'Watchdog' newspapers: replaced by marketing?

Newspapers seeking to attract young readers 18 to 34 years old are dealing with five distinct groups, each with its own view of the ideal newspaper, says a Michigan State University research-

er. The research was conducted by Eileen Lehnert, an instructor in the MSU School of Journalism, who says past research on the so-called youth market had been based on the assumption that the

youth market was a homogeneous group.

"Just because people are in a particular age bracket doesn't mean they have the same interest," says Ms. Lehnert. "That's just

mean they have the same interest, says MS. Defined. That a just ont a logical assumption."

She classified the five groups she found according to what ear wanted most in an ideal newspaper: information stalker, consumer advocate, fascinated feature reader, opinion seeker and pillar of the community. Each group responded in a separate way to 62 attitudinal statements about "the ideal newspaper."

As a result of her research, MS. Lehnert has developed a questional statement of the consumer o

tionnaire which newspapers can use to survey their own youth markets. The survey would show how large each group is in the

markets. The survey would show him, such a survey community.

Ms. Lehnert also discovered in her research that young readers do not feel it is important if the press acts as a watchdog on government or gives much space to government and politics.

"That doesn't mean newspapers should no longer consider it important to act as a watchdog," says Ms. Lehnert, but rather that promoting that aspect might not attract younger readers.

Politics: why our poor are isolated

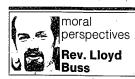
Ernest Hemingway once observed that the difference between the rich and poor is purely financial. Which would suggest that the way to eliminate powerty is to take some money from the rich and give it to the poor.

And if the community did not trust the poor with money, it could provide services essential for existance at no cost. Food stamps, public housing, assistance to families with dependent children, Medicaid are among the aids that were and are part of that effort.

The Reagan administration has determined that this transfer to the poor needs to be reduced so that "we succeed in making this nation a land whose expanding economy offers an opportunity for all to better themselves." Stopping inflation is presented as the primary concern. The principal cause of inflation from \$227 billion from \$227 billion from federal programs the inflation will be reduced.

The \$468 billion of federally budgeted money untouched by these cuts includes Social Security, Veterans Benefits, Medicare and Defense.

THE FACT that the proposed federal budget demands an intolerable sacrifice from low-income people is not new information. We have been aware of the disproportionate bur-



den placed on the working poor, the minorities, children, the unemployed and families headed by women.

The urgent question now is what are we going to do about it.

One possibility is to define the poor out of existence. Martin Anderson, President Reagan's chief adviser on the domestic economy wrote a book several years ago that proved there were no poor people in the United States. This was done by careful calculations with the "poverty line" which was determined by multiplying the minimum cost of food for a family of four for a month by a factor of three because food supposedly represents one-third of a family's monthly budget.

By adding the "in kind" non-cash income a family might receive, such as the cash value of food stamps, Medicaid, school breakfasts and lunches and rent subsidies, and pressing the numbers hard enough, you end up with no poor people in the United States.

ANOTHER POSSIBILITY would be to blame the inflationary spiral on the poor. But & here we have David Stockman's own analysis from November, 1980 that the economic crisis was not caused by the federal deficit or mas-sive programs to the poor, but rather by a malfunctioning economy.

A third possibility would be to accept, as some suggest the Bible counsels in Mark 147, the poor as a part of life and throw out a "safety net" to those who are "truly needy." But that would isolate a verse out of context, which is the essence of heresy.

A fourth possibility would be to concentrate on the causes of poverty, including unemployment, inferior job-training programs, misses of corporate capital investment for speculation, and focus our vast technology and skills on alleviating it.

Hemingway was only partly right. The dif-ference could also be political.

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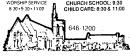
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