

Pierce

because, he said, though it spoke out "eloquently" against "implied censorship of adult themes in comedy programs" when the family-viewing concept was proposed, not enough of its members have spoken out against "explicit" demands for censorship now that criticism has shifted to violence.

He was particularly critical of the campaign against NBC's *Jesus of Nazareth* by "a few religious groups" who had never seen it, which led General Motors to withdraw as first-run sponsor (BROADCASTING, March 21, et seq.), and of the "even more alarming" announcement by the National Parent Teachers Association that it was putting the networks "on six-months probation" to give them a chance to "respond to the demands of the PTA's 6.5-million members" (BROADCASTING, April 11). He said he had welcomed criticism of the American Medical Association's anti-violence stand by Jack Valenti, president of the Motion Picture Association of America, but that "we need more support like his in this public debate."

"It is incumbent on all of us to continue to lend our full creative talents to solving the problems on the television screen itself," he said. But to defeat "demands for government regulation of program content in that particular area," he asserted, "we must all speak out with one voice.

"We must speak to our various publics: the viewers, the advertisers, social scientists, educators, Washington. We must make clear the message that program censorship, whether implied or direct, will not be tolerated in any form. To do less is to undermine the creative cornerstone of our business."

Suicide tries for live TV coverage

Man shoots himself at televised WLOX-TV Easter service, but plug is pulled in time on broadcast

"Brother, I love you," a worshipper at the First Baptist church in Biloxi, Miss., called to Ford Dawson, a retired Air Force major who reportedly had a history of mental instability. "I love you, too," Mr. Dawson called back. Then he shot himself to death.

The suicide took place Easter Sunday at services televised live by WLOX-TV Biloxi.

Mr. Dawson had entered the church with a dog while services were in progress and scuffled with an usher who, according to WLOX-TV, apparently saw the pistol Mr. Dawson was carrying and tried to stop him from entering. Mr. Dawson fired a shot into the air and proceeded to the pulpit, at which point the director of the broadcast pulled the plug on the transmission.

When Mr. Dawson reached the pulpit, he spoke softly for about two minutes, according to the pastor of the church, "mumbled something about the resurrection," then shot his dog and himself. "He just kept looking straight at the television camera at the back of the church," the pastor said. "I'm convinced he came specifically to commit suicide before live television."

PTV stations turn cold shoulder to public affairs in newest SPC round

PBS outlets pick old standbys in programs, reject package of special events proposed by WETA

If you're a producer with a new idea and you want to get it funded for national public-television play, look for money from underwriters or the Corporation for Public Broadcasting—Public Broadcasting Service member stations aren't likely to foot the bill.

That advice became apparent this month as PBS wound down its fourth station program cooperative (SPC), a complex auction-like mechanism whereby the stations decide what programs they will fund jointly. This year's SPC survivors are expected to make up about 50% of the stations' schedules.

The trend is not new but perhaps was intensified this year by economics—the $14.7 million shelled out by the stations is their own. Last year's $12-million contribution was supplemented by $3 million from CPB and $2.5 million from the Ford Foundation.

This year's SPC, which for the first time will include two "minimarkets" later this year, brought in two new programs, KQED(TV) San Francisco's *Womantime* and WGBH-TV Boston's *The Edelin Conviction.*

Many of public television's standard shows are back, including WGBH-TV Boston's *Evening at Symphony, Nova* and *The French Chef,* WNET(TV) New York's *Great Performances,* WETA-TV Washington and WNET's *The MacNeil/Lehrer Report,* Children's Television Workshop's *Sesame Street,* the Maryland Center for Public Broadcasting's *Wall Street Week* and WETA-TV's *Washington Week in Review,* which are among the 24 that survived the final round which had about 50 choices. (Still considered as remote possibilities for SPC selection, however, are the New Hampshire Network's *Antiques,* the Oregon Educational Public Broadcasting Service's *Folk Guitar with Laura Weber* and WNET's *White Stone*).

Dennis Pack, of KESD(TV) Brookings, S.D., admits that "we've gotten the old-timers back," but sees the SPC as a "good source of the basic programing." And with tight money, he added, "fewer stations were willing to take the risk" on untried product.

Jim Loper, KCET(TV) Los Angeles, characterizes the SPC programs as the "backbone" of the system, adding that stations are especially willing to buy shows such as *Wall Street Week* and *Washington Week in Review,* which offer 52 programs a year for "modest" prices—$550,144 (with $176,201 from the Maryland Center) and $346,812 respectively.

That motivation doesn't always hold true, as Dick Heuer of WJCT(TV) Jacksonville, Fla., pointed out. He characterized *Nova* (cost: $2,416,000 with $196,000 from the National Science Foundation and $500,000 from Exxon) as "the only science documentary series on the air" and "one that you don't feel you could go without." And he explained that stations will have the chance to expand their buys through the "minimarkets."

It's the minimarket coming up in June that Ward Chamberlin is banking on to rescue WETA-TV. Since the SPC rejected his station's $997,024 special events package, the public-affairs programing and job-security pictures at the station have been

