

PRESS & TELEVISION

Wonders to Behold

"Neovideo: One Step Away" by James Monaco, in *American Film* (Nov. 1978), P.O. Box 966, Farmingdale, N.Y. 11737.

The history of nonprint media—film and broadcasting—has always been governed by two basic forces: technology and economics, mixed occasionally with some politics. It is well to keep this in mind, says Monaco, editor of *Celebrity* and *Media Culture*, as the electronic media revolution propels us toward "the bright age of neovideo."

Cable television promises to give us (by 1984) a "wired nation" with innumerable channels of communication, including two-way service. But it is still, at 19 percent, well short of the 30 percent saturation (the ratio of homes with cable TV to total television homes) regarded as the critical point at which cable would become a major competitor to network broadcasting. It may never get there, thanks to new technology, such as Texas Instruments' TI tuner, which can divide the electromagnetic spectrum so as to expand the number of television channels currently available.

Broadcasters expect technical breakthroughs, including new satellite relay systems inexpensive enough (at \$100 per hour) to permit entrepreneurs to compete with the networks in distributing programs nationwide. On the horizon is "digital transmission," which could end all problems with interference and lead to flat wall screens with picture and sound quality far better than that provided by today's cathode ray television receivers.

With more numerous conventional noncable channels available, says Monaco, both cable and noncable broadcasters may move toward more specialized programming aimed at smaller target audiences that advertisers want to reach. Television programs on disc and tape may be sold in stores and through the mails. Reduced federal regulation of the entire communications industry seems very likely, Monaco warns, and we should brace ourselves for "chaotic" new developments in technology and marketing—and a fresh set of problems.

RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

Saving a Church

"Trendier Than Thou" by Paul Seabury in *Harper's* (Oct. 1978), 1255 Portland Place, Boulder, Colo. 80321.

During the fall of 1977, the American Episcopal Church suffered schism when a small, conservative faction broke away to form a new Anglican Church in North America. Although the number of parishioners attracted to the new sect has not been large (an estimated 15,000), the split has been a traumatic experience for Episcopalians.