

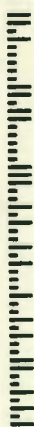
NRB

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April 2000

Inside:
NRB 2000
Wrap-up

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Shake-ups Hit Christian Labels



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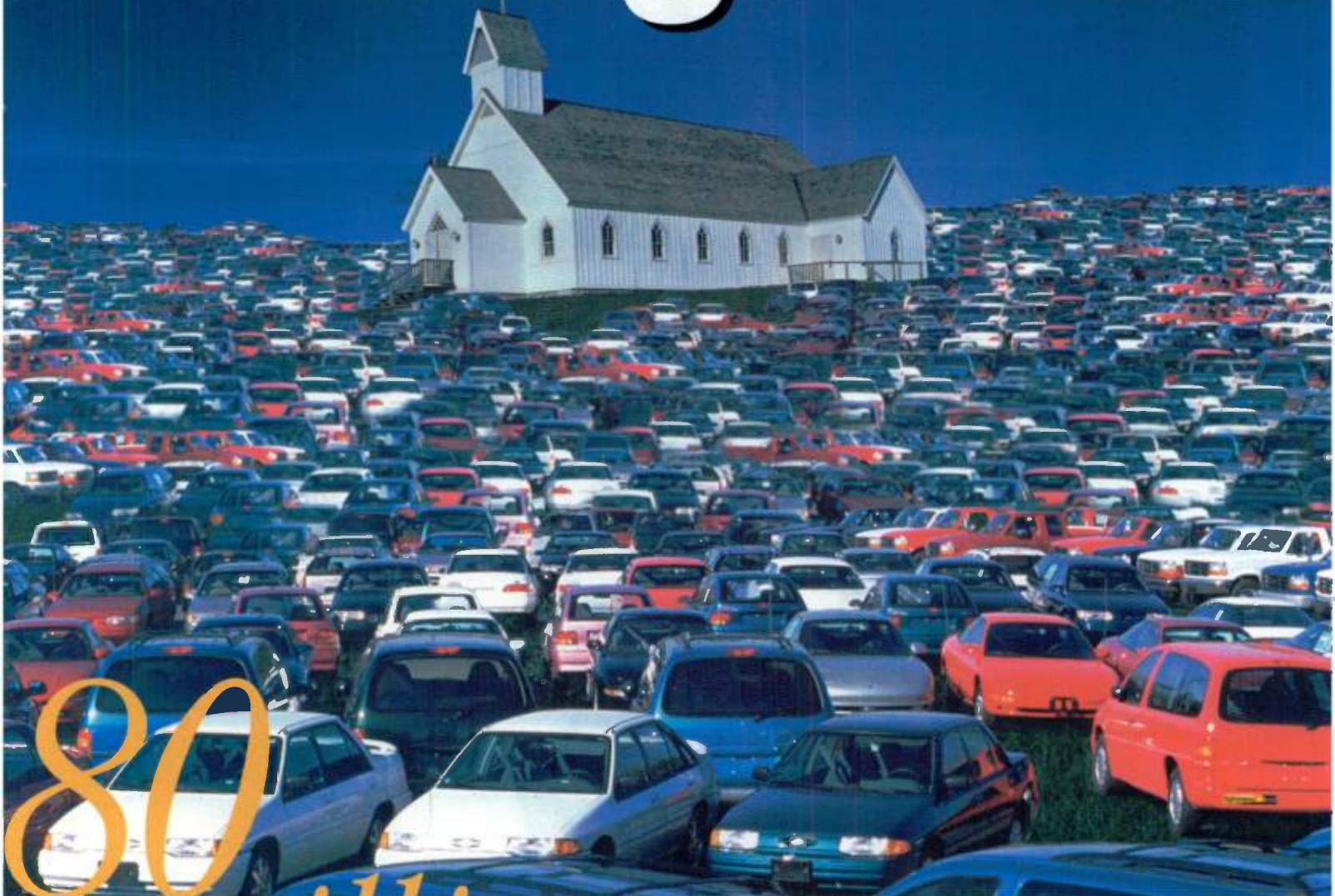


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FEATURES

Shake-ups Hit Christian Music Labels **28**

BY DEBORAH EVANS PRICE

The business trend of mergers and acquisitions has Christian music spinning. A Billboard Magazine writer explores the big buzz among industry players.

Images From NRB 2000 **32**

PHOTOS BY PATRICIA A. MAHONEY

CAPTIONS BY CHRISTINE L. PRYOR

The first convention of the century is captured in this comprehensive wrap-up. Revisit California — or see the excitement you missed!

Ashamed of the Gospel ... on TV **38**

BY PHIL COOKE

What are the basics to making the most important message in history exciting to the 21st century viewer? Find out what Christian communicators must do to survive expanded viewer choice.



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A Towering Opportunity

NRB is proud to announce a partnership with Star Towers, Inc., an innovator in tower management. Star Towers is the creation of two father-and-son teams: José Antonio Reyes Sr. and Antonio Reyes Jr. and Stuart and Marc Epstein.

The Reyes family is well known to NRB, as José is a member of the NRB board of directors. His son, president of Star Towers, has served in Christian TV for more than a decade. The Epsteins have experienced success in commercial real estate and telecommunications. With such a management team, Star Towers is able to offer exciting new income stream opportunities to NRB members.

Star Towers was formed to respond to the opportunity for Christian broadcasters to capitalize on their tower assets. The strategic partnership between NRB and Star will help our community navigate the financial and technical complexities of the rapidly changing tower industry and its new wireless applications.

The company will not employ a conventional "sale leaseback" model, but has constructed a

Master Lease Agreement granting Access Rights to Star without transfer of ownership. This element is critical in Star's strategy and ensures tower owner benefits from the additional value Star generates.

Wireless technologies use radio frequencies as their medium and are interconnected by antennae perched on towers; with expanding wireless technology, your tower assets may be lucrative pieces of vertical real estate with the potential to generate significant streams of new revenue.

NRB joined with Star Towers because the company has technical and professional expertise grounded in the fundamental values critical to a Christian organization.

Together, we can turn dormant assets into essential resources. Let us be good stewards and transform towers of steel into towering financial dividends, providing funds to launch new programs, stations and opportunities to continue our spiritual mission.



E. Brandt Gustavson is president of National Religious Broadcasters and publisher of *NRB* magazine. He may be reached via e-mail at bgustavson@nrb.org or phone 703-330-7000 ext. 507.

Moving Music



Wayne Pederson is chairman of NRB and executive vice president of Northwestern College Radio Network in St. Paul, MN. He may be reached at wap@nwc.edu or 651-631-5000.

The TV program, *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?*, wouldn't have half the dramatic effect if it weren't for the pulsating music to build the suspense as the questions are asked. Some of the greatest moments of our lives are characterized by the music associated with those special times. We remember the songs played on the radio when we first fell in love. I still remember words and melodies of some of the most ridiculous commercials from my childhood.

As I think back to the NRB 2000 Convention in Anaheim, CA, the powerful music has stayed with me. Remember the stirring songs of Steve Amerson at the Public Policy Breakfast, the powerful emotions conveyed by Michael W. Smith singing "Cassie's Song" and the heart-warming music of the India Children's Choir? And remember how we were moved to worship by the powerful closing "Doxology" sung by the Martins?

Music has great power to move the mind and the heart. That's why music is used at sporting events, in commercials, at evangelistic events and worship services. Martin Luther said, "For besides

theology, music is the only art capable of affording peace and joy of the heart."

Music has become big business. The Gospel Music Association meets this month in Nashville, TN to present Dove Awards to the Christian music industry's brightest and best.

Music technology is changing. It's now possible to download your favorite music digitally from the Internet into a portable MP3 player ... creating havoc for music licensing.

Repeatedly, Scripture talks about music. The Psalms are replete with statements about singing a new song, playing loudly on instruments and even making a joyful noise. In the New Testament, Paul tells us to "sing with the spirit and understanding." That means music must minister to the heart and to the mind.

Therefore, Christian music must be more than an emotional experience. Music must be substantive, true to God's Word and honoring to Christ, penetrating the depths of our soul to move us toward Christ.

At the Dawn of the New Millennium . . .

God's Word Stands!



Dick Bott, *President*
Bott Radio Network

2,000 years ago God's Word became flesh and dwelt among us. (*John 1:14*)

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soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and it is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the Heart. (*Heb. 4:12*)

God promises that **His Word will not return void**, but that it will accomplish that which He pleases. (*Isiah 55:11*)

That's why . . . at the dawn of the New Millennium, **Bott Radio Network** still features the preaching and teaching of **God's Word** as our **first** priority. We also serve our audience with news, issues and current events from a **Biblical** world view. But our goal is to help people grow in the Lord, and then to apply their Christian faith to their daily lives . . . as well as to their own community service.

At Bott Radio Network, we believe that knowing God's Word, and then applying it to our lives, as well as to the issues of our day, is the *only* way to effect *real* change ... in the hearts and the lives of people in America ... as well as the rest of our world.

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Trade Talk

Airwave News

BURBANK, CA – The *Millennium Chorus* and two episodes of *Moving Targets — Why Kids Kill* featuring Nicky Cruz recently won 1999 “Communicator Crystal Awards of Excellence,” a national awards program that recognizes outstanding work in the field of mass media communications. This year, there were 3275 entries from 49 states and seven foreign countries. (Phil Cooke, 818-563-2125)

HOLLYWOOD, CA – In  March, Ted Baehr, publisher of *MOVIEGUIDE*®, held the inaugural Church & Hollywood Leadership Breakfast at the Hilton Universal Hotel in Universal City. The event featured cable TV leader William Bresnan, Christian Men’s Network founder Ed Cole, Walt Disney Motion Pictures Group chairman Richard Cook and National Association of Evangelicals president Bishop Kevin Mannoia. (Dan Wooding, assist1@sheperd.com)

ROCKFORD, IL – MVP Productions produced the film *Tracy’s Choices*, which won the Christian Filmmaker Award for “Best Documentary” in 1999. The film is especially meaningful to teens. (815-877-1514)

CINCINNATI, OH – Paramount Stations Group, owner and operator of 19 TV stations coast-to-coast and outlet for the UPN Television Network, recently selected Harris Corporation to provide Digital Television (DTV) encoding systems. (Angie DeJaynes, 217-221-7442)

Airwave Anniversaries

ORLANDO, FL - October 19 marked the 20th anniversary of the *JESUS* film’s theatrical release. (Paul Eshleman, 949-36-7575)

BRENTWOOD, TN - In January, Monster Prep radio show prep subscription service celebrated its one-year anniversary. (monsterprep9@hotmail.com)

NEW YORK, NY – For the second consecutive year, the New York Festival has awarded John Whitehead’s documentary TV series *Grasping for the Wind* a “Silver World Medal” in its 42nd Annual International Film and Video Awards Competition. (Nisha Mohammed, 804-975-1652)



SAN DIEGO, CA – In January, John and Barbaranne Marion began hosting *Night Flight*, a new nightly, caller-interactive talk show. The show covers a broad spectrum of issues, including interviews with prominent personalities and invites callers to share inspirational stories as well as questions. (Sean McCabe, 703-685-5004)



John & Barbaranne Marion



L to R: Norris, LaLaye, Keaggy and Jones

NASHVILLE, TN – Sparrow recording artist Cheri Keaggy recently joined *Walker, Texas Ranger* star Chuck Norris, author Tim LaLaye and Feed the Children founder Larry Jones for a two-hour TV special that aired on Trinity Broadcast Network. (Paula Houlette, 615-371-6889)

GREENVILLE, NC – HIS Radio Network, part of Radio Training Network, signed on two stations: WMBJ-AM and WLFJ-AM. (Allen Henderson, 864-292-6040)



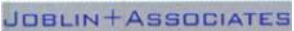
DALLAS, TX – The *JESUS* Video Project of Texas will mail a video to every Texas residence, approximately 8.3 million homes, beginning Monday of Holy Week 2000 and concluding on Good Friday. Included with the video will be an insert inviting people to call 888-NEED HIM. More than 23,000 churches in Texas will be involved in prayer, local follow-up and answering phones. (Drew Dickens, 972-473-2667)



COLORADO SPRINGS, CO – Youth With A Mission Strategic Frontiers International announced the release of *The Waiting World* video series designed to help churches pray and become directly involved with key unreached peoples inside the 10/40 Window. Shot on location, each of the 13 segments is five minutes in length and designed for viewing within a church service, Bible study or cell group setting. Specific prayer points and printed information about each group are included. (Mike Klausmeier, 719-226-3006)



SILVER SPRING, MD – Seventh-Day Adventist youth and young adults in Bermuda, Canada and the U.S. celebrated the New Year with *Genesis 2000*, an interactive satellite event sponsored by the Adventist Church in North America. (301-680-6600)

EUGENE, OR –  KTVC-TV Channel 36, announced a major commitment of air time to Christian programming. An independently owned and operated affiliate of PAX-TV, KTVC has retained the services of Joblin & Associates to secure Christian programming for the station. (Bob Joblin, 501-224-3889)

WASHINGTON, DC – Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability has prepared a special *Public Service Article* providing advice to the donor public regarding their charitable giving and encouraging donors to Christian charities to check for ECFA membership and visit



Trade Talk

www.ecfa.com. Released to 2500 media outlets around the country, the article also makes reference to the National Charities Information Bureau and the Philanthropic Advisory Service of the Council of Better Business Bureau for information on non-religious charities. Full text of the article is available by contacting ECFA. (800-323-9473)

BLACK MOUNTAIN, NC – Blue Ridge Broadcasting



Corporation made several additions to its format. Beginning January 1, WMIT-FM now carries 12 percent more inspirational music daily, plus the following programming on Saturdays: *Sports Spectrum*, a live call-in sports program; *Rhyme & Reason* with Kevin Auman delivers music and conversation; and *Truth Encounter* with Bible teacher and pastor David Wyrzten. WFGW-AM and WMIT began the following daily programming: *Decision Today*, a newsmagazine produced by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association; the live-from-Israel *Israel Direct* with Jimmy DeYoung; and *Count on Me*, hosted by Louis Grant. (828-669-8477)

LANSDALE, PA – The Grand Old Gospel Fellowship, Inc. (GOGF) radio ministry continues to expand into Los Angeles and San Francisco, CA, Chicago, IL, and Dallas, TX. *The Grand Old Gospel Hour* will soon be heard on



www.icrn.com. In other news, GOGF is working on construction plans for a youth camp and Bible conference center on approximately 640 acres of undeveloped government property the ministry is securing in the Bahamas. The facility will serve the Bahamian churches as well as provide a retreat facility for American groups and families. (Tony Hart, 215-361-8111)

PHOENIX, AZ – Good Shepherd Network stations KXEN-AM/St. Louis and KXEG-AM in Phoenix recently completed their 16th and 7th years, respectively, of providing toys to area children through *Toys for Joy*. KXEN partnered with Christian schools from Missouri and Illinois to provide more than 2000 toys for needy children in the greater St. Louis area. KXEG held a Christmas party for children who live in foster homes in the area. In other Good Shepherd Network news,

Radio Management Services, Inc., recently added the following radio stations to its family of stations: KZZD-FM/Wichita, KS, and its sister translator, as well as KBXL-FM/Caldwell, ID, and its sister station KSPD-AM/Boise, ID. (Phil French, 618-797-2293)

CHESAPEAKE, VA – Dominion Video Satellite, Inc., based in Naples, FL, the parent company of Sky Angel, selected Newton Media as its agency for media planning and buying services. In January, the agency launched a national radio, TV and print campaign promoting Sky Angel's DBS TV system. (Michaela Ross, 757-547-5400)

LITTLETON, CO – The JESUS Film Project is releasing a new story of Jesus for children, an adaptation of the *JESUS* film. The project follows six children as they observe Jesus. (John Hanna, jhanna@eproject.com)

CHICAGO, IL – Two original Total Living Network (TLN) programs were honored with 1999 Omni Intermedia Awards.



Testify!, a gospel music program hosted by singer/songwriter Lamont Lenox, garnered a "Silver Award" and "Bronze Award" for its format. *Among Friends*, TLN's flagship program hosted by Jerry Rose, received two "Bronze Awards" for its format. In other news, in January, TLN premiered *Chef Eric Gordon's Healthy Cuisine*, a 30-minute program featuring Gordon preparing natural food dishes, eclectic recipe tours of famous kitchens, easy cooking instructions and a medley of cuisines using natural foods. (Debra Hall, 312-433-3838)

DERRY, NH – Chip Taylor Communications recently released three documentaries: *Israel: Stories From the Holy Lands*; *Jordan and Israel: More Stories From the Holy Lands*; and *Israel: Echoes From the Ancients*. (Chip Taylor, chip@chiptaylor.com)



FLORENCE, KY – Salem Communications Corporation acquired WABS-AM/Washington, DC, from Radio 780, Inc., for \$4.1 million cash. Radio 780, Inc., headed by Edwin Tornberg, also owns WUST-



AM/Washington, DC, and WNRW-AM/Philadelphia, PA. Salem also owns WAVA-FM/Arlington, VA. This transaction provides Salem with an AM/FM combo in the nation's capital. In total, Salem owns 57 stations, all broadcasting a religious format. John Pierce & Company represented Salem, while Force Communications & Consultants, LLC, represented Radio 780. (John Pierce, 606-647-001)

FLORENCE, KY – Beasley Broadcast Group acquired WAEG-AM and WWWE-AM in Atlanta, GA, from Forus Communications for \$10 million cash. Beasley Broadcast Group, based in Naples, FL, also owns 31 stations in Florida, Georgia, North Carolina and Pennsylvania. Forus Communications exits radio ownership with the sale of the Atlanta stations. (John Pierce, 606-647-0101)

APPLETON, WI – WEMI-FM was recognized by peers with three Wisconsin Broadcaster Awards.



Christian Family Radio received the following awards for excellence for medium market radio: first place award in the Community Affairs Activity category for the Care & Share campaign; first place award in the Promotional Announcement category for the Super Summer Sign promotional announcement series; and merit award in the Community Affairs Activity category for the 7th Help & Hope campaign. (Tammy, 920-749-9364)

SAN DIEGO, CA – Under a new plan announced by KPRZ-



AM, Salem Communications general manager Mark Larson, KCBQ-AM plans to launch a new Community Issues Program, designed to bring San Diegans closer to the issues and newsmakers via innovative techniques and use of new media. (858-535-1210)

PORTLAND, OR – NBG Radio Network announced the opening of its Los Angeles-based office directed by Judd Nesmith. In other news, NBG Radio launched NBG Sampling Solutions, a non-traditional revenue source, in an effort to provide its advertisers opportunities to promote their products via NBG's network affiliate base. (800-472-6047)

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Trade Talk

Airwave News, continued

HOUSTON, TX – KSBJ-FM partnered with 12 area Crisis Pregnancy Centers (CPC) to raise awareness for the needs of women with unplanned pregnancies and to ask for donations of baby items for the centers. During the campaign, more than 200 people pledged to become CPC volunteers. (Jason Ray, 281-446-5725)

FLORENCE, KY – Mortenson Broadcasting Company acquired WSCW-AM and WJYP-FM in South Charleston, WV, from CLW Communications Group, Inc., for \$1 million cash. CLW Communications Group, Inc., exits radio ownership with the sale, but will continue with its nationwide ministry. Mortenson Broadcasting owns a total of 16 stations. (John Pierce, 606-647-0101)

MEMPHIS, AR – KSUD-AM announced the addition of an FM station, complementing its AM outreach of Christian talk and music for-

mat with 24-hour-a-day praise and worship. (Frank Hammond, 870-735-6622)

MILWAUKEE,
WI – WELS
Outreach



Resources announced the release of *All About Jesus*, a video designed for children ages 2-9 with learning disabilities. Developed by the Special Kids Learning Resource Network, the video features stories that teach children about Jesus and His love for them. (Heidi Fendos, 414-226-4900)

In the January "Airwave News," NRB published an incorrect image of *Book of Hope*. The work is a harmony of the Gospels in chronological order, covering the Life of Christ. For more information, please call John Young at 954-975-7777. The editors apologize for any inconvenience.

International News

CARY, NC – Trans World Radio announced new programs in the Igbo language to Nigeria, and in Kok Borok, Varli and Kuknos to India. (Richard Greene, 919-460-3760)

HERTFORDSHIRE, UK – Gerde Ridder has been working with members of the European Parliament, and communicating with the



Greek Government on the closing of a licensed Greek radio station and imprisonment of the owner. An Athens court ruled on January 31 that the Evangelical Radio Station Channel 2000, which closed in early December, could begin broadcasting again. About 100 Christians gathered in the courtroom to hear the verdict. (Harvey Thomas, feb@feb.org)

CHIAPAS, MEXICO – In January, Mexican-born missionary David Tamez was appointed to a two-year term as the president of COMEMEX (Confraternidad Evangelica de Mexico, the Mexican National Association of Evangelicals). The group represents 25,000 mainline churches in Mexico, plus many small local missions and Christian agencies. Since his appointment, Tamez formed five commissions: Prayer and Evangelism; Christian Education and Pastoral Improvement; Human Rights and Social Communication; Emergency Relief and Family Welfare; and Public Relations and Special Events. (Dale Kietzman, 626-398-2105)

DREAM FAMILY NETWORK

EUROPE – On December 1, the Dream Family Network began operation. The digital TV platform is initially providing four TV stations and four radio stations operating 24 hours a day via Sirius digital satellite. Broadcasting across Britain, Europe, parts of North Africa and the Middle East from its 16,000 sq. ft. studios in the North East, Dream Family Network offers Christian values-based programming. The network's CEO is Rory Alec. (Alison Smith, 0191-495-2244)

VENEZUELA – *Radio trans mundial*
In December, Radio Trans Mundial de Venezuela (RTM-V) redirected its two-hour daily morning program to help meet basic human needs among people most affected by devastating floods and landslides. Special segments and announcements related to this national catastrophe were inserted into other RTM-V programming and aired in the early evening and late at night. RTM-V was in constant contact with Civil Defense and Red Cross officials, relaying critical information to listeners. RTM-V is the in-country national partner of Trans World Radio. (Ramon A Williams, rlgmedia@ozemail.com.au)

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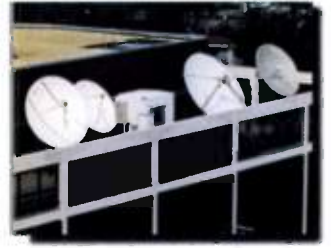
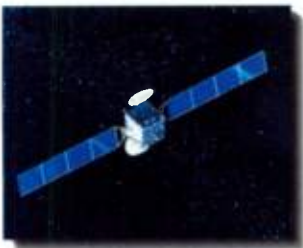


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Trade Talk

International News, cont.

CYPRUS – As a result of Network '99, SAT-7's Annual Partnership Council held in October, SAT-7 and its partner agencies are implementing a plan to increase broadcasts from four to seven days per week, effective April 2000. (Source suppressed)

AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND – Christian broadcasters from around the world are invited to attend UCB 2000 to be held between April 5-9 at the venue of the Couran-Cove, Stradbroke Island, Queensland, Australia. Hosted by United Christian Broadcasters International, UCB 2000 is designed to give practical input, spiritual refreshment and encouragement to Christian broadcasters. For more information, e-mail warren@ueb.com. (Ramon A. Williams, rlgmedia@ozemail.com.au)

Cross New Advertising Manager for NRB

MANASSAS, VA – Steven R. Cross joined the NRB headquarters staff January 24 as advertising manager for the *Directory of Religious Media* and *NRB* magazine.

A native of Kansas City, MO, Cross is a communications graduate of the University of Missouri-Kansas City and possesses a 25-year background in radio, serving 22 years at WABS-AM/Arlington, VA. His most recent position with the station was vice president/general manager.

NRB vice president Michael Glenn says, "I have known Steve for nearly 20 years. His familiarity with the Christian communications industry is a great resource for the association. I'm confident he will be a part of the NRB team for many years."

Adds NRB director of communications Karl Stoll, "NRB is blessed to have Steve join the staff. He brings a wealth of experience and knowledge of the industry to headquarters. His reputation is impeccable."

Cross says, "NRB has always been known for its strong commitment of service to our Lord and to its membership. I look forward to continuing that tradition." He and his wife, Vonnie, have four children and reside in Stafford, VA.



Steve Cross

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NRB Village launched at NRB 2000



Food for the Poor and NRB join forces to build 2000 homes

NRB and Food for the Poor have joined forces to launch a bold, new ministry outreach to help the poorest of the poor in Jamaica. The goal of the "2000 in 2000" campaign, recently launched at NRB's annual convention in Anaheim, is to build an NRB Village with 2000 homes for destitute Jamaican families.

"I fully support the work of Food for the Poor. I saw them in action in Jamaica, and I was impressed by their unique ministry to the poor," said NRB president, Brandt Gustavson. "In Christ's name they are bringing comfort, hope and opportunity to families in desperate need."



Brandt and several other NRB members visited Riverton City, a slum that is home to poor families with its one shared community "resource" — a garbage dump. There the poor scavenge for food, clothing or items that they

can salvage. The residents of Riverton live in makeshift shacks built of discarded cardboard, tin or chicken wire. The water supply is contaminated. "I have seen a woman fighting with a pig over spoiled meat — that is what she cooks for her family," explains Romeo Effs, Food for the Poor's project director in Jamaica.

"To be able to give a home to someone for \$2,000 which would include not only the construction, but the title to the property on which it sits... Now, that's a tremendous project. This makes a difference!" says Gustavson.

"I am excited about the Caribbean Chapter being involved in building a village of these houses with a community water supply and a community center to be used as a church. I am very, very excited about this. This is really a project that we need to be involved with..." said Janet Luttrell of the Caribbean Chapter of NRB — the chapter that has adopted the project.

The launch at NRB 2000 was met with tremendous enthusiasm by stations, programs and individuals. Commitments on 287 homes were made and many other partnerships are being formed. A second group of station managers and air personalities will be visiting Riverton City on March 29th. Food for the Poor is grateful to the Caribbean NRB and the National Religious Broadcasters for seeing the need and responding so positively and quickly to the outcry of the poor.

Food for the Poor is asking all NRB members to join together and use the power of the media to rally collective Christian charity to provide people of areas like Riverton City with decent, humane shelter. Each house costs \$2,000 to build and if each NRB member would commit to raising funds for one house... the NRB Village in Jamaica would be built!

For more information about how your station or program can be involved, please call Russ Russell at (954) 427-2222.



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"I love your show! *Pro-Life Perspective* always keeps me up-to-date on the latest trends and information in the pro-life movement." Angela Hicks, Edmond, OK

"... I commend NRLC & Dr. Franz for educating the public on abortion and other issues through *Pro-Life Perspective*." David Ingram, Ft. Smith, AR

First broadcast in January 1985, "Pro-Life Perspective" is the official radio broadcast of the National Right to Life Committee (NRLC), the nation's largest pro-life group. Pro-Life Perspective is hosted by NRLC president Wanda Franz, Ph.D. and features occasional guest speakers prominent in the Pro-Life movement.

Since its first broadcast, "Pro-Life Perspective" has attracted hundreds of thousands of listeners, an audience which continues to grow. With personal, professional and insightful discussion of pro-life issues, "Pro-Life Perspective" is the best means by which pro-lifers across America, including your listeners, can remain informed on current life issues.



Wanda Franz Ph.D.

Pro-Life Perspective

For more information please contact National Right to Life,
419 Seventh Street, N.W. Ste. 500, Washington D.C. 20004
(202) 626-8817

Trade Talk

Internet

NASHVILLE, TN – Musicforce.com and

lightsource.com

Lightsource.com were named the

MUSICFORCE.COM

official multimedia sponsors of the Gospel Music Association's 31st Annual Dove Awards to be held April 20. The sponsorship gives Musicforce.com and Lightsource.com exclusive rights to all Dove Awards-related Web and radio broadcasts. Lightsource.com is hosting the show's official Web cast site, DoveAwardsRadio.com; site content is produced by Musicforce.com. The site launched in January to Web cast the Dove nominee press conference, marking the first time the announcements were made online.

Information on nominated artists and continuous play of nominated music will be provided until the show airs. The Dove Awards will be simulcast on approximately 150 radio stations nationwide. (Michele Formosa, 615-457-3028)



LINCOLN, NE – Back to the Bible redesigned its Web site, www.backtothebible.org/im.

Added features include international updates, testimonials, challenging articles, expanded information about overseas ministries and links to ministry partners. (Mark Blowers, 402-464-7200)

NASHVILLE, TN – In December, GETdigitalmedia, Gaylord Entertainment Company's Internet division, hosted the live, one-hour Web cast of *Gaylord Celebration Central*, the pre-game party of the HomePoint.com Music City Bowl, at Gaylordecelebration.com. The party was emceed by TV personality Charlie Chase. (Michele Formosa, mformosa@getdigitalmedia.com)

NASHVILLE, TN – J.Countryman, a unit of Thomas Nelson, Inc., premiered a new look on its Web site at www.jcountryman.com. The site features shopping, site search, company profile, contact page, letters from readers, author profiles and various stories on the J. Countryman team. (Valerie Bower, 615-902-3218)

OLD BRIDGE, NJ – The CAPE (Cable

Programming Excellence) Award-winning *David Berkowitz/RoxAnne Tauriello Show* is online at www.VIDCAST2000.com (RoxAnne Tauriello, 888-679-4709)

LINCOLN, NE – Focus Satellite Network Alliance, a group of several ministries including Back to the Bible, has joined with Focus on the Family to share satellite time. This partnership enables Back to the Bible to distribute radio programming solely by satellite. (Martin Jones, 402-464-7200)

LOS ANGELES, CA – WebRadio.com, a subsidiary of GEO Interactive (LSE: GIM), announced MyWebRadio, offering site visitors completely free personalized homepages with the ability to add favorite radio stations and music content. Using InfoStreet's PageBlender technology, users can create their own Web sites guided by step-by-step instructions. (M. Kennedy, newsbureau@ereleases.com)

WASHINGTON, DC – Family Research Council (FRC) launched its new Web site for teens: www.ieteen.org,



the site of i.e. (ideas and energy). Designed with a new format to attract thinking teens, i.e. strives to provide a resource for teens that challenges the mainstream thinking of the culture. Articles focus on how a Christian worldview influences views on social issues like abortion, homosexuality, drug use and policy and sex education, while providing ideas for what teens can do to make a difference. (Charles Donovan, frepub@frc.org)

News Bites

WASHINGTON, DC – Chairman Tom Bliley (R-VA), one of the principal authors of the Telecommunications Act, held an "on the record" briefing for members of the media on February 3, in anticipation of the Act's fourth birthday. Bliley briefed reporters on the competition and innovation already generated by the Act's passage. (Steve Schmidt, 202-225-5735)

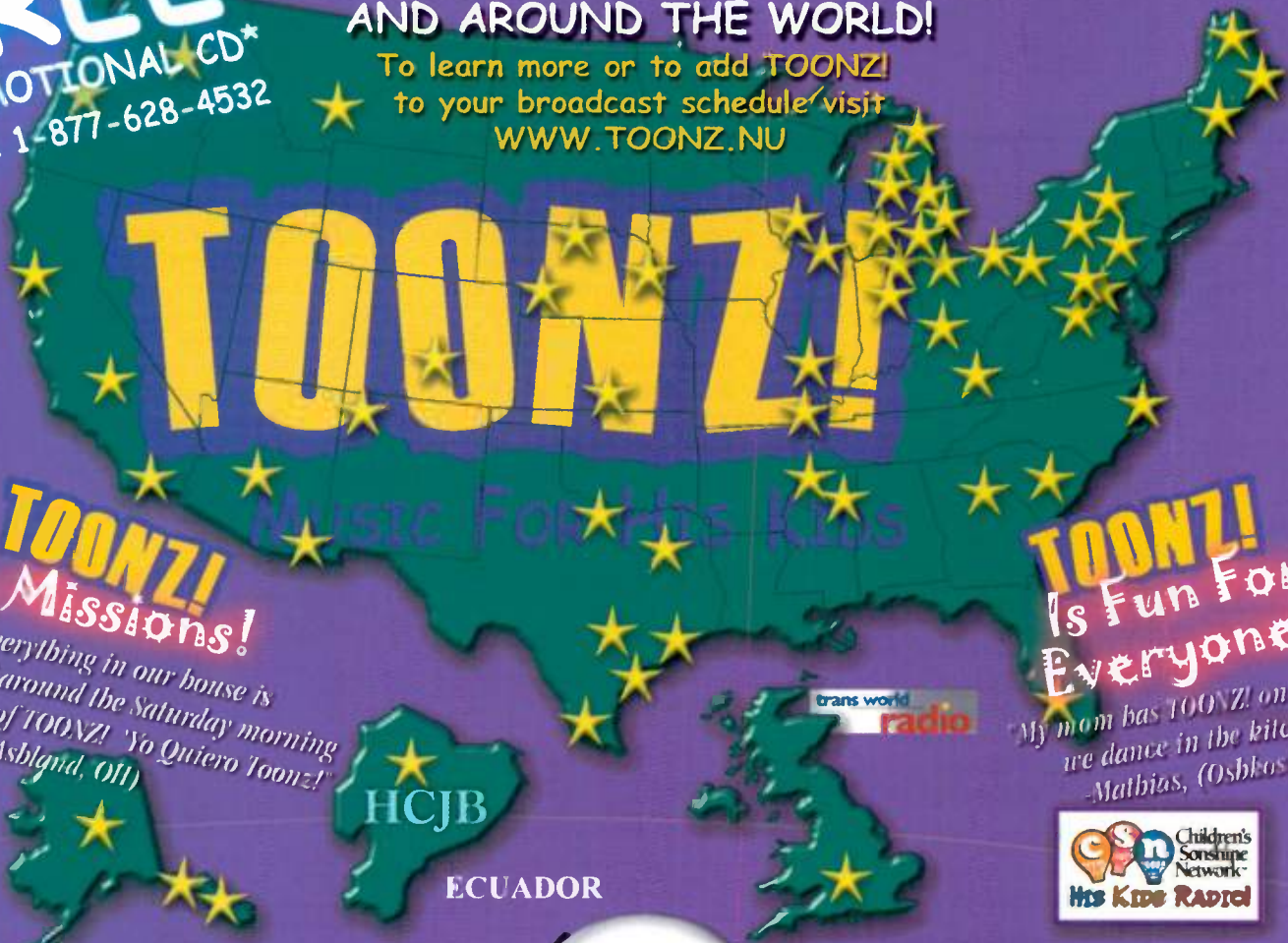
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 - Glenna, (Ashtland, OH)

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 - Mathias, (Oshtosh, WI)



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 for Jesus." - Paul, (Cleveland, OH)

TOONZI!
 Is Ministry!

"I am an old person, gray haired and
 wrinkly. Your program has a good
 message for everyone, including us old
 folks." - Bill, Calipatria State Prison
 (Calipatria, CA)



TOONZI is produced and distributed by Little Is Much, Inc. a non-profit organization dedicated to
 reaching children and their families. Write: Little Is Much, Inc. PO Box 9134 Akron, OH 44305

*STATION MANAGERS, PROGRAM DIRECTORS, AND OTHER RADIO OR INTERNET BROADCASTERS ONLY, PLEASE.

Trade Talk

Music

NASHVILLE, TN – FFH, *Christian Research Report/The CCM Update* “Best New Artist of the Year,” has initiated, written and recorded a unique concept for the Christian marketplace with its *Found A Place — The Devotional*. Rather than a song-by-song discussion, the project presents 10 simple life applications, supported by Scripture. (Rick Hoganson, 615-641-1052)

LOS ANGELES, CA – Squint Entertainment recording artist Sixpence None the Richer was named the “#1 Breakthrough



Artist for 1999” in the CHR/Pop, Hot AC and AC radio formats in the current issue of *Radio & Records Magazine*. In other news, the band performed on VIII’s *Hard Rock Live* in January. Also, the band’s music is featured on the trailer for the film *Girl Interrupted* and on the soundtrack for the film *Snow Day*. (Jay Swartzendruber, jswartzendruber@squintentertainment.com)

NASHVILLE, TN – Provident Music Distribution announced the signing of Tommy Boy Gospel. With seven releases already slated this year, the agreement calls for exclusive representation for all Tommy Boy Gospel products into the Christian and Gospel markets. (Rick Hoganson, 615-641-1052)



SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO, CA – Maranatha! Music released *The Top 25 Kids Praise Songs*, a compilation of Maranatha! Music’s best selling Kids praise music. (Dionne Petitpas, 949-248-4046)

MANSFIELD, PA – *The Road Home*, a newly released collection of songs by Greg Peck focusing on the spirit of Christianity, is now available from Kingdom Tapes & Electronics. Each arrangement has its roots in a scriptural narrative. (Kingdom Tapes, 800-788-1122)

NASHVILLE, TN – ForeFront Records officially announced the signing of PAX217. The national debut, a self-titled project, was released in February. (Annette Reischl, 615-771-4507)

NASHVILLE, TN – ForeFront and EMI Christian Music Group joined



together to collect more than 50 bags of clothing in conjunction with Eli’s clothing drive. Overall, the drive netted nearly 6000 bags. (www.forefrontrecords.com)

LOS ANGELES, CA – Inspirational recording artist Steve Amerson recently released his ninth album, *Hymns and Gospel Songs*, the first new Amerson release to be distributed to Christian retail outlets through an agreement with New Day Distributors. (Brian Smith, 615-298-5505)

BRENTWOOD, TN – Lisa Bevill’s self-titled new release contains six songs written by her, a first for the artist. (Colleen Hoagland, 615-221-5111)



LOS ANGELES, CA – Gospo Centric recording artist Kirk Franklin was named “Top Contemporary Christian Artist” and “Top Gospel Artist” on *Billboard* magazine’s *The 1999 Year in Music* charts. Franklin also garnered honors for “Top Contemporary Christian Album of 1999” and “Top Gospel Album of 1999” for the *Nu Nation Project*. In other news, Gospo Centric Records was honored by *Billboard* as the “Top Gospel Imprint of 1999”; the label also tied with Interscope Records as the “#6 Top Contemporary Christian Imprint of 1999.” Gospo Centric’s sister label, B-Rite Music, was named the “#3 Top Gospel Imprint of 1999.” (Brian Smith, 615-298-5505)

Letters

Here’s what I say about *NRB* magazine: If you haven’t seen *NRB* lately, you haven’t seen *NRB*. The overall look and editorial content of this publication have come a long way in recent years. A very valuable resource for keeping up with the state, and the mission of religious media...past, present and future.

And *NRB*’s *Directory of Religious Media* is one of the most essential reference tools in my work. It should be a given that everyone involved in Christian media has the latest copy at their disposal at all times.

George Carden, Associate Producer
Decision Today
Billy Graham Evangelistic Association
Minneapolis, MN

Thank you very much for publishing the photograph of 21-week-old fetus Samuel Alexander Armas on page 60 of your January 2000 issue. What an awesome picture. It brought tears to my eyes.

Bruce Clark, Operations Manager
WFRS-FM/Smithtown, NY

Miss the magazine! I’ve recently relocated and the church where I’m now working is not an *NRB* member (we will be soon, though). Please sign me up for a subscription as soon as possible.

I’ve been an *NRB* member for more than 15 years and I always enjoy reading through the magazine. Keep up the good work!

Steve Cowart, Media Director
First Baptist Church of Raytown, MO

I have been receiving your magazine more than a year now and really like it. Thank you for sending it to me. I pray for you all and I believe the magazine is getting better.

(Name withheld by request)
Dallas, TX

To make a big splash on the Web, you need to put your broadcast in the right place.

When it comes to Christian Web sites, there's a lot of fish in the sea. But now there's only one place that's right for online streaming of your broadcasts — OnePlace.com.

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to support your ministry. OnePlace.com has 120 broadcasters, including many of the most well-known — Kay Arthur, Chuck Colson, James Dobson, Dennis Rainey, Charles Stanley, Chuck Swindoll, and many more. Your ministry will be right there, swimming along beside them.

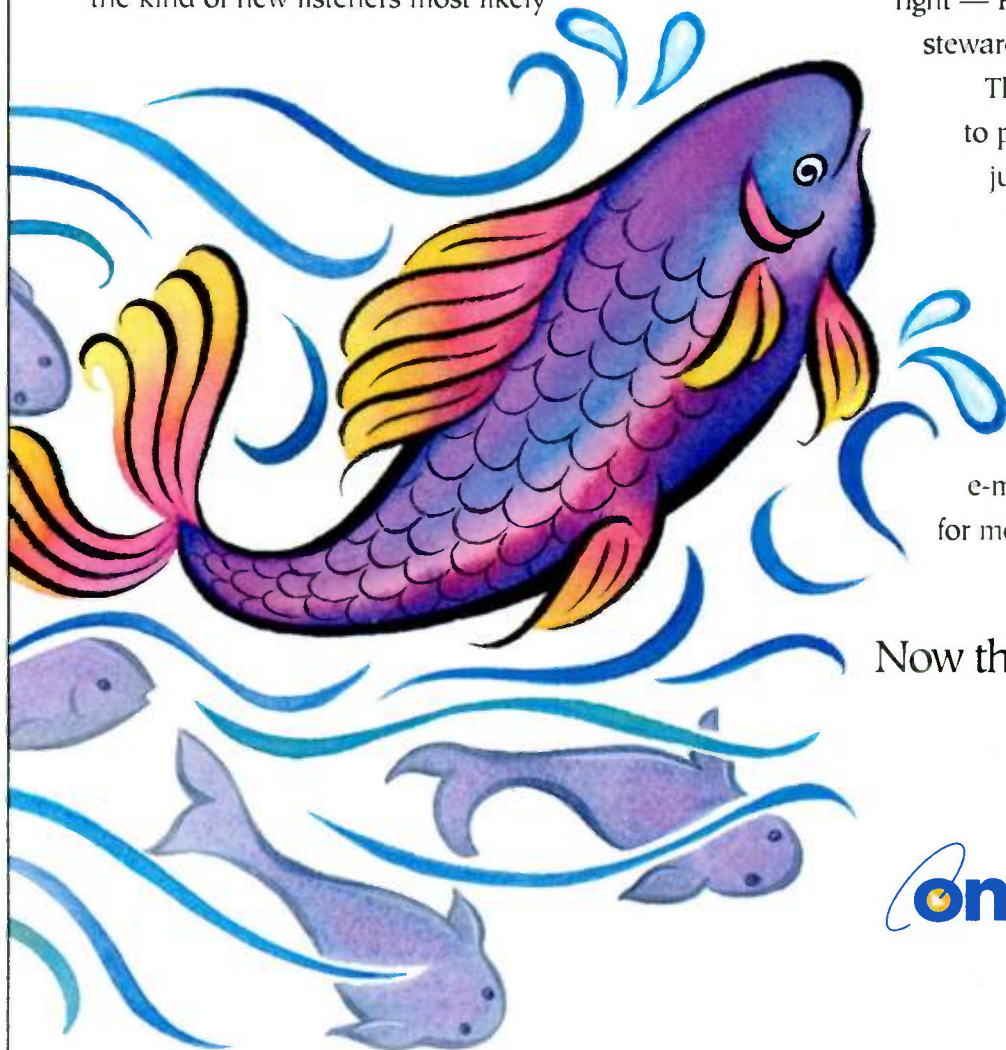
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The logo for OnePlace.com, featuring the word "oneplace.com" in a blue, lowercase, sans-serif font. The letter "o" is stylized with a blue circular graphic element around it.



Trade Talk

People

WALL, PA – Broadcaster and NRB board of directors member Russ Bixler, 72, died January 30 after complications from pneumonia. Bixler was founder, CEO and chairman of the board of Cornerstone TeleVision, Inc., a multi-channel ministry including a 24-hour satellite channel, 163 affiliate stations and four broadcast facilities in Pennsylvania: WPCB-TV/Pittsburgh, WKBS-TV/Altoona, W51BF-TV/Hermitage and W51A0-TV/Brookville. Bixler served as chairman of the NRB TV committee in 1983-84. Cornerstone TeleVision was named NRB's 1989 "Broadcast Facility of the Year." He has been listed in *Who's Who in the East*, *Who's Who in Religion*, *Who's Who in Entertainment* and *Who's Who in the Media*. Bixler was honored posthumously at NRB 2000 with the "William Ward Ayer Distinguished Service Award," presented annually for outstanding contributions to the field of broadcasting. Cornerstone's board of directors has established a memorial fund: Russ Bixler Memorial Fund in care of Cornerstone TeleVision, 1 Signal Hill Drive, Wall, PA 15148-1499. (Oleen Eagle, 412-824-3930)



Russ Bixler

NEW YORK, NY – The Entertainment Services and Technology Association (ESTA) announced its new board of directors: Mark West, affiliate vice president, president of Downhome Productions; Rick Rudolph, dealer director, vice president of Stage Equipment & Lighting; John Booth, manufacturer director, architectural sales specialist for Electronic Theatre Controls; and Mark Fetto, affiliate director, general manager of North American operations for Vari-Lite Production Services. (Lori Rubinstein, 212-244-1505)

DALLAS, TX – For her work in broadcast journalism, KCBI-FM's Sharon Geiger won the "Scribe Best Newscast" award for her coverage of the Wedgwood church shooting in Fort Worth, broadcast the day after the tragic event. Additionally, Geiger won the "Scribe Best News Feature" award for her half-hour piece, *Tragedy in Littleton: A Call to Prayer*. News director L.B. Lyon and news producer Bernia McPartland assisted Geiger. (Troy Kriechbaum, 817-792-3800)

DALLAS, TX – USA Radio Network appointed Bob Morrison news director to replace John Clemens. In his new position, Morrison directs all aspects of USA's news, sports, business updates and coverage of major live, breaking news events. Previous to this position, Morrison was managing editor of TXCN, Belo Corporation's 24-hour statewide Texas cable news channel. (Tom Tradup, 972-484-3900)

NEW YORK, NY – **ARBITRON** Company promoted Bill Rose to vice president and general manager of Arbitron Internet Information Services. Rose will oversee all Arbitron Internet initiatives including InfoStream™ and SiteScore™. In this role, Rose is responsible for increasing the InfoStream Webase ratings coalition of streaming media providers as well as developing Internet report. (Yin Chang, 212-896-1228)

MIDLAND, MI – Perry Lallaie was named assistant manager of WUGN-FM, replacing John Hayden. Lallaie has served at WUGN as an on-air personality and community relations director since 1989. He will continue to host the afternoon show while taking on the responsibilities of assistant manager. (Peter Brooks, 800-776-1030)

NASHVILLE, TN – John Wesley joined the staff of GSF & Associates. Wesley has an extensive history in Christian radio and will serve as an affiliate representative from his home base in Nashville. He will continue his long-time management involvement with the Christian radio stations owned by Trevecca Nazarene University: WNAZ-FM, WENO-AM and WNRZ-FM. (615-361-1810)



John Wesley

NASHVILLE, TN – Diane Crawford joined Word Publishing as director of public relations. Crawford brings a decade of public relations experience to her new role. Most recently she served as publicist and editorial supervisor for CBS Cable where she worked on media campaigns and major press events for TNN and CMT. In her new position, Crawford oversees all public relations efforts. In other Word Publishing employee news, former public relations coordinator Emily Burton was promoted to publicist and is responsible for managing various publicity campaigns for

Word Publishing authors. Another new addition to Word's publicity team is public relations coordinator Amy Miles, who is responsible for all publicity mailings, trade submissions and logistical coordination. (Diane Crawford, 615-902-3170)

BLACK MOUNTAIN, NC – Blue Ridge Broadcasting announced two personnel changes: Tom Atema was named general manager and Don Bailey was named senior consultant. (828-669-8477)



Tom Atema

SAN DIEGO, CA – In November, KPRZ-AM's Holly McClure was featured on ABC's *Politically Incorrect with Bill Maher*. The episode discussed movies and their impact on families and culture. (858-535-1210)

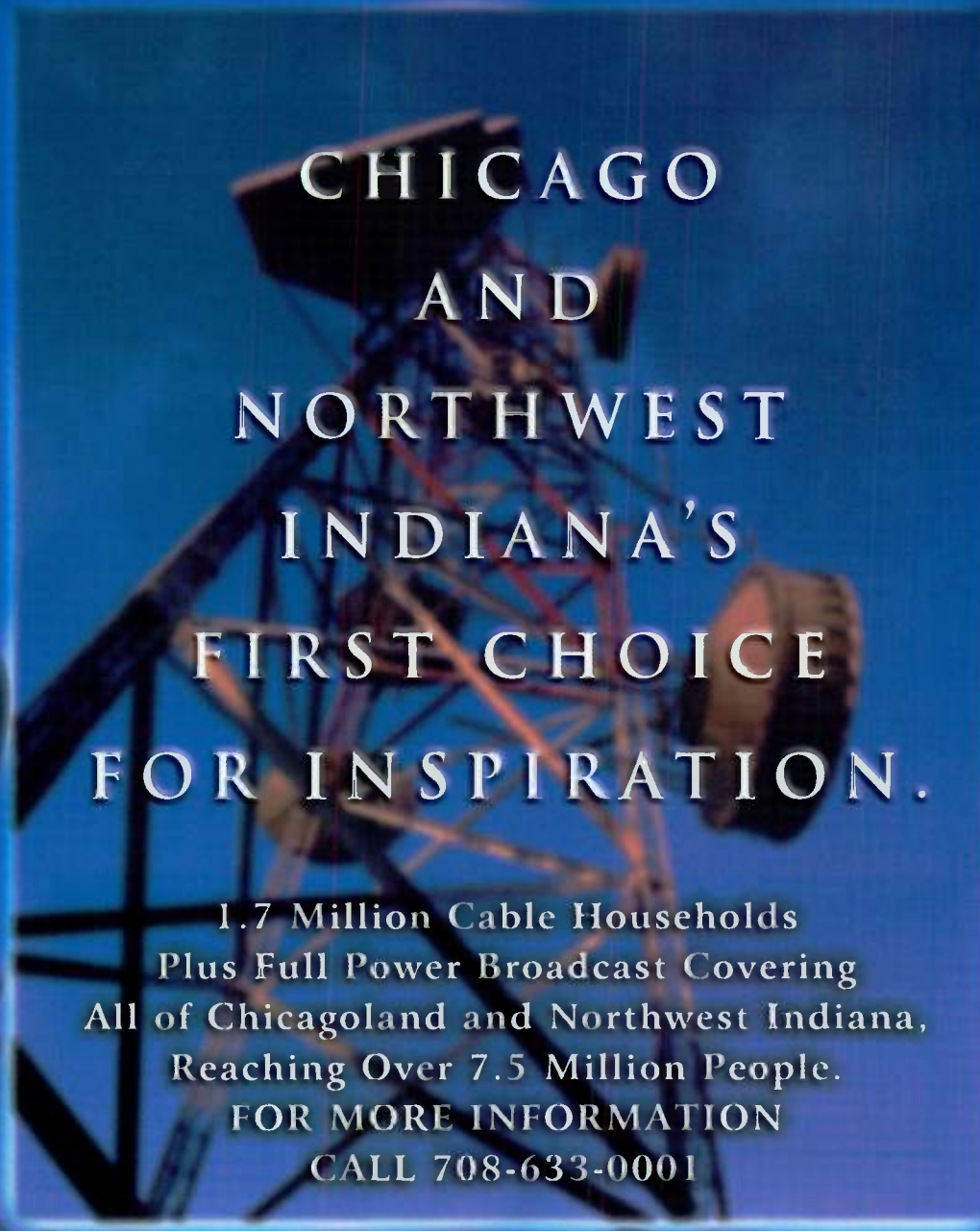
TUCSON, AZ – **Parent Talk** recently appointed five nationally known experts to join the radio program: Lynda Hunter of Focus on the Family; Jim Burns of National Institute of Youth Ministry; Cynthia Tobias of Applied Learning Styles; pediatrician and child psychiatrist Dr. Grace Ketterman; and marriage counselor Dr. Gary Chapman. The experts will make frequent appearances on the radio program, collaborate on family resources, Web site links, and other strategic alliances. (Steve Wright, 520-742-6976)



Buchanan, MI – Electro-Voice president Paul McGuire retired. His official resignation took effect this past summer, but he stayed on as a management consultant to Telex until February 2000. McGuire's first job with Electro-Voice was as a credit manager, moving over to the sales side in 1974 as a product specialist for loudspeakers. In 1975, he was promoted to national sales manager and moved to Audio Technica in 1978, where he was VP Sales until 1982. (Debra Pagan, 516-784-7865)



Metairie, LA – Hardy & Carey L.L.P. announced that Joseph Chautin III is now a partner and Mark Balkin is now associated with the law firm. (Ashton Hardy, 504-830-4646)



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Trade Talk

People, continued

TAMPA BAY, FL – Dan Brodie recently joined Dave Cruise as co-host of *The Morning Cruise* on JOY FM. Brodie has 20 years' experience in a variety of mainstream formats. Cruise's former morning partner, Bill Martin, accepted a full-time position in his local church. (Steve@thejoyfm.com)

GREENVILLE, NC – Will Daugherty was named director of Product Marketing for Lawrence Behr Associates, Inc. (LBA). Daugherty comes to LBA from Seaward International, Inc. where he was director of Marketing. Daugherty's focus will be long-range market planning, creation and management of product level collateral, advertising and promotional campaigns. (Cathy Palmer, 252-757-0279)



Will Daugherty

NASHVILLE, TN – Dennis Worden is general manager of Lightsource.com, a property of Gaylord Entertainment Company's Internet division, GETdigitalmedia. A 24-year veteran of Christian broadcasting, Worden previously served as general manager of KKLA-FM/Los Angeles, CA, and vice president for Salem Communications Group. (Michele Formosa, 615-457-3028)

FAIRFAX, VA – Advocates International president/CEO Samuel Ericsson received the "Pro Fide (For the Faith) Award" for the year



2000. The award recognizes a person who has had an outstanding impact on the lives of suffering Christians throughout the world. (Jill Wilson, 703-764-0011)

HOUSTON, TX – Buddy Holiday, *Morning Show* announcer for KSBJ-FM during its entire 18 years of existence, announced his retirement. His career also includes 2 years at the nation's first commercial CCM station, KFMK/Houston, as well as 21 years in Top 40 radio in cities like Miami, FL, and Dallas. Buddy will continue his work at KSBJ as *Morning Show* co-host through July 2000. (Jason Ray, 281-446-5725)



Buddy Holiday

FULLERTON, CA – In January, Dr. Kent Hunter, president of the Indiana-based Church Growth Center and speaker for *The Church Doctor* radio program, was a featured speaker for the Robert H. Schuller Institute for Successful Church Leadership conference held at the Crystal Cathedral in Garden Grove, CA. (John Williamson, 714-738-1501)



Kent Hunter

VIRGINIA BEACH, VA – Regent University recently named Baxter Ennis as the new director of corporate and foundation relations. Previously director of public relations,

his new responsibilities include soliciting corporations around the country and assisting Regent's development office with various campaigns. He also will coordinate the university's National Leadership Summit. (Baxter Ennis, 757-226-4093)



Baxter Ennis

WASHINGTON, DC – Actor Dean Jones, who has appeared at the NRB convention, joined the board of advisors of the Institute on Religion and Public Policy. (Doug Shaw, 202-835-8760)

HARRISBURG, PA – Dr. Michael Loftis will assume his official role as president-elect of the Association of Baptists for World Evangelism on September 1 and will become the official successor of Dr. Wendell Kempton on March 1, 2001. (717-774-7000)



ORLANDO, FL – After 28 years of leadership, R.B. "Jack" Turney,

founder and chairman of Christian Duplications International, Inc., chose Dr. David Janney to carry on his vision of producing the Bible and supplying equipment and services to the Christian market worldwide on audio and video media. (Rick Tidwell, 800-327-9332)



NASHVILLE, TN – Bill Dale, who conceived and designed *News Odyssey*, the news-based weekly TV series produced in UCom's studios for the Odyssey Channel, returned to the program as senior producer. (800-476-7766)

WHEATON, IL – The board of directors of Christian Service Brigade is pleased to announce the appointment of James G. Erickson, Ed.D., as president. Erickson most recently served as an educational consultant with Skylight, a professional development company assisting schools in curriculum selection. (CSB, 800-815-5573)



In the February-March 2000 "People" section of Trade Talk, Jay Johnson was incorrectly identified as director of Precept Ministries; his correct title is media director. The editors apologize for any inconvenience caused by the omission

Publishing

ANAHEIM, CA – Insight for Living Press announces the release of a new business-to-business product titled *Values on Hold*, a four CD set of messages from NRB Hall of Famer Chuck Swindoll designed to reduce caller hang-ups and to inspire on-hold customers as they wait. The messages address daily life, encouragement, laughter and family life. (Colette Smith, 714-575-5409)



of *I Talked to God Today*, a scripture-based book that teaches children ages 8-12 why, when and how to pray. (Judith Billings, 719-488-9200)

NASHVILLE, TN – *Before I Dream*, a three-volume CD series created and written by author Karyn Henley, will be released in April by Tyndale Kids, a division of Tyndale House Publishers. A bedtime audio-Bible-story format for young children features selected Bible stories read by Henley with original songs corresponding to the stories. (Brian Smith, 615-298-5505)



COLORADO SPRINGS, CO – International Bible Society (IBS) announced the release





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— *DAVY CROCKETT, 1834*

Trade Talk

Technology

WASHINGTON, DC – BARCO provided high-performance display technology for "America's Millennium – A Celebration for the Nation", which took place in the nation's capital on New Year's Eve. (Steven Barlow, 770-218-3200)

CINCINNATI, OH – Harris Corporation recently signed a five-year, sole-source provider agreement with the International Broadcasting Bureau (IBB), an autonomous U.S. Government civilian broadcast service, to

supply FM Radio transmitters. Also, Harris Corporation's latest acquisition, Pacific Research & Engineering (PR&E), now Harris Pacific, announced its new Impulse digital on air and production console. In other Harris news, Harris Corporation has been selected to provide a Sigma CD-II digital television (DTV) transmitter with CD Eye, Harris' new 8-VSB monitoring software, to WPBT, a Miami, FL PBS station. (Gary Pacilio, 321-724-3828)

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BURBANK, CA – Xytech Systems Corporation has introduced a newly enhanced Scheduling Module within its flagship product, Xytech Enterprise 3.4, for the broadcast, video and entertainment industries. (sinan@kanatsiz.com)



HUNTINGTON, NY – IHB Communications Canada has supplied five ARTEMIS digital audio workstations to Toronto-based Manta Sound, the Canadian full service recording facility specializing in post production for film, television and recording projects. (Debra Pagan, 516-784-7865)

DENVER, CO – Columbine JDS Systems, Inc., announced its Spotdata Electronic Invoicing (Spotdata EI) system is now compatible with traffic systems from Enterprise System Group, Inc., and Video Communications, Inc. (VCI). Spotdata EI allows advertising agencies, media buyers and in-house agencies to download electronic invoices from broadcasting and cable companies, eliminating the need for paper invoices. (Chris Lesieutre, 801-533-2669)

MEDFORD, OR – Scala Electronic

KATHREIN
SCALA DIVISION

Corporation changed its name to Kathrein, Inc., Scala Division. The headquarters for the division will remain in Medford. (Dan Fowler, 541-779-6500)



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Linda Furr,
Event Director

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the beginning of ‘the end’ in regards to
America’s moral decay.”

- Gary DeVeau
Christian Life Times

“What has happened to us as a nation? We
have refused to honor God and in doing so, we
open the doors to hatred and violence.”

- Darrell Scott
Father of Columbine High School
shooting victim Rachel Scott

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Trade Talk

Member Profile: KDUV-FM/Visalia, CA — Reaching Listeners with Prayer

Men of prayer and purpose, two brothers carry on a family tradition of broadcasting in a beautiful locale. Visalia, CA, is home to KDUV-FM, run by Bob (general manager) and Joe Croft (program director). The 50,000-watt station broadcasts the Christian Hit Radio Network via satellite, interspersing the CHR music format with several two-minute teaching spots and peppering it with three daily prayer times.

The station was started in 1992 by their mother and stepfather. During the mid-1980s, their mother had a vision to start a Christian music station in the San Joaquin Valley. As farmers, it took the husband and wife team five years to get the dream on air. Bob reports that the first day of operation, someone gave his mother a check for \$92. Today, with two sharathons a year, the station raises close to \$500 thousand dollars.

Targeting the mid-20s demographic, KDUV serves the Fresno, Visalia and San Joaquin Valley with a translator to Bakersfield, CA. The brothers aim to have the younger Christian community stay focused on God by listening to praise and worship music. They hope their programming will encourage the audience to impact the community for Christ.

Joe, also the morning host, is proud of the listener response from KDUV's prayer segments. He believes that "intercessory prayer with listeners builds a deeper relationship ... a connection." An unforeseen blessing of introducing the prayer time to the format is the dramatic increase of audience numbers and support.

Your prayer support of listeners is encouraging, KDUV. Keep reaching your region for Christ!



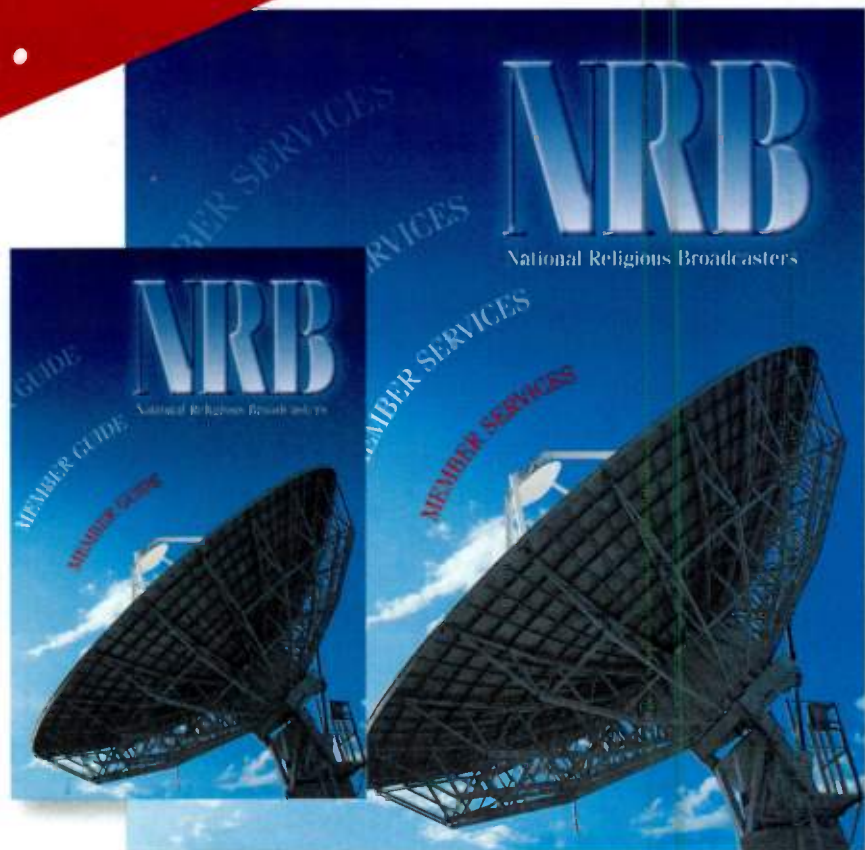
(L - R): General manager Bob Croft, program director Joe Croft, production manager Eric Grimmus, public service director Brian Howard, local Youth for Christ director Paul Belt

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(Vendors, suppliers, manufacturers, publishers, musicians, non-US Christian broadcasters)

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Title/Position _____ Organization _____

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Fax: 703.330.7100

E-mail: atower@nrb.org

www.nrb.org/member.htm



SHAKE-UPS

HIT CHRISTIAN LABELS

by Deborah Evans Price

Few segments of the recording industry have gone through more foundation-shaking changes in the last decade than the contemporary Christian community.

Once the bastion of primarily family-owned record labels scattered from California to Texas, the industry has been altered drastically in the last few years. Most key players relocated to Nashville, TN, and mainstream companies like EMI, Zomba and Gaylord became the corporate parents of such seminal labels as Sparrow, Word, Benson and Brentwood.

In the wake of the acquisitions, there have been numerous changes at the labels. Some in the industry have described the state of certain labels as "decimated" and "cannibalized." Numerous key executives, considered the founding fathers of what has become the fastest-growing niche market, have left the companies they so diligently built for careers in health care, publishing, or other fields. Others have remained in the community in less active roles.

Of course, every segment of the recording industry suffers fallout from mergers and acquisitions, downsizing and various corporate ills. In the Christian music industry, however, many of the displaced executives were not just hired hands but entrepreneurs who built companies from the ground up.

They not only created new businesses but helped a generation of musicians define a new musical genre in the late '60s and early '70s, as the Jesus Movement spawned artists passionately committed to combining their faith and musical expression — artists who consider music not just a career but a calling.

"Before all of the buyouts happened, a person who is still very prominent in the industry asked me if I was concerned about that, and ignorantly, at the time, I

said, 'I'm not really concerned about it.' Looking back, I should have said, 'I'm concerned.'" says Rick Anderson, music buyer for the 22-store, Cincinnati, OH-based Berean chain.

"We have definitely moved away from ministry in this industry," he adds. "And we've looked too much at numbers, too much at trying to make stars out of people and trying to duplicate what's happening in the world. I think that's a major mistake."

Bob Starnes, music buyer for the 70-store Lemstone chain, based in Wheaton, IL, sees it differently: "I think the ministry still comes [from artists]. It's not from whether Sparrow Records changes hands and is part of EMI. Instead, it's the artists that are driving the ministry."

Roots of the Debate

The debate over the impact of mainstream ownership began in 1992, when Jimmy Bowen, then president of EMI's country label, Liberty Records, engineered EMI's purchase of Sparrow Records. Well known as one of the Christian community's key labels,

Sparrow had been founded in 1976 by Billy Ray Hearn, who moved the label from Southern California to Nashville in 1991.

Today, Sparrow is the cornerstone of EMI Christian Music Group (EMI CMG).

That umbrella

organization encompasses the Sparrow Label Group — Sparrow Records, Forefront Records (purchased in July 1996), re:think (a June 1997 acquisition) and Star Song (an October 1994 purchase that was recently transformed into an imprint) — as well as EMI Gospel, EMI Christian Music Publishing and Chordant Distribution Group.

Every segment of the recording industry suffers fallout from mergers and acquisitions, downsizing and various corporate ills. In the Christian music industry, however, many of the displaced executives were not just hired hands but entrepreneurs who built companies from the ground up.





Not to be outdone, Zomba has also been steadily building its own Christian music empire in the last few years, beginning with the purchase of the Brentwood Music Group in 1994. That was followed by the acquisition of Reunion Records in October 1996 and the purchase of Benson Music Group from Music Entertainment Group in 1997. (Founded by John T. Benson in 1902, Benson has been an institution in religious music for nearly a century.)

"I truly regret the transformation that took place in the early '90s in Christian music," says former Reunion Records president Terry Hemmings, currently president/CEO of VGER Technologies, a Nashville-based health-care information-systems company. "I honestly don't know today that I can say it's been healthy for the industry, but I don't know that it hasn't, either. Financially, Word/Gaylord and the EMI Christian Music Group — I don't know about Provident because I don't talk to those guys — are making more money than they've ever made. The size of the market is bigger, and the number of participants is smaller ... but I don't think they are promoting a healthy creative environment."

"I don't think what's gone on is all bad," counters Provident Music Group president/CEO Jim Van Hook. "We've had some resources we wouldn't have had otherwise."

EMI CMG president/CEO Bill Hearn says mainstream ownership has obviously prompted some growing pains but has also been a positive experience.

"We understood the minute we cashed that check that we became employees of EMI," says Hearn. "Now I have a responsibility to grow the company for EMI. The only thing I can stand here today and say is that ... they've never gone back on a word or promise they've made us, and they've never messed with our mission statement. What they have done is made us a better business — taught us to think more about five years out, as opposed to five minutes out. And that makes us a better company."

Shifting Identities

With so many previously competing labels now trying to peacefully coexist under the same corporate umbrellas, consolidation has definitely had an impact on the labels' identities.

At the end of 1998, EMI CMG announced that Star Song was becoming an imprint that would release concept recordings. Star Song artists like Nichole Nordeman, Aaron Benward and the Newsboys were folded into the Sparrow roster.

"We have definitely moved away from ministry in this industry. And we've looked too much at numbers, too much at trying to make stars out of people and trying to duplicate what's happening in the world. I think that's a major mistake." — Rick Anderson, music buyer for Berean Christian Stores

Many in the industry, both inside and outside the Star Song ranks, mourned the demise of what once had been one of Christian music's powerhouse labels.

Founded in 1976 in Houston, TX, by Darrell Harris, the company relocated to Nashville in 1989. Star Song was home to Petra, Whiteheart, the Newsboys and other rock acts throughout the '80s and '90s.

After being purchased by EMI in 1994, the label operated somewhat autonomously until it was moved into Sparrow's building. "That's really when it stopped being Star Song," recalls a former Star Song staffer who wishes to remain anonymous.

For those who have to make the tough decisions regarding the future of these companies, marketplace realities must take precedence over sentiment.

"People chose to sell these companies, and once they chose to sell them, it's not necessarily going to be the same," Hearn says. "But we pray about these things, and we seek counsel, and we do the right things by people."

Star Song founder Harris retired from the label in 1996. Currently serving as chaplain for the Gospel Music Association (GMA), he's philosophical about the fate of his label in recent years.

"It would be unnatural to feel nothing when one sees what one has spent years building dismantled or utilized for purposes other than those originally envisioned," he says. "But the fact is that Star Song was no more 'mine' when I was a shareholder and an officer there than it is today. Our heavenly father owns 'the cattle on a thousand hills' [Psalms 50:10]. And I believe that is literally true — not only about livestock but regarding every asset on the planet. That includes record companies."

Star Song is not the only label to have undergone drastic changes. Reunion Records was founded in 1982 by Dan Harrell and Mike Blanton, also known for developing Blanton/Harrell Management, home to Amy Grant and Michael W. Smith.

They sold 50 percent of the company to BMG in 1993 and sold the remaining half in April 1995. The label fell under the direction of Arista's Nashville division for a brief time before going on the block again. It was purchased by Zomba in October 1996.

Former Reunion president Terry Hemmings saw the label through multiple transitions but resigned from his post of 9 years when it became part of Zomba.



The debate over the impact of mainstream ownership began in 1992, when Jimmy Bowen, then president of EMI's country label, Liberty Records, engineered EMI's purchase of Sparrow Records.

"I've been heartbroken about what they've done to Reunion. It was an independent-minded boutique record label. ... We were able to take risks that we couldn't take in an ownership structure where the bottom line, on a quarter-by-quarter basis, was driving the business." — former Reunion president Terry Hemmings

Afterward, the label went several months without a chief before then GMA president Bruce Koblish was named president. He was there for a little more than a year before parting ways with Provident in July 1998.

Benson/Diadem VP of artist development George King and Brentwood VP/GM Dean Diehl were then named co-VPs/GMs of both the Reunion and Brentwood labels. (During the restructuring, rock acts Third Day, Fono and All Star United were moved to Provident's Essential label.) Recently, VP Michelle Fink, a longtime Reunion executive who helped hold the label together through numerous transitions, left to assume a post at Blanton/Harrell Management.

"I've been heartbroken about what they've done to Reunion," says Hemmings. "It was an independent-minded boutique record label. Because of the way we owned and operated it, we were able to think completely outside the box. We were able to take risks that we couldn't take in an ownership structure where the bottom line, on a quarter-by-quarter basis, was driving the business."

Van Hook says he has been trying to help Reunion steer a new course under the Provident system. "That's why we moved George and Dean over there," he says. "I can tell you that both of those guys are deeply committed — not to hits, although hits are nice — but to the Christian message."

Hemmings admits there are times when he misses being heavily involved in the Christian music industry. But he adds, "The Christian music industry doesn't look like a fun place to be right now."

Anderson is among those who has noticed a visible shift. "When you're looking at three major distribution companies that 92 percent of the sales come from, you have a lot of labels going through very few companies," he says. "And there's no way — when you're doing that kind of volume — that any one of them can have that much identity, unless they happen to be Sparrow or ForeFront or one that has had enough success as a label to maintain that identity."

Van Hook says it's his hope that strong distribution systems will give labels the freedom necessary to reach their potential. "Our hope is to create a distribution system strong enough to provide the distribution needed by new labels that have their own flow of creativity," he says.



Executive Turmoil

Another major concern among some is the unusually high level of executive turnover at the Christian labels, though others argue that such turnover is a fact of life in any business.

In addition to Harris, Hemmings and Koblish leaving their posts, Star Song senior VP of A&R John Mays left the label when it became an imprint. Benson Music Group president Jeff Moseley left Benson last spring.

Also, Dan Brock and Eddie DeGarmo, founders of ForeFront Records — label home to de Taak, Audio Adrenaline and Rebecca St. James — left their 10-year-old company. Greg Ham has been named new president of the EMI-owned label.

"The music industry is full of turnover all the time, so I don't know that this niche is any different than any other," says Brock. "I think this has more to do with a settling down of all these acquisitions."

Hemmings agrees that the acquisitions have fueled the musical chairs scenario. "Some turnover is natural," he says. "It's just the way the market changes. I think the Christian music market changed from an entrepreneurial environment to a corporate environment. [It] substantially and rapidly changed — it didn't really evolve. It happened almost overnight. And entrepreneurial people don't thrive in that kind of environment."

Brock is one of the men tossing off the corporate umbrella. "I do think I'm more of a start-up guy than I am a corporate-maintenance guy," he says.

Positive Outlook

Word president Roland Landy worked his way up through the ranks of Word from an entry-level position to the presidency, which he's held for more than a decade. He feels Brock and other key executives will resurface in other situations.

"This is a cycle," he says. "There are times when the industry seems to shrink, and all these little labels start up. They all grow; then they get absorbed, and [the industry] shrinks. Then we start up and get bigger. There are more labels. It's a cycle."

GMA president Frank Breeden says it's regretful that some of the key industry players are moving on, but he hopes that everyone will give the new generation a chance.

"Personally, that makes me sad," he says of the executives changing posts. "But I have to balance my personal feelings with what I know about the talent

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"Our hope is to create a distribution system strong enough to provide the distribution needed by new labels that have their own flow of creativity." — Jim Van Hook, Provident Music Group president/CEO



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"This is a cycle," he says. "There are times when the industry seems to shrink, and all these little labels start up. They all grow, then they get absorbed, and [the industry] shrinks."

— Roland Lurdy, Word president

that's coming up. I'm very encouraged when I look around this town and see the people who were in secondary positions underneath those people and have paid their dues and are ready to blossom. These are people who understand our ethos."

As the Christian music industry weathers the winds of change at the corporate-owned labels, many are putting their hope in a new crop of innovative independent record labels, such as Gotee, Rocketown, Cadence Communications, Absolute Records and others.

Gotee has broken through the last few years, becoming a force on the Christian music landscape with acts like Out Of Eden, Temple Yard and Jennifer



WaterShed
RECORDS

Knapp, who received multiple Dove Award nominations, including female vocalist of the year.

Rocketown, owned by Reunion signature artist Michael W. Smith, recently enjoyed the distinction of having every artist and/or release on its roster nominated for a Dove. Cadence artist Ashley Cleveland took home a 1999 Grammy for best pop/contemporary gospel album.

"There's a new breed of independents," says Don Donahue, former director of A&R at Reunion who now heads Rocketown. "I think that [such] expansion and contraction naturally happens, and out of that expansion some labels lost their identities. And out of that other labels started, and we're certainly one of those. We started as a result of the expansion."

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Soie Fuel

STAR SONG
RECORDS

If there's one thing that you can always expect in the music business, it's change. Since the accompanying article ran in *Billboard Magazine*, there have been further developments, more executives playing musical chairs, and a new corporate merger that could shake things up to an even greater extent than before. To paraphrase an old folk song "The times they are a changin'."

Earlier this year, it was announced that Time Warner, Inc., and the EMI Group would merge to create a 50-50 joint venture to be called Warner EMI Music. It has yet to be revealed how this scenario will impact EMI Christian Music Group or Warner's Christian music arm. "Everyone is walking around like it won't affect us here in Nashville, but it will," says a source within one of the companies. "It's just a matter of time."

While it remains to be seen just how the most recent merger will impact the Christian industry, there continues to be fallout from former label changes. In the past year, several of the Christian record label executives mentioned in the previous article have moved on to new gigs.

In April 1999, former StarSong senior VP of A&R John Mays joined Provident Music Group as president of Benson Music Group. Former Benson president Jeff Moseley has successfully launched a new label, M2.O Communications. The future of Benson has been in question recently as rumors have been swirling that the 92-year-old label might be closed. Mays maintains that the label has been re-focused, but is still very much alive and looking forward to summer releases by label stalwarts 4HIM and NewSong.

As for ForeFront, Greg Ham has been successfully steering the ship that ForeFront co-founders Dan Brock and Eddie DeGarmo vacated. Brock, still on hiatus from the music indus-

try, is enjoying time with his family and has yet to resurface in an industry capacity. According to a friend, he's "checked out."

DeGarmo, on the other hand, is balancing family life with a busy plate of activities. He and EMI Christian Music Group president Bill Hearn served as co-executive producers on the *Jesus* project, a multi-artist (which includes LeAnn Rimes, 95 Degrees and Steven Curtis Chapman) soundtrack that will accompany the CBS mini-series. He's also preparing to cast his play, *Hero*, which he expects to launch Easter 2001, and is serving as executive producer on an upcoming ForeFront project by 14-year-old vocalist Stacy Orrico.

Does he miss his days at ForeFront? "I certainly miss the people I worked with on a daily basis," he says. "It's been a very busy departure for me doing this project with Bill Hearn, which is arguably the most challenging project I've ever put together just because of the enormity and the magnitude of the artists who are involved. ... I miss the people. I've got a lot of great friends and great artists I've worked with through the years that I'll always miss, but some will be involved in the play I'm doing, so I'll get a chance to see them again."

Independent labels continue to gain ground, but not without casualties. Cadence Communications closed its doors last year, but Rocketown and Gotee are still going strong. Rocketown's Chris Rice won the male vocalist award at last spring's Dove Awards and Knapp nabbed the best new artist accolade, proving that indie labels could effectively compete with the major labels when armed with great talent. And as always, it's the talent, the anointed core of artists who continue to weather the corporate storms and provide a spiritual ruler in these stormy times.

—DEP


Images from NRB 2000

Photos by Patricia A. Mahoney


Captions by Christine L. Pryor

Keynote Speakers

- ANNIVERSARY BANQUET. "God has called us to make an impact on the culture. ... If you want to see whether someone fears God, go to their home."
— Tony Evans, founder/president of The Urban Alternative
- OPENING SESSION. "[Don't be the] standard bearer of self-righteousness. ... [Do your work] more based on the attitude of love than anything else."
— Jack Hayford, host of Living Way and pastor of Church on the Way in Van Nuys, CA
- WOMEN'S LUNCHEON. "When was the last time you felt the pleasure of God over something you did? Jesus is telling you to get out of the boat and walk on water."
— Jill Briscoe, host of Bridges and author of more than 40 books.
- WORLD FELLOWSHIP LUNCHEON. "God promised He has given us all power to fulfill the Great Commission. ... This new millennium, let us do everything we possibly can to reach the world for Jesus Christ."
— Billy Kim, president of FEBC-Korea
- WORSHIP SERVICE. "The Lord says, '[I want you] to pray for people, right here in the vestibule, with all these people moving around,' and we don't do it because of what people might think — right here in the church!"
— Ron Cline, president of HCJB World Radio




PRESIDENT'S AWARD. "I'd like to thank the Academy," jests Thomas Kinkadee (left) before receiving the President's Award from NRB president E. Brandt Gustafsson. In his acceptance remarks, Kinkadee said, "You're not in the broadcasting business ... you're in the home business, and you have a chance to let your light shine."




HALL OF FAME. Charles Szindoll (left) is inducted into the Hall of Fame by NRB chairman David Clark (center) and president E. Brandt Gustafsson. Szindoll is founder of Insight for Living ministry and president of Dallas Theological Seminary.


Awards



FRAMING THE FUTURE. "Sunrise," a gift to NRB from President's Award recipient Thomas Kinkadee, "Painter of Light," will grace the association's new headquarters building in Manassas, VA.



CHAIRMAN'S AWARD. Upon receiving the Chairman's Award, Dr. Laura Schlessinger remarks, "I have always contended that people who are seriously religious are of one mind."



HALL OF FAME. Rolf McPherson (foreground) accepts the Hall of Fame award on behalf of his mother, Aimee Semple McPherson, the first woman to obtain a radio broadcasting license. NRB president E. Brandt Gustafsson displays the bronze plaque commemorating McPherson.



● **DETERMINATION.** Singer/songwriter Babbie Mason encourages the audience at the Women's Luncheon. Mason appears courtesy of Spring Hill Music Group/Chordant Distribution, Inc.

● **A GESTURE OF FAITH.** Michael W. Smith chats with the Evening Celebration audience. Smith appears courtesy of Reunion Records/Provident Music Distribution.

● **UNBRIDLED JOY.** During the Evening Celebration, Kathy Troccoli expresses, "It's amazing what God does in our lives when we abandon ourselves to Him." Troccoli appears courtesy of Reunion Records/Provident Music Distribution.

● **SWINGIN' SOUND.** Ralph Carmichael directs the Big Band with his trademark finger snaps during the Anniversary Banquet. The group appears courtesy of Light Records/Platinum Distribution.

● **THE RICE STUFF.** Chris Rice encourages the Evening Celebration audience to praise the Lord, saying, "All this is not about how good we can be, but about how good God is." Rice appears courtesy of Rocketown Records/Word Distribution.

● **INTERNATIONAL BLESSING.** The India Children's Choir performs a traditional dance during the World Fellowship Luncheon. The choir appears courtesy of Bibles for the World.

● **MAN POWER.** Haven Quartet's tight harmonies resound during the Worship Service. The quartet appears courtesy of Haven Ministries.

● **FUNNY BUSINESS.** Dennis Swanberg, "America's Minister of Encouragement," enceeds the Awards Night/Opening Session through impressions and antics. Swanberg appears courtesy of Lasting Impressions.

● **AN ACT OF GOD.** Max McLean's dramatic presentation of the book of Acts enhances the Worship Service.

● **GREEN ROOM GREETINGS.** The Martins and convention music coordinator Mark Craig have a Kodak™ moment backstage before the Anniversary Banquet. Left to right: Jonathan Martin, Craig, Judy Martin Hess and Joyee Martin McCollough. The Martins appear courtesy of Spring Hill Music Group.

Performances

STILL A PIONEER. Phil Driscoll (right) rehearses in his expo booth, a popular stop for music lovers. Driscoll combined electronics with his signature horn sound to create a high-tech listening area.



INFO. PLEASE. Team members of Information Radio Network show their skills on the exhibit floor.

Exposition



A WINNING TEAM. (L-R) NRB chairman David Clark, president E. Brandt Gustafson, former Major League baseball player Jim Sundberg and NRB vice president Michael Glenn officially open the exhibit hall of the 57th Annual NRB Convention and Exposition. Sundberg, president of Sundberg Leadership Team, also led two educational sessions of the Executive Management track.



JUST BROWSING. The wide aisles of the Anaheim Convention Center give attendees plenty of room to explore exhibitor wares.



HITTING THE BIG TIME. Business is conducted in front of All American Network's video display.



ON AIR. KKLA-AM-FM/Los Angeles, CA, broadcasts live from the exhibit floor.

LIVE WIRES. Pacific Garden Mission's Unshackled! team performs a live taping during the Evening Celebration.



INTERNATIONAL SINGBIRD. A native singer (far right) performs at the Israel Ministry of Tourism booth. The exhibitor also sponsored the NRB 2000 tote bags received at registration.

Student Events



TOMORROW'S LEADERS. Student winners display their certificates at the Intercollegiate Religious Broadcasters Awards Ceremony. The event was sponsored by Bott Radio Network.



BTR RULES. Big Tent Revival performs at the Intercollegiate Religious Broadcasters concert. The band

says they "put the message first and then match our music to the passion of Christ's teaching." Big Tent Revival appears courtesy of Ardent/ForeFront Records.



NOW HIRING. Employers interview students as prospective employees during the Intercollegiate Religious Broadcasters Job Fair.

Educational Sessions



A STUDY IN INTENSITY. An attendee pays close attention during an educational session. More than 40 sessions were held during NRB 2000.



TEN-HUT! Producer/director Phil Cooke leads the charge for the "Marines" of the TV Boot Camp.



LIVING UP TO ITS NAME. Emcee/moderator Wayne Pederson (center) grins at the audience during a moment of the Public Policy Breakfast's "Point/Counterpoint: Religion and Politics" discussion between Cal Thomas (left) and Jay Sekulow. Before the session, newly elected NRB chairman Pederson quipped, "We spent all morning arguing who's going to sit on the right." Thomas is an author, syndicated columnist and analyst/commentator while Sekulow is chief counsel for the American Center for Law and Justice.



Other Views

AUTHOR, AUTHOR. A long line of people at the NRB Store await their chance to chat with Cal Thomas (right) during his book signing for *Blinded by Light*.

RAISE YOUR RIGHT HAND. Judge Paul Pressler (far right) installs the executive committee during the Anniversary Banquet. (Left to right) Stuart Epperson (Salem Communications), Sue Bahner (CrossWay Consulting), Rich Bott II (Bott Radio Network), Jerry Rose (Total Living Network), David Clark (FamilyNet), treasurer James Gwinn (CRISTA Ministries), secretary Bill Skelton (Loxe Worth Finding Ministries), first vice chairman Glenn Plummer (Christian Television), chairman Wayne Pederson (Northwestern Radio) and president E. Brandt Gustafson. Not available for the photo: second vice chairman Michael Little (Christian Broadcasting Network) and vice president Michael Glenn.



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- AD040 Public Policy Breakfast with Jay Sekulow and Cal Thomas
- AD050 Using Research Strategically in Management Decisions
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- AD070 New Marketing for the Millennium
- AD080 The Three Seasons of Dynamic Teams (Part A)
- AD090 Creating News, Making Headlines
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- AD110 Non-Traditional Revenue: The Financial Future of Christian Radio
- AD120 Seven Deadly Diseases of Ministry Marketing
- AD130 Ministry Promotion: From Your Church to the Community
- AD140 Can a Christian Show Ever Get a Green Light from the Networks?
- AD150 World Fellowship Luncheon with speaker Billy Kim, President, Far East Broadcasting Company, Korea
- AD160 Using Research Strategically in Programming Decisions
- AD170 Using the Internet for Fundraising/ Fundraising
- AD180 Don't Pay Commissions -- Plus 9 Other Ways to Improve Your Agency Relations
- AD190 The Three Seasons of Dynamic Teams (Part B)
- AD200 Salt & Light: Reaching the World from LA
- AD210 The Future of Radio
- AD220 "You Want to Do WHAT!" - Practical Guidelines for Successful Promotional Events
- AD230 If God Will Provide, Why Do We Have to Ask for Money?
- AD240 Church Media Producers: What You Need to Know!
- AD250 What's Our Future In The New Millennium
- AD260 Evening Celebration: "UNSHACKLED!" Radio Broadcast
- AD270 What Can U.S. Ministries Do To Reach the 10/40 Window With Models of What is Being Done Already
- AD280 Integrating E-Commerce into a Ministry Website
- AD300 Ezra: A Biblical Model for Leadership
- AD310 Raising the Standard of Christian TV and Video
- AD320 Commercial Radio Open Forum: Achieving Balance in Pivotal Times
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How to update Christian media's presentation of a timeless message

by Phil Cooke



For those of us who spend our lives working in the media, the dawn of the new millennium should be a time of deep reflection and evaluation. Are we utilizing the most effective media techniques and strategies for the Gospel? Are we making a dent in the culture war? Are we making a difference in people's lives? Is the enormous amount of money we spend (compared to other outreaches) worth it?

So often, we spend our time wondering about lighting equipment, the newest non-linear editing system, a new film stock or an innovative audio board, when the essential concerns should be “Is it working?” and “Are people being reached and changed because of what we’re doing?”

NRB Power Points:

1. Storytelling is the basis of our message. We must be good storytellers.
2. Skip the Christian lingo, Brother. What good is a message the audience can't understand?
3. Stay current. Contemporary packaging tells the audience our message is for them.
4. Seek out new financial models. It takes money to capture an audience.
5. Set forth a new media vision. Christian media can't afford to waste money on commitments that aren't solid.

Sleepless in the Studio

These are the questions that keep me awake at night. So often, we spend our time wondering about lighting equipment, the newest non-linear editing system, a new film stock or an innovative audio board, when the essential concerns should be “Is it working?” and “Are people being reached and changed because of what we’re doing?”

I've been thinking a great deal about how our task will continue or change in the next century. How will entering the digital age affect Christian media? What changes will occur in the immediate future that will impact our mission?

I'm no expert on technology — in fact, I gave that up long ago. I realized that if I tried to keep up with computer and technological innovation, I would have time for little else. And that's when I discovered that it isn't technology that's important, but the way we use it that will ultimately make the difference.

A great American playwright, Eugene O'Neill, concentrated his work on the “eternal verities” — the things that last. He wasn't concerned about trends or the latest article in popular magazines or entertainment programs. He was concerned about the eternal questions wrestled with from generation to generation.

In a similar fashion, the world of Christian media also possesses eternal verities — areas that are critical in spite of technology, that remind us that what we're doing matters and that will never change. These areas are timeless; they don't regard what camera, microphone or lighting we use.

Storytelling

It's critically important to remember that we're telling a simple story about how God chose to become one of us and share His eternal plan with people who didn't deserve it. That's it. Our mission isn't about close-ups, cuts and dissolves, better limbers or higher video resolution. It's about telling a story.

As we enter the digital age of the next century, let's spend more time learning how to tell a story more effectively. I don't worry about when we'll change our Christian TV stations to the new high resolution format as much as when we'll start producing dramatic movies and television programs that tell a story.

It doesn't matter the program format — preaching, music, documentary, variety — the program is telling some type of story, and unless that story is told effectively, the audience won't be interested.

Why are Christian media producers not producing more dramatic projects? Part of the problem is our inability to tell a story. This Sunday, thousands of pastors will step up to the pulpit and not tell a single story. Yet, when you study the life of Jesus, that's just about all He ever did. He rarely lectured or preached; He mostly told stories that touched people and changed their lives.

Here was an incredible chance on NPR to explain the life-changing experience of Christ's love to a nationwide audience, and yet the reporter could not find a single person in that church who could explain the experience in simple terms anyone could understand.

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Skip the Lingo, Brother

I recently listened to a remarkable story on National Public Radio that focused on a major city-wide evangelistic effort by one of the largest churches in the West. Although I was amazed that NPR would even do a feature on this type of Christian story, I was completely prepared for the secular reporter to make a mockery of the event and trivialize Christian faith as so many have done in the past. But the report was genuinely open-minded and attempted to tell a balanced, sincere story. The reporter even questioned her own need for a personal faith and openly wondered if this might be her moment for an encounter with God.

What I wasn't prepared for was her difficulty in getting Christians to describe their faith in normal human language.

Time after time, when she would interview the church members, they used terminology that only a Christian would understand: faith walk, strongholds of the enemy, salvation, praying through, dominions, reaching the lost — all terms for which a non-Christian has little or no understanding.

Here was an incredible chance on NPR to explain the life-changing experience of Christ's love to a nationwide audience, and yet the reporter could not find a single person in that church who could explain the experience in simple terms anyone could understand. Finally, the reporter walked away frustrated, deciding that since it was so difficult to explain, it must not be relevant to our culture or to her personally.

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I was devastated. When I read the New Testament, Jesus doesn't use Christian lingo. He doesn't use theological or philosophical terms. And He certainly doesn't talk over people's heads.

Jesus understood that the way to reach people was to speak to them in simple everyday language anyone could understand. Why have we lost that ability? Why have we created an entire vocabulary of words and phrases that only church members can understand?

John, one of my closest friends, is a respected and successful physician. When he speaks to his staff or confers with other doctors, he uses vocabulary particular to his profession — words and phrases that are very specific and effective, but for which I have little or no understanding. However, when John talks to his patients, he speaks in a style they understand, explaining difficult medical concepts in a simple way. And the simplicity is effective; they leave his office with an accurate and true understanding of their medical condition.

Why can't we do that as Christians? When we're talking to non-Christians, we must speak in a language they understand or our message will not be understood.

Stay Current

While it's important that we tell effective stories and use language and phrases people understand, it's also critical that we surround our media efforts in packages that people want to open. Do an experiment: Turn on your TV to a Christian channel. Now mute the sound and switch between that channel and ABC, MTV, MSNBC or the Sci-Fi Channel. Notice a difference? Of course. Look at the video quality, the graphic presentation, the shooting style. These channels are designed to capture an audience.

Jesus dealt with current issues in the surroundings that were popular — the marketplace, the homes of the rich and powerful, the temple square — all places He knew people would listen to His message. We need to package our message in an innovative and exciting way so people will want to watch and listen.

I saw a magazine ad recently for a Christian college, and the tag line was "We're not ashamed of the old-fashioned Gospel." I've heard that over-used line before. But this time I thought, what is the "old-fashioned Gospel"? The gospel message of the 1950s? Of the 1800s?

America needs the Gospel that Jesus preached, the same one that's true today. A message with an answer for the hopelessness of the inner city, an answer for the school violence that's swallowing up our young people and an answer for those caught in a web of pornography and drugs.

Sinners aren't looking for an "old fashioned" answer. They're looking for today's answer, and unless we can produce programs and events that portray our message as an answer for today, they'll never listen.

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Seek New Financial Models

I had a discussion with a Christian TV station owner recently who was absolutely convinced that God had given us telethons in order to finance Christian TV. He was confident that no other way was acceptable to God but telethons, and we had no business using other methods.

If telethons are working for your church, station or ministry, then by all means, continue. But as we enter the new millennium, we're going to need alternative ways to finance Christian media or we'll continue to lag behind in our task.

For instance, currently in TV, the preferred method is to offer a product on the air to capture names. Then those names are pummeled over and over again through fund-raising efforts in the mail. There's really nothing wrong with this approach (unless the fundraising appeals are offensive, unethical or in poor taste), however, it has done little to raise the kinds of funds necessary to make Christian movies, dramatic TV series and other types of expensive programming.

But why is that necessary? Why do we need these types of programs? Because they work. They capture audiences by the millions.

If preaching and teaching on TV generated great audiences, the secular networks would be producing those types of programs in prime time. But what are they airing? TV movies, sit-coms and dramatic series.

If you work with a station manager, pastor or other ministry leader, sit down and discuss their vision as well. Ask the hard questions, and don't settle for easy answers.

Is it especially honoring to God to struggle with equipment that's falling apart? Does He expect us never to travel to create special programs? Should we sacrifice the quality of His message by using inferior talent instead of spending the money to hire professional writers, producers, directors and actors?

Financing is the key. When we change the financing model, we'll change history.

I don't have all the answers for this dilemma, but I want to continue raising the question. Changing the financing model for Christian broadcasting, movie-making and producing will literally change the face of Christian media.

Set Forth a New Media Vision

I made a decision this year to re-evaluate my company's vision for producing Christian media programming. Upon reflection, we saw that we were being asked to work with a number of clients who really didn't have much of a vision for TV, and therefore weren't very interested in being innovative and cutting edge. It wasn't necessarily a budget issue, although in media, finances are always an issue at some level. Mostly, it was a commitment issue.

Who knows why some clients want to produce TV programs? Perhaps it's ego, popularity or pressure from family, friends or church members — the reasons are innumerable.

But this year, we decided to focus on clients who had a genuine calling and commitment to change lives through media and were willing to do whatever it takes creatively to make that happen.

Another Christian producer recently said, "The world is full of media companies that are out to make a buck. The world desperately needs a media company that is out to make a difference." We want to be a media company that makes a difference, and as we begin the year 2000, I urge you to re-evaluate your own media vision.

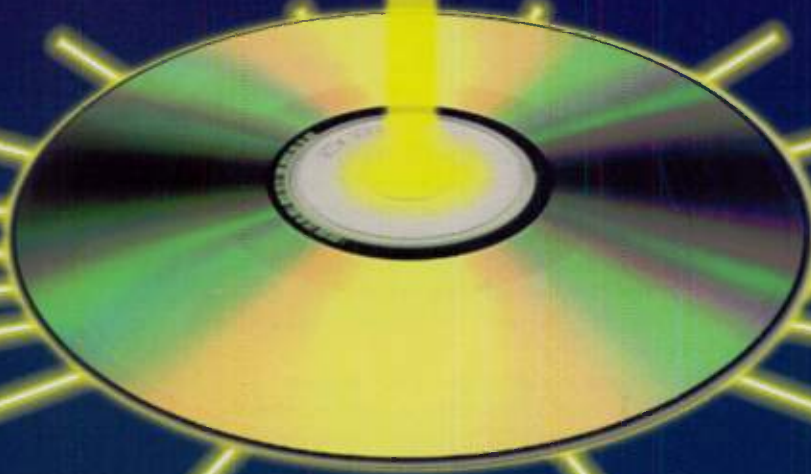
If you work with a station manager, pastor or other ministry leader, sit down and discuss their vision as well. Ask the hard questions, and don't settle for easy answers. The cost is great, and the stakes are high.

At the beginning of a new millennium, we can't afford to have churches, ministries, stations or production companies waste time or money. We need people, companies and organizations who are committed — not to technology, but to using that technology to reach people with a message that can change their lives.

Let the beginning of a new millennium be the dawning of a new age in Christian media. Learn to tell a story effectively, without using members-only lingo. Use a contemporary package adequately supported by new financial models. And stop wasting money, time and talent on commitments that are less than solid. Change the face of Christian media, one program at a time.

Phil Cooke is president and television director of Phil Cooke Pictures, Inc., in Burbank, CA. His most recent TV project was Millennium Chorus, a global special featuring Kathie Lee Gifford, Michael W. Smith, Bob Carlisle, Michael Crawford and Jennifer Holliday. Cooke conducted the NRB 2000 TV Boot Camp in Anaheim, CA. Reach him at phil@cookefilm.com or 818-563-2125 and visit his Web site at www.cookefilm.com.

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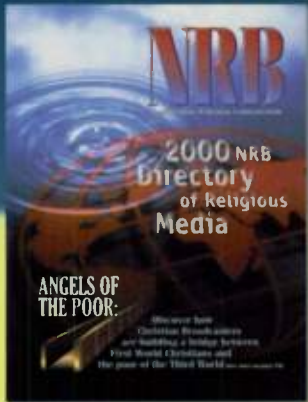


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Opinion

During NRB's disagreement with the FCC over new content regulations on noncommercial educational TV channels, the association received many phone calls, e-mails and letters from people expressing their position on the matter. Here is a sampling:

After hearing about the announcement from the FCC concerning the most recent assault on Christian broadcasting, I must say that I am shocked.



Using once again poor judgment and not willing to accept the slings and arrows of favored special interest groups, millions of Christians

may very well be deprived of their viewing options. After carefully reading the comments from the FCC leaders and the generalist definitions of what [will] or will not constitute an educational program, I feel that every Christian-oriented program will be brought before the FCC firing line. ... It is interesting to read that the FCC's statements clearly use the word "church" in referencing religious programs; does this mean that other faiths are off the hook at this point in time?

Ishwari Silberman

If it were homosexuals that the FCC were "out to stop" from their freedom of expression on the airwaves, you would be celebrating! While I agree that the government should keep its nose out of people's business, I find it extremely amusing that you poor, so-called "Christians" are under fire from the FCC.

It's about time that you people should get a dose of the medicine you are trying to force-feed the rest of the world. You are not of Christ and Christ is not in you. You are hiding behind Christ to preach your hate and evil. And that old saying, "What comes around goes around," is in full effect here. "Praise the FCC!" Amen!

Anonymous e-mail

Thank you for contacting me about religious broadcasting and a recent ruling by the FCC. ... I was very disturbed about the precedent-setting implications this ruling could have on noncommercial stations in Mississippi and across America. Never before has such a bright line been drawn about what does or does not constitute "education-

al programming" with regard to the approval of a noncommercial TV station license.

I cosponsored legislation in the Senate to nullify this unwarranted ruling. Subsequently, the FCC reversed course and revoked the additional guidance portion of its order. This was the right outcome.

*Trent Lott, Majority Leader
United States Senate*

I was horrified by the news last night that the FCC is setting new rules on certain religious programs. ... If anyone has ever wondered about the unleashing of a one-world religion in the United States, I believe that this most definitely will set the stage.

Marsha Borrelli-Silva

After so many years of the Madeline Murray O'Hair hoax, it appears that the FCC is taking its first steps in curtailing evangelical religious broadcasting. I'm so glad there is an NRB to help preserve access to the airwaves for the preaching and teaching of God's Word.

*Richard Bott II
Bott Radio Network*

The argument is gaining ground that, in enforcing church-state separation, the government can't discriminate against religion. The proposition sounds neutral and unassailable. But in fact it is used to redefine separation in such a way as to turn the concept on its ear and make enforcement all but impossible. The unlikely source of the latest example is the FCC.

Washington Post editorial



Where the government controls access to an entire medium of communication, it has no choice other than to remain studiously neutral as between religion and non-religion. Any other position would inevitably lead to discrimination against religion — as demonstrated by the FCC's now-revoked policy. The reason why this proposition sounds "neutral and unassailable," to quote your editorial, is because it is so.

*Rep. Billy Tauzin (R-LA) Chairman,
House Telecommunications Subcommittee
In response to the previous
Washington Post editorial*

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Our view is that the founding fathers intended to spare us from this kind of morass when they opted for the First Amendment. Indeed, the FCC ruling suggests that the more fundamental issue here is not religious broadcasting, but the FCC itself. Maybe there was an argument for reserving licenses for certain stations before, but in an age of cable and the Internet it's hard to argue that there is any shortage of outlets. Maybe, too, you can distinguish between the educational value of a Pat Robertson sermon and a Bill Moyers PBS special. But what does it mean for the First Amendment to have an FCC that forbids one and subsidizes the other?

Wall Street Journal editorial

Like many others concerned about the future of religious broadcasting, I sent a letter to the chair of the FCC. It's refreshing to know that truth can prevail.

While the Commission's decision to reverse its initial ruling to restrict Paxson's broadcast license does provide cause for celebration among Christian broadcasters, we cannot declare a victory and head for home. The regulation giving FCC commissioners a basis for making their original unconstitutional ruling still stands.

The letter of this vague regulation appears to have served its purpose: allowing commissioners the opportunity to make a ruling against religious broadcasting in the event that it becomes politically advantageous for them to do so. In order to prevent a more serious future infringement on our constitutional rights, we must now work to change this regulation so it concurs with the spirit of the First Amendment.

*Jennifer L. Brown
Former radio and TV reporter*

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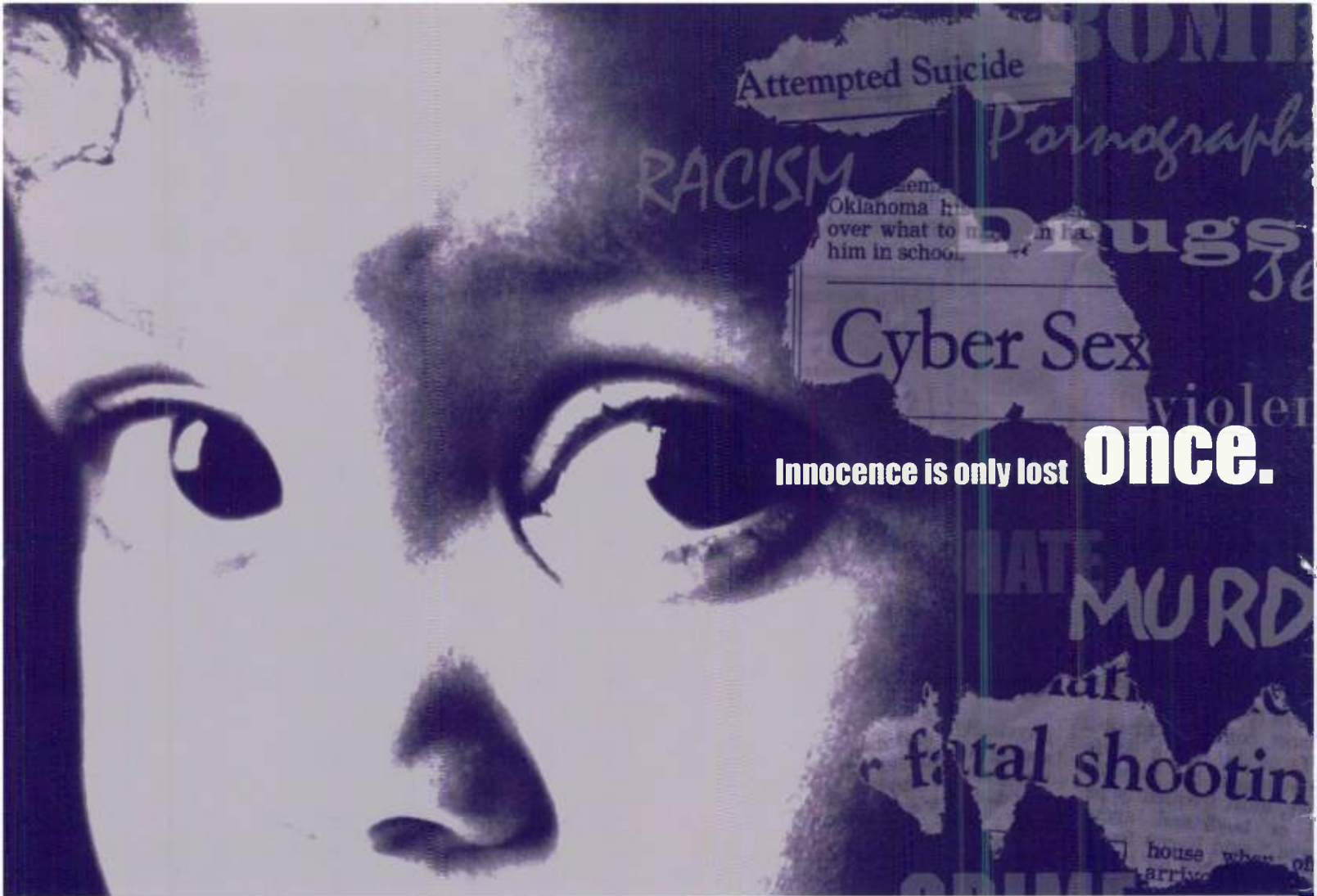
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