

## **CBS' BERNIE GOLDBERG ON TV MEDIA BIAS**

### **A Synopsis of Goldberg's 2002 Book, "BIAS"**

**John H. Painter**

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#### **FOREWORD.**

Extract from Bernard Goldberg's BIAS<sup>1</sup> ...

*"And that's why the media stars can so easily talk about "right-wing" Republicans and "right-wing" Christians and "right-wing" Miami Cubans and "right-wing" radio talk show hosts. But, the only time they utter the words "left-wing" is when they're talking about an airplane."*

... End of extract from Goldberg's book.

That quote was from Bernie Goldberg's May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2001 op-ed piece in the Wall Street Journal, entitled, On Media Bias, Network Stars Are Rather Clueless. This one quote eloquently sums up the book he published the next year.

#### **INTRODUCTION.**

This is the fifth in a series of synopses of current books being used to formulate a Christian basis for interpreting the 'signs of our times'. In the first writing of the accompanying paper, Interpreting the Signs of Our Times<sup>2</sup>, I commented,

*"Communication and the Media, as players in the current state of affairs, is obviously important. However, none of the four books dealt with it. Therefore, I must interpret this lack as the need for another book that does deal with it. I shall be searching for such a book."*

Well, I've found it, and it is Goldberg's book, of which I was previously unaware.

Bernard Goldberg, a winner of 7 Emmy Awards, spent nearly thirty years in CBS News. He was a familiar face to those older Americans who had a habit of

watching the evening TV news shows. I had done so since the days of Murrow and Cronkite. In more recent years, when the left-wing bias of TV Network News became so obvious and blatant, I gravitated away from the three major networks to the cable's Fox News Network. So, it was a surprise to me to see this book that lays open CBS News like a festering wound. It's an insider showing the world the internals of TV News. And, it cost Mr. Goldberg, mightily.

But, it gives me enough information to enable me to integrate TV News into the model for Christian interpretation of the signs of the times.

### **WHAT THE BOOK IS.**

Goldberg's book is not analytical, as are the first four in this series of synopses<sup>3,4,5,6</sup>. Rather, it is anecdotal. Although, he does give some numbers. Goldberg makes his points about TV News by telling a lot of first-hand stories from his multi-decades of experience in CBS News. His stories are about major cultural issues and how they are reported. He names names and cites figures, together with quotes of conversations with the CBS News President, Producers, Night-Time News 'Stars', and other News notables.

The book's major point is to confirm and verify what has been obvious to viewers for a long time. And, that is that CBS and the other major media news organizations report the news with a slant. And, that slant is what is politically called left-wing or liberal. They are biased in their reporting. And, that bias operates in favor of some particular things and against others. But, Goldberg's first surprise is that 'left-wing' reporters are not operating so as to conform with a particular brand of politics. Rather, they are operating out of a world view. They are just reflecting how they view the world. They see the world one particular way. And, they think their view reflects reality. Therefore, anyone who doesn't view it their way is outside the cultural pale, so to speak, and must be intellectually alien.

The second surprise is that this left-wing slanted TV News is not a conspiracy. That is, it is not being perpetrated on the public by orders from on high, through a cadre of reporters selected to reflect this particular worldview. With this conclusion of Goldberg's I find it very hard to agree. And, that's because it just doesn't make sense in a nuts and bolts world. But, I'll have more to say about that, later.

### **WHAT THE BOOK SAYS.**

#### **It's About The Elite.**

Goldberg characterizes these left-wing TV News reporters to be among those journalists (including the print media) who think they are better than 'regular' people. They think they are smarter, more sophisticated, fairer, and more sensitive. He quotes media stars who admit things like that, and that they are the ones "fighting the good fight." Such journalists, according to Goldberg, think they are doing the Lord's work, although I doubt one of them would phrase it that way.

Now, in my experience, these kinds of views are not restricted to journalists alone. They are all found in other venues, such as academia and government. And, what covers all such views is the cloak of elitism. Such people are elitists. They think they know best what is good for ordinary folks. And, they want to tell them so, whether in TV News, the Classroom, or the Court Room.

Elitism prompts a kind of behaviorism known as 'political correctness'. And, that manifests in the way an elitist will phrase his/her ideas for public consumption.

There are some things that will only be stated a certain way. There are other things that will not be stated at all. For instance a Cherokee will be described as a “native American,” not an “Indian”. Someone will be “physically challenged” or “handicapped”, not “disabled”. And, although a political conservative will always be identified so, or as “right-wing”, a left-winger will never be called such or “liberal”. These are the politically correct rules such elitists live by, according to Goldberg.

So, what are the national issues to which these elitists apply their political correctness? Goldberg lists a few as feminism, abortion, race, affirmative action, gay rights, the homeless, and of course, politics. These are among the social and cultural issues about which TV News will slant their reporting. There is a more general rule that manifests in these specific issues. I will get to that, below.

### **What the Numbers Say About the Problem.**

Goldberg does not just give anecdotes. He also provides some poll numbers. He cited a survey of 139 Washington bureau chiefs and congressional correspondents, made by the Freedom Forum and the Roper Center in 1996. The results are as follows:

- 89% of the journalists said they voted for Bill Clinton in 1992, compared with just 43% of the nonjournalist voters.
- 7% of the journalists voted for George Bush; 37% of the voters did.
- 2% of the news people voted for Ross Perot, while 19% of the electorate did.
- 50% of journalists said they were Democrats.
- 4% of journalists said they were Republicans.
- 61% said they were “liberal” or “moderate to liberal”.
- 9% said they were “conservative” or “moderate to conservative”.

Goldberg then cites a 1985 Los Angeles Times poll, conducted on a nationwide sample of 3,000 journalists and the same number from the general public:

- The journalists/public split on being liberal was 55%/23%.
- The journalists/public split on favoring Ronald Reagan was 30%/56%.
- The journalists/public split on favoring abortion was 82%/49%.
- The journalists/public split on favoring public school prayer was 25%/74%.
- The journalists/public split on affirmative action was 81%/56%.
- The journalists/public split on death penalty for murder was 47%/75%.
- The journalists/public split on stricter handgun controls was 78%/50%.

So, to paraphrase Apollo-13's Jim Lovell, "*New York, we have a problem.*"

### **The Basis for the Bias.**

How is it that people who are in the business of reporting the news to the public can continually be so biased? To me, there seem to only be two possibilities. One, it's a conspiracy or two, it's what Goldberg says. Let's look at what he says, before pursuing the possibilities for a conspiracy. It might very well end up being both.

Goldberg says that, "*Too many news people, especially the ones at worldwide headquarters in New York, where all the big decisions are made, basically talk to other people just like themselves. ...they can easily go through life never meeting anybody who has a thought different from their own.*" And, apparently, all those same-thinking people that the TV journalists associate with are politically correct elitists.

Add to this another Goldberg observation that, "*The problem is that so many TV journalists simply don't know what to think about certain issues until the New York Times and the Washington Post tell them what to think. Those, big, important newspapers set the agenda that network news people follow.*" What this means in a far shorter statement is that TV journalists are intellectually lazy. Combine politically correct elitism with intellectual laziness among most of the TV journalists who only talk among themselves and you have a fine environment for news bias.

Another observation is that since the times of Cronkite and Murrow, TV News has morphed into entertainment. Whereas originally TV News didn't make any money for the networks, now it makes money. So, it is subject to ratings. And news producers are scared of dropping ratings, because then sponsors will pull the money. And, entertainment, as Hollywood has discovered, is a fine medium for manipulating the beliefs of the public. So, TV News doesn't want to put something on that may drive away its public viewers. Unfortunately, TV News no longer is in touch with its public. And, they are being driven away.

### **WHAT THE BOOK MEANS IN THE LARGER CONTEXT.**

#### **Is It a Conspiracy?**

If this kind of elitist behavior was only observable in TV Network News, then we could just go to Fox News, without worrying about it. Unfortunately, this behavior also occurs in other institutions, such as government and academia. So says some of the other books I've synopsized. They include Huntington<sup>3</sup> and Steyn<sup>4</sup>. So, we see common left-wing behavior in multiple national institutions. What does this make one think of?

Is it a conspiracy, or is it just a common worldview of a very small minority of very influential people? If it is a worldview, then how did all the people from different venues acquire it? Did they acquire it before they launched out into their venues? That is, is this worldview a product of where these people were educated? That would make a nice investigative study, but we don't have time for it, here.

If it is just a common worldview, then how did all these people come to believe in it, with such a uniformity of belief? It has many of the aspects of a religion. You might say that they almost worship it. (See Goldberg's descriptions of Dan Rather.) If so, then to a Christian it would be idolatry. And, that's a possibility, if all these people are non-Christian. Or, they might consider themselves Christian, without knowing what that really is. But, what they do have in common is being the product of a Christian society. For, the United States is not yet post-Christian in Western

(Christian) Civilization, as Steyn<sup>4</sup> reveals. But, let's not get into Christian things, quite yet.

Conspiracy is most often thought of in its legal definition. However, Webster's gives a gentler definition, " ... *to join in a secret agreement to do an unlawful or wrongful act or to use such means to accomplish a lawful end*".

There is nothing unlawful about what these elitists do, unless one considers that their ends violate the federal Constitution in several instances. But, it would be impossible to legally prove that academicians, jurists, bureaucrats, and TV News reporters were joined in a legal conspiracy. And, all of the other nations of the Post-Christian West have already legally arrived at the destination these elitists desire, that being a fully Socialist United States of America.

So, it may be a conspiracy, but not an illegal one. The elitists are accomplishing their ends, without violating the nation's laws. So did Hitler. The difference is that his Socialist State was of the political Right, whereas the American brand of Socialism is of the political Left.

### **It's All About Socialism.**

It is clear from Steyn<sup>4</sup> that the destination of the elitists is a Social-Democratic Welfare State. That is one where the government controls production and money and the use of collected taxes for the ends of the government, if not the people. That is, the citizens are to fund through their taxes those things that the elitists want to spend it for. And, remember, they know better than regular people. To achieve these ends requires a Socialist Government. Steyn<sup>4</sup> saw this. Huntington<sup>3</sup> saw this. And, even Burnham saw it in his 1964 classic, *Suicide of the West*<sup>7</sup>. It is a strong, centralized form of government, which is far removed from what the Founding Fathers set up.

And, the American people have seen this in glaring detail since January, 2009. But, many Americans don't know what to make of what they are seeing. That's because what the elitists have been accomplishing since 1965 by more stealthy methods is now being pursued full force in the open. Perhaps the present series of papers may help Americans understand what they are seeing, now.

I have much more to say about these issues, but it will be in two companion papers, the first being about Christian interpretation of signs of the times<sup>2</sup>. The second is *The Battle for America*, which is still in preparation<sup>8</sup>. In these two, all the synopses will be put together.

### **THE CHRISTIAN BOTTOM LINE.**

Goldberg's book does not look at issues about how slanted TV Network News 'fits' into the overall elitist scheme of things in the venues of administrative and judicial government, academia, and politics. That is, this book does not look at how the Media plays such a key role in the drive toward a Socialist-Democratic Welfare State. But, the book does fill a gap in the need for a Christian interpretational model for the signs of the times. And, so, this synopsis, short though it is, shall be immediately plugged into that model.

### **CONCLUSION.**

As I've worked on *The Battle for America*, the search has led me to look at what it was that Lincoln actually did with regard to our government. It turned up another

book. And, the results from that book are astounding, in terms of what the reality of the Civil War really was. That book<sup>9</sup> will be integrated into a future paper.

As a hint ... the argument over what form our government should really take goes back to 1776. It was Lincoln who drastically changed the form of our government, opening the door to what it now is. Lincoln was the first President from Illinois, who ran on a platform of 'change.' But, he wasn't the last.

As for now, I'm finished with Bias and am pressing on to the accompanying papers.

## REFERENCES.

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  - <sup>2</sup> Interpreting the Signs of Our Times, by John H. Painter, June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2009, available electronically from <http://www.AlphaAquila.org>.
  - <sup>3</sup> Who Are We?, by Samuel P. Huntington, Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2004, ISBN-13: 978-0-684-87053-3.
  - <sup>4</sup> America Alone, by Mark Steyn, 2006, Regnery Publ. Inc., ISBN 978-0-89526-078-9.
  - <sup>5</sup> Revolution, by George Barna, 2005, Tyndale House Publ., ISBN-13: 978-1-14143-0758-9.
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  - <sup>7</sup> Suicide of the West, by James Burnham, 1985 (originally 1964), Regnery, ISBN 0-89526-599-0.
  - <sup>8</sup> The Battle for America, by John H. Painter, July 17<sup>th</sup>, 2009, available electronically from <http://www.AlphaAquila.org>.
  - <sup>9</sup> The Real Lincoln, by Thomas J. DiLorenzo, 2002, Three Rivers Press (a division of Random House), ISBN 0-7615-2646-3.