

emphasizing the need to research violence motivations rather than sending away at the broadcaster," he announced the formation of a violence epidemiology branch" at the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta. Professionals from fields including psychiatry, criminology, public policy development, medical anthropology, and statistics will explore "patterns of cir-

tions about the power of the mass media," said Ronald J. Milavsky, an NBC vice-president.

He said "standards and practices departments—the network censors—are continually on the lookout for anything in a script which might be imitated and lead to some harm." NBC completed a report of its own and found that poverty and aggressive friends or parents increase antagonistic behavior more reliably than television viewing.

NCTV, unlike Donald Wildmon's Coalition for Better Television, has concentrated specifically on violence as a health concern rather than the broader issue of morality in television. However,

NCTV chairman Thomas Radecki, a professor of psychiatry at the University of Illinois, believes violence on television "fosters values hostile to democracy and to Judeo-Christian ethics." He said his group does not oppose all violence on television. Documentaries and news reports that portray violence and its consequences realistically are good, he said, and some entertainment programs such as "Hill Street Blues" succeed in depicting "accurate, appropriate" violence. However, with cable television spreading rapidly, Radecki predicts the problems of unnecessary, harmful violence will increase.

BETH SPRING

Georgetown Does Not Have to Recognize a Gay Student Group

A recent court ruling in Washington, D.C., permits Georgetown University to refuse to grant recognition and campus privileges to a homosexual students' group because of the school's Roman Catholic "history and tradition." However, Superior Court Judge Sylvia Bacon suggested in her decision that if a national policy existed to protect gay rights, the Supreme Court's recent *Bob Jones University* decision could compel a different conclusion.

The *Bob Jones* decision was based on a national "fundamental, overriding" interest in ending racial discrimination, which was found to supersede First Amendment protections of free exercise of religion.

The Georgetown case is substantially different, but by citing *Bob Jones*, the judge indicates how that landmark ruling may have established sweeping new precedents.

A group of about 25 gay students at Georgetown filed suit against the school in 1980, invoking a D.C. human rights law that bans discrimination on the basis of sexual preference. The university had withheld recognition of the group, forcing it to forgo such privileges as funding, mailing services, and a campus mail box.

The students claimed that Georgetown is not religious, and it likened discrimination against homosexuals to racial bias. Georgetown, a Jesuit institution, argued that it has "a history and tradition which is specifically Catholic."

At the trial, university lawyers relied on a 1975 Vatican Declaration on Sexual Ethics as well as a pastoral letter from the archbishop of San Francisco to make their case. Catholic doctrine on homosexuality holds it to be "gravely evil and a disordered use of the sexual faculty."

Judge Bacon sided with the school, finding that the Catholic position on homosexuality is based on "sincerely held religious beliefs." She said it is beyond the reach of the courts to "probe the proper interpretation or application of Roman Catholic beliefs on homosexuality or on the duties of the faithful."

Religious freedom requires giving a school such as Georgetown the right to adhere to its beliefs and to be free from complying with such laws as the D.C. statute, which is contrary to the church's teaching. Bacon said even though Georgetown engages in secular activities and receives federal grant money, these factors do not impede "its status as a church-affiliated educational institution."

Upon winning the case, the university's official reaction was muted. President Timothy S. Healy, S.J., issued a prepared statement, saying "faculty and students will look to close the rift these days have opened and heal the hurt they have brought; to show all the men and women of Georgetown, even those who fought for a belief we cannot share, our rightful understanding of their worth." The students plan to appeal the ruling. □



NCTV Chairman Thomas Radecki

stance," Koop said, and search for ways to reduce levels of violence. The impasse between networks and critics is a classic chicken-or-egg dilemma, with researchers insisting that television increases violence and television spokesmen saying their programming is based on what viewers want. The landmark report criticizing television produced in 1982 by the National Institute of Mental Health, which said television has become a major socialization institution comparable to family, church, and school. It portrays an unrealistic world, the report says, in which there are more lawmakers and lawyers than any other group and violence occurs ten times more often than in real life. The result is that we come to accept and expect violence in their own lives. Network representatives at the October NCTV conference challenged these positions, saying much of the research separates social changes apart from television that may increase societal violence. "There has always been a tendency for most people, including reporters, to hold exaggerated expecta-