

PRESS & TELEVISION

yond its numbers, that power has been bestowed on it by the press and political liberals.

Exaggerating Falwell's power serves liberals by supplying a scapegoat for their 1980 election losses and by lending a sense of urgency to their appeals for funds. The American Civil Liberties Union recently raised \$100,000 in one month after it ran a newspaper advertisement playing on fears that the Moral Majority would succeed in re-establishing school prayer. But why have newsmen played along?

For one thing, Falwell & Co. know how to grab headlines and 20-second TV news clips with outrageous quips ("We're becoming a society with a chicken in every pot and a baby in every trash can"). More fundamentally, most New York and Washington reporters are liberals—"the very people Falwell blames for driving America into a moral tailspin." A 1981 survey of 200 influential journalists found that 86 percent seldom or never go to church. Hence, newsmen fear Falwell's intolerance and anti-intellectual attitudes, even as they fail to understand his appeal and its limits. Yet, Rosenberg notes, the media furor has probably helped Falwell: "What's described as powerful often ends up being powerful."

Largely ignored by the press amid all the noise, says Rosenberg, has been "the human side"—the legitimate concerns of Americans worried about the moral decay in national life.

*No News Like
Washington News*

"The Washington Press" by Dom Bonafede in *National Journal* (Apr. 17, Apr. 24, and May 1, 1982), 1730 M St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

The way the big-league U.S. press and television reporters tell it, 40 percent of what matters in America takes place in Washington, D.C. The nation's capital dominates the news now as never before. Of *all* the news items broadcast by CBS-TV, for instance, almost two-fifths originate in Washington; of all the domestic wordage sent out to American newspapers by the major wire services, AP and UPI, nearly 40 percent is Washington news. So reports Bonafede, chief political correspondent for the *National Journal*.

The federal government's growth spurt since 1965 partly explains the Washington news explosion. But since "news" to some extent is whatever editors and reporters say it is, the growth of the Washington press/TV corps itself is a factor. Forty years ago, when Franklin D. Roosevelt was President, he met the press by chatting with a handful of reporters gathered around his desk. Now, presidential press conferences draw 200 reporters, TV cameramen, and others. According to Bonafede, there are some 10,000 journalists of all varieties, and 2,989 news organizations, ranging from the *Los Angeles Times* to the Bergen County, N.J., *Record*; in town. ABC's TV news operation is headquartered in Washington, not New York, and has a staff of 450. The *New York Times*'s Washington bureau had 32 reporters in 1979; now it has

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40. The *Washington Post's* news staff has jumped from 350 in 1966 to about 500 today.

TV, radio, and daily newspapers can't take care of all the Washington news. That's where the specialized "newsletter industry" comes in. Some 2,500 different newsletters, both commercial and nonprofit, are now published in the capital. Uncle Sam is largely responsible. "Every time there was a new federal program, there would be two, four or six newsletters," explains Fred Goss, president of the Newsletter Association of America. President Reagan's determination to cut Big Government has ended the newsletter boom, Bonafede says, but 16,000 subscribers still each pay \$600 a year for *Tax Management* and 1,800 fork out \$800 for *The Energy Daily*.

Big Government is now matched by Big Media. But the question again is: Is bigger better?

RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

America's Liberal Theologians

"The Politics of American Theology Faculty" by Everett Carl Ladd and G. Donald Ferree, Jr., in *This World* (Summer 1982), Institute for Educational Affairs, 210 E. 86th St., Sixth Floor, N.Y., N.Y. 10028.

How do Americans' religious values affect their political views? Scholars debate whether deep religious faith tends to make a person politically conservative (e.g., anti-abortion) or liberal (e.g., pro-nuclear disarmament). Now, a new survey of America's Christian theologians compounds the riddle. *These* religious leaders, at least, are more liberal than most Americans on many political issues but conservative on questions of personal morality. So report Ladd and Ferree, director and associate director, respectively, of the Roper Center.

The Roper Center polled 1,112 professors in Christian seminaries and schools of religion in late 1981 and early 1982. Theologians, they found, are far more likely than other Americans to call themselves political liberals. Fifty percent of the theologians claimed to be liberal; 22 percent, moderate; and 27 percent, conservative. (For Americans overall, the figures are 21 percent liberal, 33 percent moderate, and 47 percent conservative, according to a 1981 Roper poll.) The political gap was especially evident on issues of welfare and defense spending. Only 29 percent of theologians, but 55 percent of the general public, thought welfare spending was too high. By contrast, 74 percent of the theologians objected to Washington's defense outlays; just 29 percent of the general public agreed. The theologians were closer to other Americans on so-called social issues. Seventy percent deemed abortion immoral in cases where a married woman simply wanted no more children; 65 percent of all Americans concurred. When asked whether such abor-