and δίκαια express the very foundations of moral life. If truth and righteousness are lacking, there is nothing to hold moral qualities together."<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Robertson Nicoll, Editor, The Expositor's Greek Testament, Vol. 3, Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., Grand Rapids, p. 408.

<sup>10</sup> H. G. Moule, Philippian Studies, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1897, p. 230.

<sup>11</sup> Robinson, op. cit., p. xxix.

<sup>12</sup> Archibald Thomas Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament, Vol. IV, Eerdmans Pub. Co., Grand Rapids, 1946, p. 459.

<sup>13</sup> Nicoll, op. cit., p. 408.

Criteria 2. Honest. σΕΜΝΑ The most used translation of the word into English is worthy.

There lies in it the idea of a dignity or majesty which is yet inviting and attractive, and which inspires reverence. Grave, as French observes, does not exhaust the meaning. Gravity may be ridiculous. 'The word we want is one in which the sense of gravity and dignity, and of these as inviting reverence, is combined.' Ellicotts' venerable is perhaps as near as any word, if venerable be divested of its modern conventional sense as implying age, and confined to its original sense, worthy of reverence.<sup>14</sup>

"The natural words by which to render it into English are such as august, solemn, noble, majestic, dignified."<sup>15</sup>

Criteria 3. Just. Σίκαια just, meet, right. " . . . it describes that which is in accordance with the loftiest conception of right."<sup>16</sup>

Criteria 4. Pure. ἀγνά is derived from ἀγνός which means in a physical sense pure; in a moral sense, blameless or religious; in a ceremonial sense, consecrated. It takes on the meaning of chaste, clean, pure, Jones observes that "there would be associated with the word the thought of domestic purity . . . ."<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Marvin R. Vincent, Word Studies in the New Testament, Vol. 3, Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., Grand Rapids, 1946, p. 458.

<sup>15</sup> J. Hugh Michael, The Moffatt New Testament Commentary, Harpers and Brothers Publishers, New York, p. 203.

<sup>16</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 204.

Criteria 5. Lovely. πρὸς δὴν is a derivative from the Greek words πρὸς meaning motion towards, accession to, or nearness at and δὴ ἐν meaning love of the heart rather than of the head. "Its primary meaning is 'love-inspiring' . . . . When used of things, the adjective here employed means pleasing, grateful, attractive."<sup>18</sup> "Lit., sounding well. The kindred verb is commonly used in an active sense. Hence not well spoken of, but fairspeaking, and so winning, gracious."<sup>19</sup> The Expositor's rendering is more suitable for the purpose of the criteria—" . . . those things whose grace attracts."<sup>20</sup>

Criteria 6. Of Good Report. εὐφρυνα is derived from εὖ meaning good or well done and φῆμι meaning a saying.

The more probable primary meaning . . . . is "well-speaking." From this are derived such meanings as uttering-sounds-of-good-omen, fair-sounding, auspicious. The adjective would apply to anything that had a good ring. "High-toned" is an exact English equivalent."<sup>21</sup>

## V. SUMMARY

The criteria as taken from Philippians 4:8 is sufficiently

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 204.

<sup>19</sup> Vincent, op. cit., III, p. 459.

<sup>20</sup> Nicoll, op. cit., III, 468. .

<sup>21</sup> Michael, op. cit., pp. 204-5.

summarised in three questions which Bowen chooses to ask concerning the reading matter put before Christians:

1. What are the mental pictures provided by this magazine leading us to think?
2. Do they make the material things of life appear all-important?
3. What are they leading us to decide about life?<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Cewthon Asbury Bowen, Literature and The Christian Life, p. 70.

The "Christian Criteria for Evaluating Magazines"  
are based on Paul's admonition in Philippians 4:8 as shown  
herewith:

#### CHRISTIAN CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING MAGAZINES

##### 1. True

- a. Truth
- b. Righteousness

These hold moral qualities together.

##### 2. Honest

- a. Worthy
- b. Dignified
- c. Inviting reverence
- d. Venerable

##### 3. Just

- a. Meet
- b. Right
- c. That which is in accordance with the loftiest  
conception of right.

##### 4. Pure

- a. Blameless
- b. Consecrated
- c. Chaste
- d. Clean
- e. Domestic purity

##### 5. Lovely

- a. Love-inspiring
- b. Pleasing
- c. Grateful
- d. Attractive
- e. Winning
- f. Gracious
- g. Those things whose grace attracts.

## 6. Of good report

- a. Good
- b. Well done
- c. Well speaking
- d. Uttering-sounds-of-good-omen
- e. Fair sounding
- f. Auspicious
- g. A good ring
- h. High toned

Although Laura K. Martin's "Criteria for Evaluating Magazines" are not sufficient from the standpoint of Christian education, they do make a needful contribution to criteria for Christian matter.

## CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING MAGAZINES

- I. Publisher. Other books and magazines he publishes; special field and standing in that field
  - A. General commercial
  - B. University and scholarly
  - C. Technical and industrial
  - D. Sponsor (may or may not be the publisher) includes learned societies, and special interests. Usually non-profit, with the objective general welfare or promotion of good will toward some particular cause
- II. Character and policy
  - A. Reprint or original material
  - B. Proportion of fiction to non-fiction, in quality as well as space
  - C. General style. Scholarly, popular, literary, juvenile
  - D. Political bias. Liberal, conservative, or purely reportorial
  - E. Proportion of American to foreign in content and attitude
  - F. Claims and announcements by the magazine of its future policies, checked against actual performance
- III. Editor. A specialist in the field, or does he edit unrelated periodicals? Does he write for other magazines, books or newspapers?
- IV. Contributors. How many are well known? (Contributors'



columns appear increasingly, from which information may be gained)

- A. In fiction, does the magazine usually present its authors' best work, or is it the mediocre output of famous writers? Is the style clear or careless?
  - B. In non-fiction, is the author an acknowledged expert? Has he had actual and extended experiences in the country or the field about which he writes? Does he write of his own experiences, or gather those of others? Is his style popular, exaggerated, straightforward?
- V. Mergers. How have these affected the point of view or make-up? Usually there is less of merging than of outright purchase, and the periodical purchased is apt to be entirely lost, although attempts may be made to hold readers of the discontinued publication through continuation of favorite departments or contributors.
- I. Date of founding. New magazines are worthy of careful examination but sparing recommendation, since policy cannot be fully formulated and usefulness determined within a few months.
- VII. Circulation. Rising or falling? Periodicals with growing circulation usually offer more live content than those which are struggling for existence. If figures are uniform for the last few years, is there a mere sliding along on established reputation or is there indication that a particular and devoted audience has found its needs satisfied, and growth is not expected?
- VIII. Price
- A. Possibility of inclusion within the budget
  - B. Indication of relation to advertisers. How much of the publishing expense is borne by the reader, how much by advertisers?
- IX. Advertising
- A. Type. Art value. Dignified, beautiful, or lurid?
  - B. Assigned to certain sections, or spread through the reading matter?
  - C. Is there predominance of one type: liquor, travel, books? Bearing upon editorial point of view and price
- X. Physical makeup
- A. Size and binding. Is it easy to hold for comfortable reading?
  - B. Print. Fine but clear, large and blurred, or really clearly stamped on appropriate paper?

- C. Illustrations. Outside of advertising pictures, does the reading matter have genuine illustrations, or are the pictures unrelated to accompanying articles? Are they well reproduced? Colored or black and white? Have they a genuine appeal to young people or are they decorative, and important only to the art student?

XI. Reading level

- A. Suitable for junior or senior high school use?  
B. For slow, average or superior readers of various ages?  
C. Relation of content to style. Profound subject matter simply written, scholarly content presented with distinction, or in an involved manner, or do most articles concern everyday affairs presented in lively fashion?

CHAPTER III  
A REPORT OF THE SURVEY OF PERIODICALS  
IN THE CHRISTIAN HOME

The survey of periodicals was conducted in homes of the Free Methodist Church with which the writer is affiliated. This particular church has a definite rule in its discipline restricting the reading matter of its members. In the General Rules of the Free Methodist Discipline is found the prohibiting words,

It is therefore expected of all who continue therein, that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation. First, by doing no harm, by avoiding evil of every kind, especially that which is most generally practiced; such as,  
.....  
reading those books which do not tend to the knowledge or love of God.<sup>1</sup>

This fact, plus the emphasis of the ministers from the pulpit, has had a definite influence on the kind and number of the periodicals which were reported in the questionnaire.

I. PROCEDURE

Questionnaires were sent to ninety-three homes. Thirty-six of them were sent to the homes of conference superintendents. These names were chosen from the thirty-

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<sup>1</sup> Discipline of the Free Methodist Church, 1947, The Free Methodist Publishing House, Winona Lake, Indiana, p. 18.

six conferences in the United States just as listed in the Conference Minutes for 1949.<sup>2</sup> Wherever the conference is manned by two or more district superintendents, the first name appearing in the Minutes was chosen. Thirty-three were sent to the homes of Sunday school superintendents. These were chosen from the list of superintendents as listed in the Annual Minutes for 1949 also. The first name appearing in the list was chosen. Since only twenty-five conferences had their Sunday school superintendents listed the remainder were chosen by taking the tenth name which appeared on the list of Sunday school superintendents. Twenty-four were sent to homes which had been visited. The questionnaires were sent into twenty-five states ranging from the East coast to the West coast and from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico. Information was obtained as to the titles of every periodical both secular and religious which came into the homes.

In the seventy questionnaires returned 786 periodicals were reported—fifty-three percent of which are secular and forty-seven percent are religious.

## II. THE PALMER SURVEY

Bernard Palmer's survey was conducted in the conservative little city of Holdrege, Nebraska. More than eighty-five

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<sup>2</sup> The Annual Minutes of the Free Methodist Church of North America, The Free Methodist Pub. House, Winona Lake, 1949.

percent of its 5,000 people are church members half of whom are evangelical Christians. There was no way of knowing just how many of those polled were actually Christians; however, the same survey was made among definitely conservative Christians and the results of their reading habits were the same. Palmer discovered from his survey that there was an average of 2.2 secular magazines per church family and an average of 1.01 religious magazines each.

### III. COMPARISON OF SURVEYS

In comparison with Palmer's survey the writer discovered that the Free Methodist Church family subscribed to an average of 5.9 secular periodicals and 5.3 religious periodicals each. The secular average included newspapers which average 1.4 to each home. The higher total average of subscriptions in comparison with that of Palmer's is presumably due to the fact that the survey was made primarily among Christian workers in the church. Eighty-eight out of the ninety-three questionnaires were sent into homes which were definitely engaged in Christian work such as preaching, superintending in the Sunday school, teaching, or taking an active part in either the Women's Missionary Society or the Young People's Missionary Society.

### IV. OBSERVATIONS

It was found that there were almost as many farm papers as youth papers; more farm papers than Sunday school papers; more mechanics and science than denominational papers; more professional than children's or temperance papers; only 10 papers reported for boys and two for girls; more war papers than devotional papers; the same amount of hobbies as devotional papers; sixty-four out of the seventy homes reporting subscribe to the Free Methodist which is the official paper of the church.

#### V. SURVEY OF PERIODICALS

1.	Religious (other than those listed below)	235
2.	Secular (other than those listed below)	210
3.	Newspapers	106
4.	Youth	44
5.	Farm	36
6.	Sunday school	32
7.	Mechanics and science	15
8.	Conference	14
9.	Professional	13
10.	Institutional, orphanages, missions, etc.	12
11.	Prohibition	11
12.	Boys	10
13.	School bulletins	9
14.	Sports	7
15.	Junior children	6
16.	Primary and beginners	5
17.	War	4
18.	Hobbies	3
19.	Devotional	"
20.	Comics	"
21.	Miscellaneous	"
22.	Unclassified	"
23.	Girls	2

Total 786

## CHAPTER IV

### THE EVALUATION OF THE SECULAR PERIODICALS REPORTED IN THE SURVEY

The secular magazines surveyed in this chapter were chosen because they were reported most frequently on the questionnaires. Each magazine has been thoroughly surveyed. Bernard Palmer's "Magazine Analysis" form has assisted as a general approach to the analysis; however, the methods used vary according to the different types of magazines. Some of them did not have stories, therefore, the part of the analysis dealing with stories was not used. The outstanding characteristics or features peculiar to the individual magazines have been listed under "observations." The analysis and discussion of the magazines are given in the order of the frequency with which they were reported in the questionnaires. e. g. The Reader's Digest was reported more frequently on the questionnaires than any other secular magazine; therefore, it is the first one analyzed.

The particular issues reported were picked at random because of easy accessibility. Some were checked from the libraries, others were borrowed from neighbors. The writer, choosing the magazines in this manner, was able to steer clear of any bias in picking the most undesirable magazines for the analysis. In most cases two or three magazines of each kind

were surveyed, but only one of each is reported herewith.

# I. ANALYSES

## Reader's Digest

Name Reader's Digest Issue May, 1950

Number of pages 162 Pages of advertising 0

Number of objectionable pictures 1 (smoking)

### Observations:

Thirty-four articles of interest

One article on sex

Review of a recent book

Questionable scenes in articles 37

Taking God's name in vain 27

Dancing 3

Drinking 2

Smoking 2

Adultery 2

Gambling 1

Twenty-three suggestive jokes, some tending to immorality

One joke making light of God and religion: e. g.

"Why have we the finest generation of children ever known  
in this country?" "Because they were produced by private  
enterprise."

Laura Katherine Martin describes the Reader's Digest  
as the magazine with the largest circulation in America and one



whose pioneer work is in popularizing non-fiction. In twenty years it attained an enviable reputation for timeliness, readability and comprehensiveness. Samuel Beckoff who has made a careful analysis of the context and sources of recent articles in an effort to show overwhelming political bias says,

The lay reader, as well as the more-concerned educator, has begun to wonder whether the Digest was still (1) a digest, (2) reliable teaching material, (3) liberal in thought and expression, and (4) contributing substantially to the war effort.<sup>1</sup>

### The National Geographic

Name	<u>The National Geographic</u>	Issue	<u>April, 1950</u>
Number of pages	<u>174</u>	Pages of advertising	<u>52</u>
Liquor ads	<u>0</u>	Number of pages	<u>0</u>
Tobacco ads	<u>0</u>	Number of pages	<u>0</u>
Movie ads	<u>0</u>	Number of pages	<u>0</u>

"The claim is made that 35 percent of the advertising used in other magazines is rejected by National Geographic."<sup>2</sup>

Number of objectionable pictures	<u>35</u>
Bathing suits (women)	<u>22</u>
Brief gowns	<u>5</u>
Dancing	<u>4</u>

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<sup>1</sup> Laura K. Martin, Magazines for School Libraries, 1946, The H. Wilson Company, New York, p. 156.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 149.

Questionable relationships (caressing, kissing, etc.)

2

Semi-nudes 1

Smoking 1

Observations:

152 illustrations accompanying the six write-ups.

Sixty-four pages of illustrations in color.

Write-ups all clean, educational, and well written.

All objectionable pictures are found in advertisements—  
most of them in vacation ads.

100 of the 177 advertisements are of schools and camps.

Newer, more dynamic pictorial accompaniments of current news outrival the Geographic in popular interest, but their appeal, and usually their physical durability, are more fleeting, while the indexed and classified illustrations of the neatly paged Geographic are used over and over through the years.<sup>3</sup>

Time

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_ Issue December 19, '49

Number of pages 102 Pages of advertising 60 1/2

Liquor ads 33 Number of pages 23

Tobacco ads 3 Number of pages 3

Movie ads 0 Number of pages 0

Objectionable pictures 27

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 149.

Drinking 12

Brief gowns 9

Dancing 3

Semi-nudes 2

Kissing 1

Observations: (from May 1, 1950 issue)

Very suggestive statements in articles, e. g.:

Groucho Marx, C. B. S. radio star, in speaking of women says, "If they dressed for me the stores wouldn't sell much---just an occasional sunvisor."

"I want to get across religious ideas indirectly," explained Editor Morris over his double whisky in the Two Brewers in London one evening last week. "I don't want to bore young readers with dull and dry preaching." Reverend Morris resigned as pastor of his church in order that he might write comics with which he hope to bring religion closer to life. He breaks down "the iron cage between the clergy and the people" by going in to "drink" with them and not to "inspire" them.

Time makes many gestures suggestive of a free lance press. It aligns itself in American affairs with the general conservatism of mass sale publications, but is unpredictable in its attitudes on international affairs. Certain issues have at different times been banned in England, in Buenos Aires, and in Tokio (before the war).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 162.

The Saturday Evening Post

Name The Saturday Evening Post Issue April 8, 1950  
 Number of pages 162 Pages of advertising 111½  
 Liquor ads 0 Number of pages 0  
 Tobacco ads 1 Number of pages 1  
 Movie ads 1 Number of pages 1  
 Objectionable pictures 5 (nudeness, love scenes, etc.)

## Story 1

Title: "Girl in Hiding" (serial in six parts)

Plot: A girl who has murdered her employer tries to cover her  
 guiltiness.

Drinking 10 Smoking 6 Adultery 1  
 Lewd remarks 3 Misc. 4 (love scenes, etc.)  
 Murder 1 Pictures depicting the story 3.

## Story 2

Title "A Gentleman and a Fool" (short story)

Plot: A Civil War rebel frees a girl, who has saved his life,  
 from slavery as a mistress only because he wants her  
 for himself for the same purpose.

Drinking 4 Adultery 1 Lewd remarks 3  
 Cursing 17 Misc. 1 Kissing 1 Pictures  
 depicting the story \_\_\_\_\_

(This story is very suggestive all the way through)

## Story 3

Title: "The Flying Privateer" (short story)

Plot: A war story whose plot was rather concealed.

Drinking 2 Cursing 3 Kissing 1 Suggestive  
scenes 1 Pictures depicting the story 2

#### Story 4

Title: "Well of Anger" (short story)

Plot: A Friends ranchman in a dispute over a spring of water  
shows how trouble may be solved without guns.

Cursing 2 Pictures depicting the story 1

#### Story 5

Title: "Reverend Brown's Escapade"

Plot: A minister unhappy with his own wife shows kindness to  
stranger woman in his congregation. He becomes in-  
volved with her, a married woman, which leads him to  
drink, unfaithfulness to his wife, and finally to in-  
volvement in a murder case.

Drinking 1 Kissing 2 Suggestive scenes 2

Misc. 2 Murder 1 Pictures depicting the story  
2.

Description of a scene: "The Reverend John Brown did not hesi-  
tate. He took the girl in his arms and kissed her full  
upon her warm velvety lips."

#### Story 6

Title: "Criminal's Mark" (novelette)

Plot: Steve, an ex-convict who has been paroled and has a  
happy home and a decent living is hounded by the old

gang until involved anew in a gang job of robbery.

Drinking 4 Smoking 5 Lewd remarks 1  
 Cursing 21 Misc. 1 Suggestive scenes 11  
 Shooting 2 Robbery 1 Pictures depicting the  
 story 2.

Observations: (over the entire magazine)

Twenty cartoons, ten of which are suggestive.

Movie advertised with the blaring words, "Killing a  
 man is one thing . . . loving his wife is another . . .  
 both are dynamite." "Another violent story by author  
 of 'Duel in the Sun,'" states the ad.

" . . . the Post's hold on middle class readers may be  
 measured by its very high advertising rates, which has made  
 it able to buy fiction and articles by most of the "big names"  
 in American affairs as well as American literature."<sup>5</sup> Accord-  
 ing to Laura K. Martin, at the last report Post was receiving  
 \$23,000. for its center spread advertisement.<sup>6</sup>

#### Better Homes and Gardens

Title Better Homes and Gardens Issue February, 1950  
 Number of pages 210 Pages of advertising 115  
 Liquor ads 0 Number of pages 0

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 157.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 199.

Tobacco ads \_\_\_\_\_ 0 \_\_\_\_\_ Number of pages \_\_\_\_\_ 0 \_\_\_\_\_

Movie ads \_\_\_\_\_ 0 \_\_\_\_\_ Number of pages \_\_\_\_\_ 0 \_\_\_\_\_

Number of objectionable pictures 14

Smoking 5

Nudes 4

Brief gowns 4

Caressing 1

Observations:

No stories

Twenty-one pages of recipes and cooking hints.

"The publishers claim that their magazine devotes more editorial space to preparing and serving foods than any other magazine."<sup>7</sup>

One article on cancer in children.

Remainder of articles on homes and gardens.

One high school girl summarizes the scope of this publication in the statement that 'It has variety and arrangement such that you can learn to conduct your whole house, from sewing to kitchen work.' She might have added 'and your garden as well;' for the information on vegetable and flower growing is carefully edited as well as attractively illustrated.<sup>8</sup>

Pathfinder

Title Pathfinder Issue April 5, 1950

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 135.

<sup>8</sup> Loc. cit.

Number of pages	<u>68</u>	Pages of advertising	<u>29</u>
Liquor ads	<u>0</u>	Number of pages	<u>0</u>
Tobacco ads	<u>2</u>	Number of pages	<u>1</u>
Movie ads	<u>1</u>	Number of pages	<u><math>\frac{1}{2}</math></u>
Objectionable pictures	<u>16</u>		
Bathing suits (women)	<u>8</u>		
Smoking	<u>4</u>		
Brief gowns	<u>2</u>		
Kissing	<u>2</u>		

Observations:

Sections covering the various fields in government,  
education, science, religion, arts, etc.

No fiction stories.

An article on religion tells of Dr. Lamsa, an authority  
on the Bible translation from the Aramaic says that  
Jonah was not in the whale's belly, but according  
to the Aramaic the story only means the equivalent  
of the English idiom—Jonah was "in a pickle."

The movie advertised is the story of a little girl who  
sees a murder, but suffers such a shock she "for-  
gets" what has happened.

The latest entry in the kiddies-and-killers  
sweepstakes lacks the polish and ingenuity of its  
predecessors but is several notches above most  
Hollywood shockers.

.....

When Zachary Scott discovers that his wife has



been two-timing him with his best friend, he advances upon her with a revolver. The wife knocks him out with a hand-mirror. While Scott is unconscious, his wife has a second quarrel this time with her sister, Ann Sothern, who is tired of having her boy friends hijacked. Miss Sothern, more or less accidentally, shoots her sister dead and flees from the room.

The American Home

Title	<u>The American Home</u>	Issue	<u>April, 1950</u>
Number of pages	<u>164</u>	Pages of advertising	<u>90</u>
Liquor ads	<u>0</u>	Number of pages	<u>0</u>
Tobacco ads	<u>0</u>	Number of pages	<u>0</u>
Movie ads	<u>0</u>	Number of pages	<u>0</u>
Objectionable pictures	<u>9</u>		
	Bathing suits (women)	<u>2</u>	
	Shorts (women)	<u>2</u>	
	Smoking	<u>2</u>	
	Brief gowns	<u>1</u>	
	Dancing	<u>1</u>	
	Semi-nudes	<u>1</u>	

Observations:

Many articles on home making and cooking.

No fiction stories.

Emphasis is on joyous living rather than on pretentious appointments—on arranging living quarters, workrooms and kitchens, on handicraft and parties, and how to buy and make things. This magazine has long been famous for recipes arranged for clipping and filing, and these are now illustrated in color. There is some information on gardening, though this is not a specialty, and there are occasional

articles on historic homes and their restoration. An excellent all round home magazine.<sup>9</sup>

Life

Title Life Issue April 24, 1950  
 Number of pages 162 Pages of advertising 95  
 Liquor ads 10 Number of pages 8  
 Tobacco ads 4 Number of pages 3 $\frac{1}{2}$   
 Movie ads 1 Number of pages 7  
 Objectionable pictures 82  
     Bathing suits (women) 25  
     Drinking (one-half women drinking) 16  
     Brief gowns 14  
     Complete nudes 12  
     Smoking 5  
     Semi-nudes 5  
     Caressing 3  
     Dancing 2

Observations:

On the average every time the Life reader turns a page his eyes focus on an objectionable picture.

Fifty-one of the eighty-two objectionable pictures had to do with nudity.

The first liquor ads usually begin about half-way over

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., pp. 131-2.

in the magazine.

Over half of the pages are advertisements and liquor

ads rate highest in frequency and space.

Stories are picture stories.

Examples of shocking pictures and write-ups: (taken  
from issue of January 23, 1950.

A precocious Jap artist five years old paints  
a female nude facing him.

"Faye sheds a husband, sees a fight," Faye,  
a movie actress, has just divorced Elliott Roosevelt  
and watches a bull fight.

Story of a debutante, eighteen year old Sallie  
Marie Busch:

By 10 P. M. she was greeting the first guests  
who went on to dance to the music of four orches-  
tras, engage in a plastic snowball fight, consume  
mountains of food, and drink beer served from photo-  
electric dispensers which gushed Anheuser-Busch  
Budweiser whenever a glass was passed in front of  
the sensitized spigots.

. . . . .

The menu included roast pig, turkey, shrimp,  
cheese, rum cakes, champagne and beer . . . . It  
was 9 A. M. . . . the young pair hummed and danced  
the Blue Danube Waltz. Then Sallie Marie went home  
with a fever of 102°

Laura K. Martin is to be commended for her discrimi-  
nation in not giving Life unqualified endorsement,

While it is praised by many science teachers for the  
accuracy of its scientific information, by many home mak-  
ing instructors for its specifically helpful charts on  
nutrition, by English and American art critics for its

reproductions of famous paintings, there is still doubt of the suitability of a considerable portion of its contents for young people's libraries.<sup>10</sup>

### Household

Title Household Issue May, 1950  
 Number of pages 94 Pages of advertising 52  
 Liquor ads 0 Number of pages 0  
 Tobacco ads 0 Number of pages 0  
 Movie ads 0 Number of pages 0  
 Objectionable pictures 8  
     Brief gowns 6  
     Kissing 1  
     Smoking 1

#### Observations:

Many recipes and household suggestions.

Stories for children.

Clean in general and helpful.

### Ladies' Home Journal

Title Ladies' Home Journal Issue April, 1950  
 Number of pages 260 Pages of advertising 163  
 Liquor ads 0 Number of pages 0  
 Tobacco ads 0 Number of pages 0

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 145.

Movie ads 7 Number of pages 1

Objectionable pictures 76

Semi-nudes 18

Caressing, kissing, etc. 16

Bathing suits (women) 14

Brief gowns 12

Dancing 5

Nudes 2

Shorts (women) 2

Smoking 2

### Story 1

Title: "The Green Bough"

Plot: A teen age girl's plans for marriage all fall through and she submits to living the remainder of her life as a school teacher when she learns that her fiancée is obligated to marry his former girl friend who is expecting a baby.

### Story 2

Title: "Seventh Year"

Plot: A mother who becomes tired of keeping house for her unexciting husband and son seeks and runs the course of a more thrilling life after which she returns home satisfied with her family and the routine home duties.

### Story 3

Title: "The Double Life of Mrs. Dillingham"

**Plot:** Mrs. Dillingham who lives with her doctor son tries to escape the drudgery of baby sitting at home by posing as another lady who goes out and makes money of her own by baby sitting elsewhere.

**Story 4**

**Title** "Wintertime"

**Plot:** A war time story revealing the treatment received by Germans at the hands of the Russians. This story is a continued story, but is filled with drinking, smoking, killing, and indecent living. It carries ten cases of rape and three drinking scenes.

**Observations:**

Almost as many questionable pictures according to the number of pages in the magazine as Life carries.

Many interesting and helpful articles for the home-maker; however, the pictures and stories, somewhat subdued, are as subtle as those found in Life.

. . . the methods employed in cutting full-length novels to fit into one issue have caused some objection from authors. About a third of the book's text is used, and that third often traces only the romantic thread, omitting or distorting the author's most significant implication or background. Moving picture producers foster these condensations, no matter how poorly done, since they shet the public appetite for the forthcoming picture, and since it is often the woman who decides what picture the family shall see, four million subscribers are not to be overlooked.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 120.

Coronet

Title Coronet Issue March, 1950  
 Number of pages 172 Pages of advertising 23  
 Liquor ads 0 Number of pages 0  
 Tobacco ads 0 Number of pages 0  
 Movie ads 7 Number of pages 30  
 Number of movie pictures 36 Pages 20  
 Objectionable pictures 41

Brief gowns 14

Bathing suits (women) 7

Questionable relationships 6

Smoking 5

Mystery novels 4

Drinking 4

Outrageous 1; Jane Russell, movie actress lying  
 stretched out in hay mound with close clinging  
 thin skirt draped above her knees.

Observations:

No news.

Interesting informative stories.

Two sections on pictures stories: one on a movie star,  
 one on trip to Venus.

Comment on movie of Jane Russell:

Then a violent controversy over certain scenes spread

across the nation and, with every word, pro and con, her fame grew. The lush figure of Jane Russell decorated soldier's billets on five continents, her sensuous lips smiled from fuselages of bombing planes, and sailors chose her as "the girl we'd like in every port."

Martin comments on Coronet:

Photography in the advertising pages of the mass circulation magazine is of course the most widely known development of pictorial technique, but for real distinction in selection and reproduction of pictures, no American magazine today surpasses Coronet.<sup>12</sup>

## II. OBSERVATIONS

1. Objectionable pictures were found in every magazine. Reader's Digest which carries very few pictures had one. Life carried the most with eighty-two objectionable pictures. Ladies' Home Journal ranked second with seventy-six. Coronet ranked third highest with forty-one.

2. Nudity of the female sex rated highest in objectionable pictures.

3. Objectionable pictures were used subtly; many times innocent and unquestionable articles were advertised by objectionable accompanying pictures.

4. Not one of the analyzed secular magazines measured up to the Christian Criteria established in chapter "two" of this research project.

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 101.



### III. CONCLUSION

After the survey of the above magazines the conclusions expertly expressed by Harold L. Lundquist seem most adequate:

It is true . . . that much of the material in these magazines is good, helpful, and instructive. Special articles, departments for the home and housekeeper are prepared and printed with great care and definite attractiveness. After you have read these fine articles, however, there is always the chance that some one else will turn to the rot-tot which you have provided by displaying the magazine in your home.

Perhaps you reason that you skip the objectionable spots. Would you reason that way about a "slightly poisoned" loaf of bread? and is the soul and mind of your family worth less to you than their bodies?<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Harold Lundquist, "Is Your Reading Right?" Christian Life Magazine, 11:20, June, 1949.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This critical survey has been approached with an unbiased mind. The need for such a survey is even greater than was realized when the project was first undertaken. The results have been shocking; never again can the magazines which appear on the magazine racks in Christian homes be taken for granted.

#### I. THE CHURCH HAS A DUTY

As Cewthon A. Bowen so aptly says: "There is a race on to provide the 'dominant imagery' which will give direction to this generation. Shall that imagery be provided by Christianity?"<sup>1</sup> The church has a plain duty. It must provide popular materials which set forth the Christian view of life and help children and young people, as well as adults, to develop tastes in reading which are refined and religious. Such periodicals must be superior to the unworthy materials with which they compete for the interest and support of youth. The most talented writers must contribute to them, persons who understand how to make Christian ideas appealing. The

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<sup>1</sup> Cewthon A. Bowen, Literature and the Christian Life, p. 69.

kind of pictures used, the way pages are made up, the type and paper—all of these have to be considered. The reader must find enough satisfaction to form habits of applying the principles of Christianity to the choosing and reading of periodicals.

The church not only has a duty in instigating and promoting clean and wholesome periodicals, but first it must awaken to the fact that homes need a house cleaning of their periodical shelves. Every Christian home must be stimulated to ask of its magazines, What are the mental pictures provided by this magazine leading us to think? How are they affecting the ideals and habits of our children and young people? Do they make the material things of life appear all-important? What are they leading us to decide about life?

In this connection the words of Paul have added emphasis: "Whatsoever things are true . . . . honorable . . . . just . . . . pure . . . . lovely . . . . of good report . . . . think on these things." If we are to put this admonition into action, we are obliged to provide reading matter which will put before the minds of our age the things which Paul lists as the essentials of Christian thinking.<sup>2</sup>

## II. CONCLUSION

These seem to be the inevitable conclusions:

1. Not one of the secular magazines surveyed measured up to the established criteria.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 68.

2. There is need for a Christian magazine which will give the live interests of the secular magazines and yet hold as its central core the essentials to a spiritual life.

3. A majority of the magazines tended either openly or subtly toward the risqué, the lewd, the glamorous, and to the material things in life which are all dangerous to youth.

4. The casual reader is left with the feeling that the sensuous and glamorous are all important.

5. There is need for Free Methodist homes to clean out their magazines.

If this survey of periodicals in Christian homes challenges to a clean-up in the reading habits of conscientious Christian youth and adults, then considering the absence of a fervent Christian influence in the lukewarm and non-Christian homes, it is logical that the need for clean wholesome periodicals is even greater than this critical survey has presented.

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