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# The Business of Snatching Minds



Anyone who works in the business world is familiar with the current marketing jargon. Advertisers talk of market share. For example, Coca-Cola, the world's largest beverage company, sometimes calculates its sales in terms of share of the total of all the liquids consumed by the entire world's population. On this basis, they figure that only a small percentage of all liquids drunk by humans is a Coca-Cola product. Conclusion? The sky is the limit if everyone can be expected to drink only Coca-Cola beverages.

Marketing strategists extend this concept to other measurements — for example “share of wallet.” But the most far-reaching concept in terms of endtime spiritual phenomena is the concept of “share of mind.” Not only do leading marketing professionals use this concept to great effect, we can be sure that Satan has also mastered this technique. The proof? The “share of mind” that God's truth gets in our time — specifically also in so-called “Christian” nations — is probably at an all-time low. In fact, the “share of mind” trend that we are discussing here is actually

prophesied to occur in the last days. The sad reality is that very few people will ever be conscious of this grave development. Truth and vital facts of eternal significance are being crowded out of the mind by the siren lures of trivia that capture most people's attention today.

Why is the mind such an important aspect of Satan's endtime strategies? And, sadly, why has this strategy been so successful?

## Why the Mind Is an Endtime Target

The human mind is a strategic focus in the cosmic battle for at least three important reasons:

First, our faith involves the mind: “Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD” (Isaiah 1:18). Faith, belief and obedience are connected to reasoning. As the Apostle Paul admonished, we are urged to use our minds — not to put our brains on the shelf: “I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind” (1 Corinthians 14:15). In contrast, the cults try to immobilize, disable and circumvent the natural safeguard of the mind. That is not so with God. It is true that our minds are not able to fully capture His greatness and



In conclusion, we see the main reasons the human mind is the logical point of assault. It is the essence that exercises faith and chooses a relationship with God; it is the spiritual war zone; and lastly, through our physical brains, our minds can entrench behaviors and responses that we may have to strain to unlearn.

His ways. But that doesn't mean we don't accept logic and reason to support our beliefs.

Next, our mind is a spiritual battleground. Whatever thoughts gain access — whether through our eyes, ears or spirits — it is in the mind that they impact our hearts and souls. In fact, what the Bible calls the “heart” is, in essence, what our minds choose to believe and pursue. Our thoughts represent reality and rank eternal importance just as much as our actions. Christ made this point very clear: “But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (Matthew 5:28). Here we see that the evil thoughts of the mind, if not repulsed, become actual sins of the heart whether there has been any physical consummation or not.

Finally, the mind finds its interface in the brain, a fleshly organ that learns and adapts. This gray matter can become habituated to lifestyle, thought patterns and thinking processes. Like an exercised muscle that becomes stronger, so the physical pathways of the brain can become trained and expert. To the extent that we have allowed our brains to train bad thoughts and behaviors, we need to undo them. The Apostle Paul referred to this as renewal: “Do not conform any

longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is — his good, pleasing and perfect will” (Romans 12:2).

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### Jamming the Radar of the Human Mind

Without question, the mind of modern-day mankind is under assault. The attacks and incursions are increasing and coordinated as perhaps never before. Moreover, a global communications machinery is rapidly taking form that plays a pivotal role in enabling the Antichrist and the beast to deceive the world. Let's review just a few of the developments in this area that have been sweeping America and the world in recent decades.

1. Media Concentration: Today, less than 10 firms — all of them global giants — dominate world media whether radio, television broadcasting, cable, print or the internet. They include

world-spanning companies such as Sony, News Corporation, Time Warner, Viacom, Disney, Bertelsmann and others. By some estimates less than 50 companies control the world's media. It is difficult to keep up to date with this fast-moving group. This industry is always changing as media takeover and acquisition activity remains high around the globe. A recent survey of media and financial executives reported a strong desire to continue acquiring media properties.<sup>1</sup> Rupert Murdoch, now arguably the world's most powerful media mogul who built News Corporation, famously predicted earlier this year that the world would have only three large media companies in three years.<sup>2</sup> He might be right.

What are these firms doing? They are building and consolidating distribution channels to the entryways of the mind — the eyes and ears of mankind. We can see that a massive and unified information machinery has taken form around the world. Of course, this would be good if they were all disseminating the Gospel to the four corners of the world; however, as is well known, media owners and their professional staffs are largely dominated by secular humanist thought. Mostly, the messages carried by the media are being

Another study that measured the hours spent upon television, cable networks, internet, recorded music and movie theatres in 2002 concluded that media consumption of these categories rose 30 percent since 1977.<sup>5</sup> Most of the time that people are spending on media consumption is concerned more with entertainment than musing (thinking).



determined by consumer wants and the demands of corporate profitability. All of the large global media firms are public companies that must satisfy their shareholders. High share prices and dividends, not purity and high morals, are what matters to this constituency. In one way or another, the interests of commerce drive the message. As the head of Westinghouse (which at the time owned CBS, the television network) once put it, “We are here to serve advertisers. That is our *raison d’être*.”<sup>3</sup>

This global concentration trend has great significance for the world today for a number of reasons. In keeping with the theme of this article, we can at least conclude that this development is playing a key role in a “mind jamming” strategy of the human mind during these last days. Clearly, it is not accidental that this process has played out over such a short period, having

largely occurred in accelerated fashion since the early 1980s. Recently, media concentration has been a top news story in the US as the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has been contemplating new ownership rules that will further open the doors to yet more concentration. At a recent congressional hearing in opposition to the FCC’s proposal, John McCain, who was worried about the possible effects of continuing concentration, commented, “At some point, you’ll have many voices — and one ventriloquist.” Though he may not have known it, his words line up with prophecy. Indeed, there is only one ventriloquist behind the world’s systems. And increasingly, this voice — Satan’s — is becoming louder, shriller, more coordinated and pervasive than ever before. Already, he has been behind the popular values and humanist philosophies of mass media today.

2. Amusement and Entertainment: Just how much media does the average person consume in North America? According to a number of surveys, the average person is increasing his

watching and listening to the media. One survey conducted in 2001<sup>4</sup> reported the average North American was exposed to 3,491 hours of media output in 2000. Moreover, this amount was expected to continue to grow in the future. If one assumes that the average person sleeps eight hours each day, this staggering statistic suggests that as much as two-thirds of a person’s waking hours is being jammed with “share of mind” products. Another study that measured the hours spent upon television, cable networks, internet, recorded music and movie theatres in 2002 concluded that media consumption of these categories rose 30 percent since 1977.<sup>5</sup> Most of the time that people are spending on media consumption is concerned more with entertainment than musing (thinking). Of course, some wholesome entertainment can be valuable. But with so much entertainment, most of it of featuring questionable content, what room is there for applying our minds to the important things in life: worshipping God and studying Scripture?

3. News and Information Content: We all rely on information as we form opinions and decide matters of truth. But opinions and truth depend on the source of information. Ac-



Advertising spending per person in the US since the late 1940s (measured in 1999 dollars) has risen 5 times.<sup>9</sup> Clearly, the cares of this world have become the focus of most people. Like the pagans, many allow their minds to become concerned with material things.

According to a 2003 survey,<sup>6</sup> the vast majority of people rely upon the mass media for their news information — the same large media behemoths mentioned earlier. Eighty-three percent of Americans receive most of their news from the television, 42 percent from newspapers, 19 percent from radio, 15 percent from the internet and less than 5 percent from magazines. But much of what is identified as “popular” news programming today amounts to little more than entertainment. The newscasters tend to be aesthetically pleasing, with movie-star good looks and make up. Much of the news content is pure trivia, Hollywood output, and updates on the rich and famous. Real news that affects the hearts and souls of mankind — past, present and future — receives scant mention. As well, balanced international news continues to shrink from the public domain even during these times of foreign anti-terrorism activities. What international news does catch the eye of mass media channels is either superficial or selected for its entertainment or propaganda value. Instant coverage, scripted dialogue and plots are even turning wars into gaming events.

The result is that the average person’s mind is bombarded with entertaining images and populist messages. With that kind of in-

formational diet, the mind loses its alertness, its ability to discern truth from fiction, and its ability to see and to recognize the signs of the times. “So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled” (1 Thessalonians 5:6-7). Fewer and fewer people today have the ability to test and approve God’s will and plans. Moreover, Jesus Christ counseled His followers to be alert and to watch. How many find the time and focus to do so today?

4. Booming Advertising Exposure: It is estimated that the average American is subjected to approximately 3,000 advertising messages every day.<sup>7</sup> That figure does not include ads and messages that might be found on t-shirts, in newspapers, inside subways or on the sports apparel and equipment of Olympic athletes. As one writer puts it, “The entire system is saturated by a hyper-commercialism, a veritable commercial carpet-bombing of every aspect of human life.”<sup>8</sup> Increasingly, advertisers try to link their products with “values.” This advertising is so effective that a simple logo eventually carries a sophisticated meaning. Youth culture is particularly adept at this type of sign language. By wearing a certain brand name t-shirt, young people are demonstrating member-

ship in a specific clique or identity with a certain worldview.

The culture of advertising is also a recent phenomenon. While advertising has been around since the dawn of time, it is only following World War II that the hyper-consumerist culture began in America. Advertising spending per person in the US since the late 1940s (measured in 1999 dollars) has risen 5 times.<sup>9</sup> Clearly, the cares of this world have become the focus of most people. Like the pagans, many allow their minds to become concerned with material things. Christ said that we shouldn’t allow our minds to dwell on such matters: “What shall we eat?” or “What shall we drink?” or “What shall we wear?” For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (Matthew 6:31-33). Christ warned that in the last days we should “Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap” (Luke 21:34).

We have surveyed only some of the major endtime avenues of assault upon our minds. We could also document the rise in the use of a host of mind-altering



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drugs — from anti-depressants to recreational and abusive substances. According to the World Health Organization, depression has become a global epidemic. We could also document the rise in false religions and cults that are snatching people's minds. This last phenomenon is expressly prophesied in Scripture. Many false Christs will come in the endtimes: "Watch out that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed" (Luke 21:8-9). "For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect — if that were possible. See, I have told you ahead of time" (Matthew 24:25). The claims of false Christs will take up the "share of mind" as never before. Indeed, this is happening today.

#### The Focus of Mind That the Bible Teaches

What "share of mind" does our Lord encourage? The Bible leaves no doubt. Hundreds of verses in Scripture suggest Jesus Christ should possess our total being. Scripture leaves no doubt that God's truth and presence should dominate our minds. Perhaps the most quoted verse is found in Psalm 1: "Blessed is the

man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night" (Psalm 1:1-2). "Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long" (Psalm 119:97).

Sadly, all of us living in the super-charged media and commercialized culture of our time struggle in attaining the type of devotion that Scripture teaches. The Apostle Paul was already worried about this type of assault upon the minds of Christians 2,000 years ago:

"But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ" (2 Corinthians 11:3). Paul may not have understood the "somehow," but today we do recognize the devices and means being employed to lead our minds astray.

What can we do? We can acknowledge this encouragement: "Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God" (Colossians 3: 2-3). But in our time of a massive, coordinated assault upon the functioning of people's minds, more than acknowledgment is required. We must also willfully act to govern and guard our minds. The Bible provides

much counsel on this task: "Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy" (1 Peter 1:13-16).

"The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray" (1 Peter 4:7). (MC)

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#### ENDNOTES

- 1 *Survey: Prospects for Media Mergers and Acquisitions*. Ad Media Partners, April 2004, Reported by *B-to-B* magazine, May 3, 2004, [www.btobonline.com](http://www.btobonline.com).
- 2 Big three will run world's media, says Murdoch. *The Australian*, February 13, 2004.
- 3 *Advertising Age*, February 3, 1997.
- 4 Infoporn: Mass Distraction. *Wired Magazine*, May 2001.
- 5 Milken Institute.
- 6 Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, 2003.
- 7 "Special Report: The future of advertising." *Economist* magazine, June 26, 2004.
- 8 Robert W. McChesney. *The Global Media Giants: The nine firms that dominate the world*.
- 9 *The First Measured Century: An Illustrated Guide to Trends in America, 1900-2000*. Theodore Caplow. The AEI Press, Washington, 2001. Page 271.