

EASTER SURPRISE BY FAMILIAR SOURCES

Ever since a group of “doubting Thomas theologians” formed the Jesus Seminar, it has become commonplace for pundits to subvert the meaning of Easter. This year the attack will be led by ABC, PBS, BBC and Twentieth Century FOX.

ABC anchorman Peter Jennings promises that he will offer “a reasonably controversial broadcast” on the historical life of Jesus. Though he hopes that the program will air near Easter, he congratulates himself for allowing us to celebrate our sacred holiday without his propaganda: “Therefore, we’re not going to stick it down anybody’s throat on Easter Sunday.” How considerate. Sounds like some kind of self-imposed media Blue law: it’s okay to stick it down the throat of Christians but not on Sundays.

On April 6 and 7, the PBS program, FRONTLINE will do a four-hour long show, “From Jesus to Christ: The First Christians.” David Fanning, the senior executive producer, boasts that “FRONTLINE presents the real story of the rise of Christianity, challenging and upsetting conventional ideas.” So comforting to know that we can simply junk everything we’ve learned about Jesus by just tuning into FRONTLINE.

Among the great revelations that the show offers is the stunning conclusion that “Jesus did not identify himself as a Christian. He was born, lived, and died a Jew.” Now how about that for scholarship! It could also be said that the term Christian comes from Christ.

It is telling that the scholars who contributed to this program deliberately refuse to use the standard A.D. when writing about history after Christ. Their preference is to use the politically correct C.E., or Common Era. But who cares,

especially when we know that we're going to be treated to "the real story."

The BBC is also doing a special on Jesus, just in time for Easter. We don't know much about it other than that it bears a strong relationship to the myth-busting theme as explored by the American networks.

The worst script that we've seen, by far, is "These Are the Days: The Easter Story." It is loaded with sick humor aimed at the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ, as well as at the Catholic Church. In it, a character named Kieran says, "Hey, wouldn't it be cool if this bread had actually been transformed into 'the body.' Y'know, like we're actually eating flesh." Kieran adds, "I really like the idea of eating 'the body.' And then washing it down with a big goblet of blood."

Forgive us for feeling suspicious, but ABC is owned by Disney, the company that owns Miramax, which distributed the movie "Priest." The BBC produced "Priest," PBS' FRONTLINE indicted the Catholic Church's work in Africa just last year and Twentieth Century FOX is the major producer of "Nothing Sacred."

Perhaps it's time for "60 Minutes" to vet ABC, BBC, PBS and FOX with an eye towards unmasking their religious agenda. The only problem is they may need more than 60 minutes to do justice to the report.