

TV REVIEWS

Moyers' Journal Reaches for Peace in 'Holy War'

"The New Holy War," the latest edition of "Bill Moyers' Journal" (at 9 tonight on KCET-TV Channel 28; 8 p.m. on KVCR-TV Channel 24), displays, in full relief, hopelessly uncompromised beliefs and stances between Christians on the right and gays and lesbians on the left.

Somehow, though, Moyers' report concludes with a glimmer of hope, the possibility that a passionate center may emerge in the debate over Christian ethics and gay rights.

Perhaps the last place the center will hold is Colorado Springs, where the Colorado initiative known as Amendment Two—preventing gays and lesbians from claiming discrimination—began. It's where Moyers comes to talk to all sides in a still-raging debate. He's in his favorite role, the thoughtful liberal outsider trying to understand everyone.

More deeply though, Moyers—without stating it—comes to the heart of Christian fundamentalist country as a practicing Baptist and lifelong Christian himself. What slants his report isn't politics, but his desire to search for a Christian middle ground in a secular nation.

He finds reasonable people all around: In the newsroom of the Colorado Springs Gazette-Telegraph; with a devout but hardly fanatic fundamentalist like Rev. Bernie Kuiper, who articulates the fundamentalist position on homosexuality as thoroughly as possible; with Betty and Lynn, a church-going, Christian lesbian couple; and among non-fundamentalist Christians chagrined at the extremism of some of their fellow faithful.

It is with this latter group that a dialogue has begun with local gays and lesbians, and with it, the struggle to explore whether biblical doctrine, American polity, family-based values and individual rights can be commonly held. Moyers, the believer in a Democratic Christianity and a clear separation of church and state, doesn't express a good deal of hope. But there is some, he suggests, as long as decent people can talk to one another.

—ROBERT KOEHLER

this week is that the valuable stuff gets lost in the avalanche. And the problem with missing the good work is that it is only in the past year that a truly meaningful investigation of the epochal crime has been possible.

Like "Frontline's" eventful report Tuesday, "Who Was Lee Harvey Oswald?" CBS' "Who Killed JFK? The Final Chapter" (at 9 tonight on Channels 2 and 8) benefits from new access to KGB files and authorities, recently released documents and a variety of articulate viewpoints—dominated by Gerald Posner, whose new book debunking all conspiracy theories, "Case Closed," is all the rage.

Indeed, instead of J.F.K. week, this is really Gerald Posner week, and Posner really has the ear of host Dan Rather. It's too bad for CBS, though, that "Frontline" beat them to the story by several days—as well as the same conclusion, that there is no hard evidence to support anything other than that Oswald acted alone. A lot of those who figure prominently in the "Frontline" study, such as Posner and insightful journalist Priscilla McMillan, repeat their views for Rather.

Of course, for those more prone to tune in CBS than PBS, some of this will be startling. Oswald's mother, Marguerite, is filmed lying that son Lee wasn't found to be emotionally disturbed. Rather's claim that CBS has proceeded with its own investigation since 1963 is supported with fascinating tests, including showing marksmen hitting a target simulation of the moving limo.

CBS' report shows some class by not mentioning that its weekend-long, commercial-free broadcast of Kennedy's state funeral and burial marked a historic turning point in TV news journalism and for CBS in particular. It will come in for strong criticism, however, in offering the impression that all of the key assassination conspiracy theories—was it the Mafia? the CIA? the Cubans? the Soviets?—are quickly dismissible. This is apparently Posner's influence, but the unanswered questions, especially those regarding Mafia ties to both Oswald and his killer, Jack Ruby, are simply ignored here.

Still, there is something deeply affecting about watching Walter Cronkite nearly cry on camera as he recalls the week's events. He feels the social earthquake, the loss, to this day. Journalists are humans, after all.

—R.K.

New Data Unfolds in 'Who Killed JFK?'

The obvious problem with so many films, movies and documentary investigations of the Kennedy assassination coming at us