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September 2003

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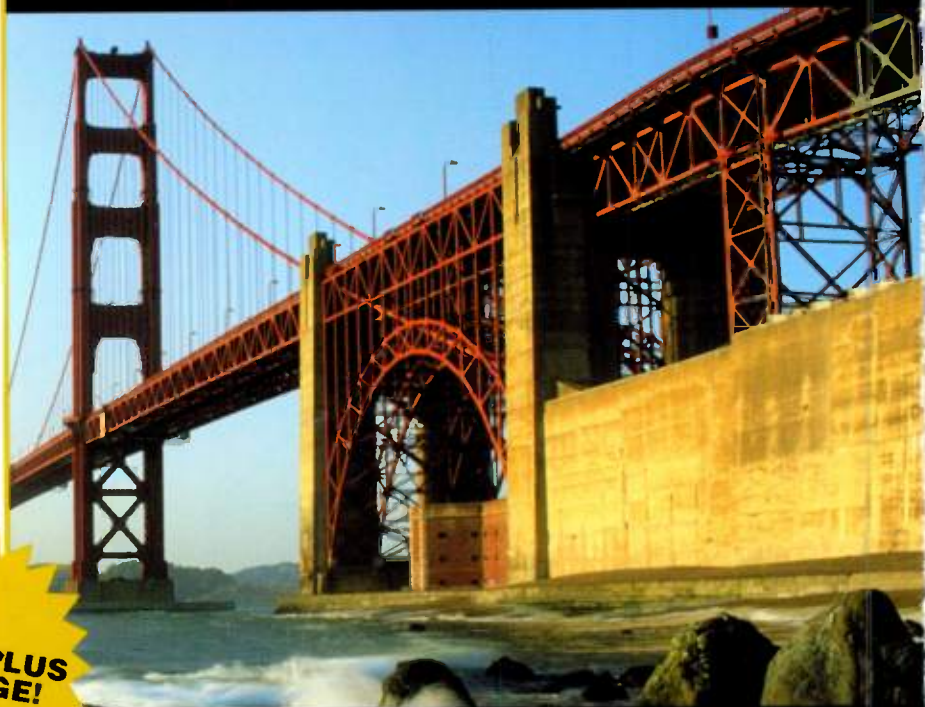
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PROGRAMMING TRENDS

Inside: *Listener Statistics, p.6* • *Talk Forecast, p.18*

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at a Time!*

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COVER STORY

18 9 Trends in Christian Talk Radio

BY ROBB HANSEN

What's the forecast for Teaching/Preaching programs? Breaks in long-format programs? Shorter features? Webcasting? Speakers delivering more than the message? Discover what changes are in the air for the industry's largest radio segment.

Bonus: A look at the Spanish language climate.

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SO DID ANYTHING UNUSUAL HAPPEN WHILE I WAS OUT TO LUNCH?

Calendar

- **September 12-16**
International Broadcasting Convention (IBC) Exhibition; Amsterdam, The Netherlands; www.ibt.org
- **September 18-20**
Eastern NRB; Philadelphia, PA; www.wpel.org/enrb.htm
- **October 1-3**
NAB 2003 Radio Show; Philadelphia, PA; www.nab.org
- **October 15-17**
Broadcast Technology Society (IEEE) 53rd Annual Broadcast Symposium; Washington, DC; www.ieee.org
- **February 13-17, 2004**
61st Annual NRB Convention & Exposition; Charlotte, NC; Patsy Smith, psmith@nrb.org

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Absent From the Body

Calling our spiritual journey a "race," the writer of Hebrews reminds us that we are to run it with perseverance because "we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses." During the month of July, four of NRB's most faithful and gifted men joined that array of witnesses: Larry Burkett (July 4), Otis Yoder (July 18), Bill Bright (July 19) and John Jess (July 21). Each of these men left unmistakable footprints of faithfulness and touched millions of lives with their ministries.

Larry Burkett

Larry Burkett founded Christian Financial Concepts, which later merged with Crown Financial Ministries. His voice on the radio was always that of both friend and prophet. When we heard his gentle manner, along with his evident concern and compassion for his callers, we knew we were listening to a friend. But Larry always had something of a modern-day prophet about him as well. In the midst of his clear teaching on the biblical principles for money management, we were consistently reminded that our attitude about wealth is truly a reflection of our devotion and relationship to God. He reminded us that when we hold too tightly to the things of this world, our hands are not open to receive all the blessing God intends for us.

Otis Yoder

Pastor Yoder founded the *Heralds of Hope* radio ministry for which he was the principal speaker for more than 30 years. Believing that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God, his unwavering commitment was to the clear exposition of Scripture. His friends describe Brother Yoder as "jealous" for the Word of God. By this they refer not only to his desire to proclaim the Word but also his passion to defend it.

Bill Bright

Calling himself a slave of the Lord Jesus Christ, Bill Bright founded what has become the largest Christian ministry in the modern church era: Campus Crusade for Christ. While some undoubtedly will view the legacy of Bill Bright in terms of the extraordinary family of ministries comprising Campus Crusade for Christ, others will point to his strategic creativity in developing high-impact tools for evangelism, such as *The Four Spiritual Laws* and the *Jesus* film. Yet for many, the mention of his name will bring memories of his winsome spirit, his unflinching encouragement and his deep devotion to Jesus. If the aim of the Christian life is to know Christ and make Him known to others, then Bill Bright's exceptional life struck the mark closer than most.

John Jess

John Jess founded the *Chapel of the Air* radio ministry for which he was the principal speaker for 35 years. He became a Christian at 17, leaving what he called a wild life of driving bootleg whiskey for gangster Al Capone. During his early years in ministry, John Jess traveled throughout the United States, speaking at churches and tent meetings and using his musical talents to glorify the Lord. With *Chapel of the Air*, he perfected a friendly, conversational teaching style that enabled him to minister across generational boundaries. His devotion to teaching biblical truths continued even in retirement, as he recorded messages for Family Life Radio's *Straight Talk* program.

Each of these men lived remarkable lives, proclaiming at every opportunity the Christ they trusted so completely, presenting Christ's plan of salvation to all who would listen and preparing their audiences for a life beyond this temporal one. And now they too are part of that great cloud of witnesses.

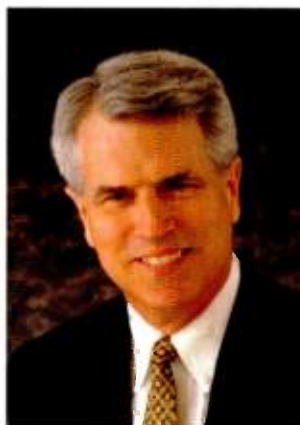
We too are witnesses, in a different sense. We have witnessed the leadership these men gave to our industry. We have witnessed four lives that have been well-lived for the glory of God. And we have witnessed a dedication to running an excellent race, inspiring us to persevere in our own. The question for us is: how shall we live in light of such devotion?

The words of Steve Green's song come to mind:

*May all who come behind us find us faithful,
May the fire of our devotion light their way.
May the footprints that we leave lead them to believe,*

*And the lives we live inspire them to obey.
May all who come behind us find us faithful.*

We have surely found these four men to be faithful, fired with devotion and inspirational to our obedience to Christ. Clearly, they are stellar examples of NRB's tag line: Christian Communicators Impacting the World. And although we shall miss them greatly, we recognize that their absence from the body means that they are now gloriously present with the Lord they served so faithfully.



Dr. Frank Wright is president of NRB. Contact him at fwright@nrb.org or 703-330-7000.



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***BOTT RADIO NETWORK** and its format have literally revolutionized my walk with the Lord. Thank you for changing my life forever. M.R. — St. Louis, MO*



*About two years ago God led me to **BOTT RADIO NETWORK**. I accepted Jesus as my Lord and Savior. I know your station was part of God's plan for me. J.S. — Kansas City, MO*

*I am a prodigal child, returning to my faith after many years of atheism. The Lord Himself led me to **BOTT RADIO NETWORK**. It's a staple of my life. S.H. — Wichita, KS*

*I strayed away from God, came back and every time I turned on the radio, **BOTT RADIO NETWORK** was still there providing the messages I needed. Thank you very much for your existence. T.R. — Modesto, CA*

*I started listening to **BOTT RADIO NETWORK** and became a Christian. You've been a blessing by assisting me in becoming a Godly father and husband. B.F. — Memphis, TN*



*I was away from God, but scanned across **BOTT RADIO NETWORK** and began listening every evening on the way home from work. I am so happy to say I've rededicated my life to Him in a depth that I have never known before. D.F. — Oklahoma City, OK*



Dick Bott
President

At **BOTT RADIO NETWORK**, it's not how many people we reach, but how many **lives are changed** that really matters. That's why the foundation of our format is **Quality Bible Teaching** — with Christian News and Information, to help people grow in the Lord and apply their faith in their daily lives. **God's Word** still changes the hearts and lives of those who have ears to hear.

We thank God for the many program ministries we broadcast. They share our purpose — **to get the Word of God into the people of God...** and make a difference for eternity!

**Be assured, if your program is on
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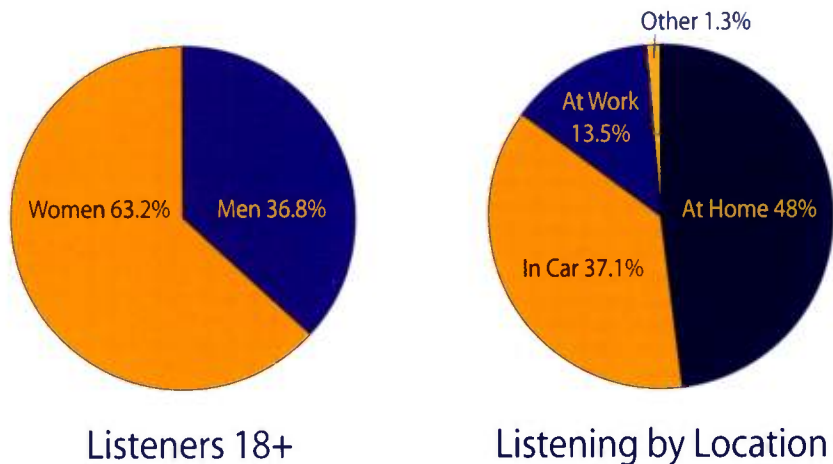
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RELIGIOUS RADIO LISTENER STATISTICS

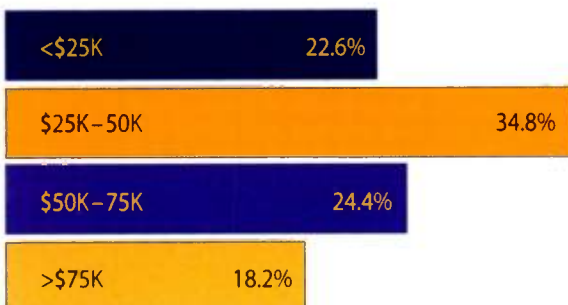


Listeners 18+

Listening by Location



Religious AQH Share of All Radio Listeners by Daypart, 12+



Household Income

Source: Arbitron Radio Today 2003

AT-A-GLANCE MEMBER GUIDE

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The Complete Guide to EEO Regulations for Religious Broadcasters
• Gina Ebhardt, (703) 330-7000



10 Non-profit Radio Myths

Making a transition from commercial to non-profit radio can be like learning a foreign language. There are many misperceptions about non-profit radio stations:

1. Non-profits are cheap and unprofessional. Great radio is great radio, wherever it is found. Since its bottom line is mission oriented, a non-profit can take the "profit" it makes and put it back into the radio station, whereas a for-profit has a responsibility to bring a return on investment.
2. Non-profits cannot make a financial profit. As long as a non-profit station's exempt mission is served, funds can be accumulated and used to expand operations to further the station's purpose. However, excess funds cannot go to members, directors or officers.
3. It is easier to work with an owner than with a board. A good board provides a wide breadth of knowledge and experience. If board members are properly recruited, know their function and are kept well informed, they can help spur growth and balance each other's perspectives.
4. A non-profit station cannot air an announcement from a for-profit business. Within FCC guidelines, a non-profit non-commercial station can make a grant announcement for a for-profit business. The FCC has rules about what can and cannot be said (no calls to actions, no qualitative language, etc).
5. A non-profit organization cannot promote concerts or events. While it is true that a non-commercial station cannot run promotional spots for a for-profit entity, it can run announcements for its own event.

6. Non-profit salaries are lower. Non-profit boards establish salary ranges based on salaries at similar for-profit organizations. As long as salaries don't include an open-ended bonus that could put someone outside of that range, then the non-profit can pay what it wants to pay.
7. Non-profit stations always ask for money. Although many non-commercial stations ask for money two to three days a year, the national trend is toward shorter fund raisers. In contrast, an average spot load on a commercial station is 12 minutes per hour, or 73 days of spots per year.
8. Non-commercial is the same as non-profit. The terms are different and not interchangeable. Although non-profit organizations run non-commercial stations, many commercial Christian radio stations are run by non-profit organizations. Non-commercial stations are positioned left of FM 92. A non-profit organization can have a station anywhere on the dial.
9. Non-profit stations do not have ratings. Arbitron rates all stations. Many stations purchase their ratings from the Radio Research Consortium at a greatly reduced rate, with some important restrictions about how the data can be used.
10. Major donors control non-profit station programming. Most non-profits have hundreds or thousands of people giving small gifts, making the station less susceptible to programming changes. A non-profit with a major donor is at no greater risk than a commercial station with a major advertiser.

Tim McDermott, GM, KSBJ, timcdermott@ksbj.org



Hand Us a Towel

I was impressed. May 2003 marked my sixth trip to NRB's headquarters in Manassas, VA, for the IRB committee's annual planning session. However, this was the first year that I attended at the new NRB office. Although the two-story complex bursting with space was nice, I was impressed with what I saw the moment I walked through the front doors. In the center of the lobby was a large bronze statue of Jesus washing Peter's feet. Jesus is holding a towel as if to say, "Go and do likewise." This reflects the mission of NRB and the goals and purposes of IRB. Loving and serving others is a Christian distinctive.

Every year I take a group of my top communications students to the NRB convention. It's a terrific time for communication students to be exposed to hundreds of servant-leaders in our industry. From a college student's perspective, one of the most important events is the NRB Job Board and Job Fair — where the present meets the future. The Job Fair is a time when our students meet face-to-face with ministries that offer internships or want to hire. The paradigm shift from analog to digital is well upon us and our students are adept in the world of computers and technology. More importantly, IRB members know how to think critically and creatively, with a Christian perspective.

IRB member Russell Schmidt is a perfect example of how the present is meeting the future. A senior at Toccoa Falls College, Russell posted his resume on the NRB Job Board and attended the Job Fair. He wasn't sure if he wanted to work in Christian broadcasting, but he earnestly prayed and trusted God to direct him. At the convention Russell met John Bulkley, of Ron Hutchcraft Ministries. Bulkley interviewed him and continued to dialogue with him for the next few months. After Russell graduated, he was hired at Ron Hutchcraft Ministries; he currently produces *Realtime*, an evangelistic radio show aimed at unchurched youth. Now Russell has the towel and is humbly serving those around him and impacting his world for Christ. Impressed? I am.

At our IRB planning session, NRB President Dr. Frank Wright challenged the committee to clearly define what we are about and why we exist. The answer is clear: we exist to be a place for our students to connect with the vast array of communications ministries associated with NRB. I challenge you as leaders in the field to reach out to IRB members who are looking for internships, jobs and mentors. Hand us a towel — we're ready to serve.

Lance Clark, Ph.D, Associate Professor in Communication, Huntington College, lclark@huntington.edu

TELEVISION



Television Production and the Church

A trend has developed in the local church over the last several years: When a church reaches a certain size, the next step is to go on television. And why not, since a lot of people watch TV? But is that reason enough to spend the resources on a weekly television production? Perhaps. Consider Lakewood Church, which has experienced growth over its 40-plus year history, due in large part to its television outreach.

But does a church service make a good television program? That's what we should be asking ourselves. Is the program you are producing something that you would want to watch? Are we, as producers and directors, doing all we can to communicate that message to the masses through television?

Look at your broadcast through the eyes of the people you are hoping to reach. Watch your program at home, in your surroundings. You will be surprised how different your program looks in your living room than it does in the edit suite. Home distractions include children, the phone, the doorbell, etc. (If these exist in your edit suite, then you have a different set of problems.)

Watch the transitions, the camera angles. How is the audio? Is the audience reaction too loud? Does it exist at all? Don't be afraid to make changes, or to undo those changes if they are not working.

Are your camera positions in the best location? If you move a lateral camera 10 feet to the left or to the right will it cause that exit sign on the wall behind the stage to disappear from the shot? There will be some limitations. For example, some leadership will allow seats to be removed to accommodate an additional camera position.

The viewership for one Lakewood Church broadcast is more than the number of people who will attend our services in one year. It may be the same for you. While I'm not suggesting that you ignore those who take the time to get up on a Sunday morning, get dressed and drive to church, I am suggesting that you consider that statistic. Those who attend the services should never be compromised, but there are certain things that can be done to enhance the broadcast.

Above all, we have a powerful tool at our disposal. Television is a wonderful medium to reach the masses. We must make sure we are delivering a product that is informative and palatable as well. Put your best foot forward each week for your broadcast.

Jon Swearingen, Director of Media, Lakewood Church, jonswearingen@earthlink.net



The Worst TV Broadcast

I recently saw the worst church television broadcast I've ever seen. I'm not talking about entry-level cable access, but an over-the-air church TV broadcast. Before I go any further let me make clear that I am not criticizing the spreading of the Gospel; I am criticizing the technique.

The church in question is large judging by the size of its choir and orchestra (more than 200), and it has the financial means to buy airtime each week on a VHF broadcast station, which I estimate to cost \$50,000 annually for its market. But the technical expertise was awful.

The camera director consistently cut between several extremely wide shots during the choir and orchestra music. The shot sequence was: wide, wide, wide, close-up, wide. The few close-ups were jarring visual potholes when juxtaposed with the extreme wide shots. Moreover, the shots were taken without any consideration for the rhythm of the music. The coup de grâce was a shaky handheld walkup shot of a keyboardist that came without rhyme or reason in the middle of the choir's musical presentation.

The lighting didn't escape my notice, either. The choir loft, which was wide but not very deep, looked as if it had been lit with a strip of yellow-brown light. Lavender geometric shapes were thrown at crazy angles along the dark back wall of the choir and into the orchestra. The lack of ambient lighting made the congregation appear to be drowning in a black morass.

Last, but certainly not least in this triple crown of torment, was the engineering. Nowhere have I seen a better example of cameras poorly white and black balanced. And yet, some symmetry was achieved since two cameras were shaded red and two cameras were blue.

Although clear and balanced audio was the one sparkling diamond, the pain of watching the choir obliterated any spiritual message the song contained. My agony continued into the pastor's segment. Not one camera change was a cut; it was all five-frame dissolves. The cameras were too far away for a close-up and the lighting angle was so high that dark circles took the place of the pastor's eyes.

I was not able to watch the rest of the program, but clearly, this church needs to re-evaluate. It was sub-standard and reflected poorly on the church.

Do everything with excellence. Hold yourself to standards higher than the world holds for itself. Be willing to get professional help. If this church could afford the equipment and airtime, it could afford training. Reaching lost and skeptical people requires us to remove any distractions to the message. The challenge for us is to produce high-quality work that represents the God of the universe. It's time we give our best.

Jim Barnwell, Director of Media Production, Bellevue Baptist Church, Memphis TN, jbarnwell@bellevue.org

Hispanic Consumer and Advertising Patterns

Reaching Hispanics is a hot market. Not only is the Hispanic population growing in numbers, but also in income. The Hispanic median income is now over \$40,000; the average Hispanic teen spends \$320 per month, or 4% more than the average non-Hispanic teen; and Hispanic buying power in 2003 is \$630 billion — and is projected in 2010 to reach as high as \$1.2 trillion.

Studies reveal that Hispanics have unique buying patterns. They spend more on personal care and cosmetics, baby and children's products, and personal electronics than they do on automotive needs, insurance and investments. In many cases, their consumption levels are higher than the general market. Hispanic consumers value quality and trust; more than two-thirds of Hispanics agree that buying from an unknown brand is risky. They are Internet users, radio listeners and television viewers. They spend more time online and more time listening to radio (English or Spanish) than their non-Hispanic counterparts. Hispanic consumers are savvy and powerful.

You might come to the obvious conclusion that the need to advertise and capture the Hispanic market is great. However, the vast majority of corporations have not given dollars and time to match the power of the Hispanic consumer. Hispanics represent approximately 13% of the population, yet in 2003, advertising leaders are allocating only 3.2% of their resources toward this market. Corporate America has been slow to catch on to the changing face of America.

Increasing dollar investment alone is not enough to capture this market. Hispanics are discerning consumers. The message must be the right message and the context must be culturally relevant. Companies who have the best understanding of the Hispanic market and its contribution to profitable revenue will earn the greatest long-term rewards.

So what can we learn from these trends? Hispanics are watching, listening and buying. Those who have wisely targeted and invested in this ethnic market are reaping the benefits. Hispanics offer a lasting return on investment. A long-term approach and well-crafted strategy win high customer loyalty among Hispanics. Now, imagine the spiritual implications.

If Hispanics are watching, listening and buying into products, companies and ideas, then the message of Jesus Christ — presented in a culturally sensitive manner — will reap tremendous spiritual rewards. Think how powerful the Hispanic consumer would be if armed with the one and only "product" that will truly change their lives and the lives of those around them?

Steffi Ewing, Managing Partner, CMC Agents, Inc., info@cmcagents.com

Does Your Site Suffer From Attention Deficit?

The two boys slowly walked up to the mouth of the ancient cave, unaware of the danger that lay within.... Do I have your attention?

Authors Thomas Davenport and John Beck of the Accenture Institute for Strategic Change say that the economy of the future will be based on attention. Acquiring, maintaining and managing attention will be key to the business paradigm of the future.

This certainly has interesting implications on how we might strategize ministry for the years ahead. Yet today, capturing the eyes of surfers and then keeping them is a goal no one with a Web site will refute. As Christian communicators, we need to be the most concerned about this because we have the greatest message to spread.

What can we do to hold the long-term attention of our online visitors? Davenport and Beck suggest some of the following "Attention Structures" that promote stickiness:

1. Change. Provide changes in format, tone, content, etc. This keeps the site interesting to new and repeat visitors.
2. Storytelling. Christ often communicated truth and kept the attention of His listeners through parables. Engage your visitor's imagination and you'll capture his attention.
3. Convenient entry and exit. This may seem contrary at first, but making it easy for users to get in and out will keep them coming back instead of making them frustrated.
4. Action. Avoid passive media. Engage the user through surveys, message boards, chat, games and other activities.
5. Don't interrupt. Interrupting the flow of information should be kept to a minimum. Pop-ups and flickering banners can distract and even destroy the user's attention.
6. Make it relevant. If a user feels her needs are being met, you will keep her coming back for more.
7. Promote community. Create a sense of belonging, personalization and customization. This allows your users to interact with the site and to maintain a sense of ownership over their Web experience.
8. Make it easy to use. Be considerate of low-bandwidth users. Create an intuitive navigation and make searching your site easy.

Whether you agree or disagree with this concept, you have to admit that it gets your attention. In a world of so many competing voices and options, we must be wise in our efforts to share the Gospel.

Eric Brown, Director of the Interactive Media Division, In Touch Ministries, eric@intouch.org



Ralph E. Plumb
President /CEO

What makes a rock-solid partnership?

"When I became the President of the Union Rescue Mission we already had an agency relationship with Masterworks. And I'm glad we did! They're simply the best! I have known some of the Masterworks senior staff for 20 years, when we served together at World Vision. I'm impressed with the experience, professionalism and integrity of the whole team. With their help, we have become a larger and better-positioned mission than when they started with us. Most importantly, we share the same values and a passion to honor God by serving the poor and homeless in our community."



A full service direct response agency.

Contact:

Steve Woodworth
swoodworth@MasterWorksAssociates.com

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rstarks@MasterWorksAssociates.com

(360) 394-4300



PEOPLE



Larry Burkett

Gainesville, GA – Larry Burkett, 64, passed away July 4. He battled cancer and heart disease for the past several years. For more than 30 years, Burkett taught Christians how to be financially free. His daily radio broadcast, *Money Matters*, won four NRB awards: Radio

Program of the Year (1990) and Talk Show of the Year (1999, 2001 and 2003). Steve Moore continues to co-host the programs. Crown Financial Ministries CEO, Howard Dayton, comments on Burkett's life at www.crown.org and lists specifics on how to pray for the Burkett family. (Robert J. Sutherland, rsutherland@crowns.org)

Atlanta, GA – Bryan O'Neal was promoted from assistant PD to PD of Air-1 Radio Network. Leah Bassett a.k.a. Princess Leah, recently joined KADI-FM/Springfield, MO, as morning co-host. (*PDAdvisor*, June 9, 2003)

Dallas, TX – Dr. Lois Evans accepted the presidency of the Global Pastors Wives Network (GPWN). The GPWN task force is resolved to expand and develop the following areas through video, audio and textual outlets: relationship with Christ, relationship with companion-husband and children, relationship with congregant-self, relationship with confidante, relationship with congregation and relationship with community. (Vijay Prabhakar, 214-943-3868)



Dr. Lois Evans

Camarillo, CA – Salem-Sacramento GSM Bob Fox was elevated to GM for the company's four-station cluster. Fox also maintains his GSM duties. Fox previously was GSM for Clear Channel-Toledo. He's also held GM and GSM titles for several radio and television stations. Fox replaces Joe Cruz, who recently took a position with Hispanic Broadcasting. (*Radio Ink*, July 11)

Pittsburgh, PA – After 27 years of leadership in Christian Broadcasting, Oleen Eagle stepped down as president/CEO of Cornerstone TeleVision Network. An early pioneer in Christian broadcasting, Eagle joined Cornerstone founders Russ and Norma Bixler in 1976 and played a vital role in the development and advancement of the station. Serving



Oleen Eagle



as president since 1994, Eagle handed over leadership to Ron Hembree in a special inauguration ceremony televised live on June 30 on the Cornerstone TeleVision Network. (Dee Richert, drichtert@ctvn.org)

Omaha, NE – Lucy Chapman joined KGBI-FM as news director for *The Bridge Morning Show*. Chapman was previously midday host for KEFM-FM. (Mark Michaels, mmichaels@graceu.edu)



Lucy Chapman

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Allanta, GA – Salem Communications announced the following staff moves: Salem's VP of operations and GM for Salem of Los Angeles, Dave Armstrong, relocated to New York to serve as GM for WMCA-AM and WWDJ-AM and to oversee Salem stations in the Boston market. Armstrong replaces NY GM Carl Miller, who is pursuing other opportunities. Terry Fahy now serves as acting GM for Salem LA. After helping to launch the station 12 years ago, Denise Harper has resigned as GM of WXPZ-FM/Salisbury-Dover to accept an administrative position at her church. West Michigan's top-rated mainstream midday air personality and *Billboard Magazine's* 1992 Air Personality Of The Year, Michael Sirianni, joined WCSG-FM/Grand Rapid's staff as midday host. WBVM-FM/Tampa-St. Petersburg PD Bill Carl assumed interim music duties following the departure of MD Michael Dee. Former KLYT-FM/Albuquerque and PlanetLightForce.com staffer Colin Cruz is host of Alternative X Factor, a new Christian program on KAXF-FM/Houston, TX. (PDAdvisor, May 22)

Denver, CO – MOPS International, Inc., named Jeff Bone as its new COO. Bone is the former Chief Technology Officer for the American Bible Society and has also served on the executive management team of Crosswalk.com, Inc. He has more than 17 years' experience in business development, management, and entrepreneurial ventures. Prior to his work in ministry, he founded the software company Infomedia, Inc. (Mark Rasmussen, mrasmussen@MOPS.org)

Fort Worth, TX – Dr. David W. Clark, FamilyNet president since 1997, is the sixth president of Palm Beach Atlantic University in West Palm Beach, FL. He began his term of service on Monday, July 14. Bob Sutton, broadcast veteran and FamilyNet board member, is leading a transitional leadership task force team. (Denise Cook, dcook@FamilyNet.com)



Atlanta, GA – Effective June 1, music coordination for all of Moody Broadcasting Network's

(MBN) O&Os are handled by consultant Mike Middleton through the office of national PD Mike Bingham. Ron Maxwell has assumed assistant national PD duties and began handling MBN music/tracking calls from Ft. Myers, FL, following the departure of WMBI-FM MD Angie Thomas. Plans were for WSOR-FM /Ft. Myers to begin simulcasting WKES-FM/St. Petersburg, FL in July as part of a plan to regionalize MBN's stations in Tennessee, Florida and Indiana. (PDAdvisor, May 29)

Atlanta, GA – Mike Sommers was named PD for WXPZ-FM/Milford, DE. In his new role, Sommers will take over the music and programming for WXPZ following Denise Harper's exit. Lori Walden was named MD at WIBI-FM/Springfield, IL, replacing midday host Donna Collins, who left to become a missionary. (PDAdvisor, May 29)

Seattle, WA – Todd Baker, fund-raising consultant and frequent conference speaker, was appointed Senior Account Executive at Masterworks, a full-service direct marketing advertising agency. Baker possesses 18 years' experience working with secular and evangelical non-profit organizations, including American Bible Society, Christian Children's Fund and The Salvation Army. Baker is the author of the e-book, *Nonprofit Websites*, and authors a regular column in *The Nonprofit Times*. (Dave Raney, draney@MasterWorksAssociates.com)



Nashville, TN – Scotty Smith, Howard Publishing author and senior pastor of Christ Community Church, was named one of "The 50 Most Influential People in Christian Music" by *Christian Radio & Retail Weekly (CRW)*. Smith was selected for the honor by a panel of 40 industry leaders from record labels, radio and retail. (Rick Hoganson, Hoganson@Comcast.net)

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Garland, TX – The American Tract Society (ATS) marked its 178th anniversary in May. ATS gospel tracts met 19th Century immigrants at Ellis Island and greet Internet users today as e-tracts. The faith-based agency has sent gospel tracts to the battlefields and fronts of every U.S. military conflict since the Civil War. By the 20th Century, ATS records logged a cumulative 6.5 billion pages of tracts, books and Bibles printed in more than 188 languages. (Marcia Davis, 972-625-0209)

Grand Rapids, MI – In celebration of its 30th anniversary on June 9, WCSG-FM embarked on a "30 Cities in 30 Days" good will tour, broadcasting live from 30 towns in the listening area during the month of June. The tour also featured a local search for a new morning show co-host with on-site auditions, numerous giveaways and a 30-hour broadcast marathon with morning show host Don Michael. (PDAvisor, May 29)



Boise, ID – On May 26, Inspirational Family Radio KBXL-FM held a banquet and ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate 20 years of broadcasting and the building of a brand new facility. Lee Eichelberger, owner/GM, started in radio as a kid and fulfilled a dream to own his own radio stations. Lee also is on the WNRB board and is active in local radio organizations. Other radio stations in the media group are commercial stations KSPD-AM and KDZY-FM. (Leigh Ann Dyer, 208-377-3790)

Sarasota, FL – On June 16, The JOY FM held a one-day on air celebration marking its 17th year



of broadcasting. The birthday included fund-raising efforts that resulted in meeting the station's goal of \$100,000. The funds are to be used to expand JOY FM's marketing reach, to repair storm-damaged equipment and to finance a signal upgrade. (Andrea Kleid, andrea@thejoyfm.com)

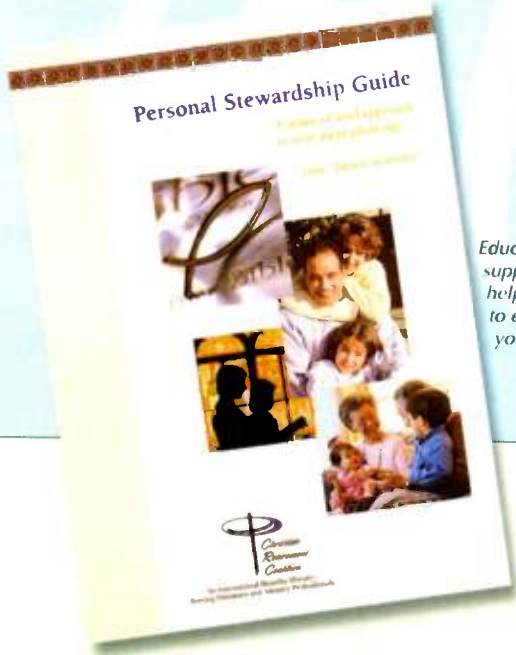
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AIRWAVE NEWS RADIO

Essex, VT – CMI Radio Network, owned by Christian Ministries, Inc., has a new name: The Light Radio Network (www.thelightradio.net). The company is a group of nine radio signals heard in Vermont, New Hampshire, New York, Massachusetts and the southern Quebec Province of Canada. (Richard McClary, 802-878-8885)

Columbia, SC – Approximately 5000 listeners attended WMHK-FM's annual Open House on June 27. Instituted in the mid 1990s, this year the free Open House consisted of tours of the studios, balloons, kiddie rides, a magic show by Christian magician Toby Travis, food and a concert by Shaun Groves. (Jerry Grimes, 803-365-0416)

Lansing, MI – The Light WLGH-FM honored single parents and military temporary single parents at Lansing's first Single Parents' Day this past spring. The party featured kids' activities and prizes, including a weekend getaway to Lake Huron, gift certificates to local restaurants and beauty salons, and movie passes. (PDAdvisor, May 29)

Ocean Grove, NJ – Salem Communications Corporation began its annual summer concert series on June 21, with Big Splash 2003 hosted by Salem's WWDJ-AM. The Fish/Dallas and Interstate Batteries hosted Celebrate Freedom, an all-day free event at South Fork Ranch. The Fish/Honolulu hosted Celebrate Freedom 2003 on July 3 at the Waikiki Shell. A portion of the \$10 admission fee benefited The Cambodian Women's Center. Fish Fest 2003 was presented July 27 at Verizon Wireless Amphitheater in Irvine, CA, hosted by The Fish/Los Angeles. (Radio Ink, June 23)

Washington, DC – On July 1, Pilgrim Communications changed the format of WPZZ-FM/Franklin-Indianapolis from business talk to Christian AC. This comes in the wake of the \$5.6 million purchase of WXIR-FM/Indianapolis, IN, by ABC, Inc., and the expected subsequent switch of WXIR to the Radio Disney format. Jeremy Bialek, WXIR-FM sales rep and former MD/PM drive host, was named PD. Additional plans include changing the call letters from WPZZ to WIJY Joy 96. (PDAdvisor, May 22)

Atlanta, GA – Dr.

Charles Stanley was the special guest speaker at the 5th Annual KKLA Pastor Encouragement Luncheon on May 29 at the Pasadena (CA) Hilton Hotel. More than 500 pastors from Southern California attended. Stanley was inducted into the KKLA Hall of Fame. Warren Duffy, host of KKLA-FM's *Duffy & Company/Live From LA* emceed the luncheon. (Mary Anderson-Harris, 818-729-9291)



Dr. Charles Stanley (L) and Roger Kemp, Salem Communications VP/Ministry Relations at the 5th Annual KKLA Pastor Encouragement Luncheon

Omaha, NE – On May 17, KGBI-FM teamed up with New Creations Transitional Housing ministry, an outreach of a local church that moves homeless families into their own apartments. Listeners donated enough furniture and supplies to furnish approximately 17 apartments. (PDAdvisor, May 22)

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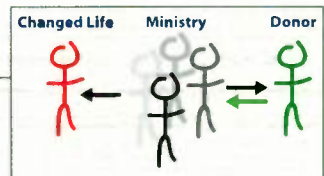
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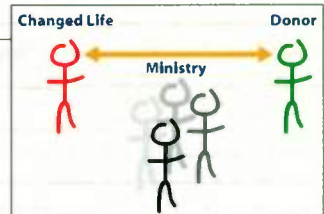
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St. Petersburg, FL – WKES-FM and Moody Broadcasting Network (MBN) announced the expansion of its coverage to Citrus County and the Ocala area with the addition of the 36,000-watt WHGN-FM in Crystal River. WHGN, previously owned by the Seven Rivers Presbyterian Church, transferred ownership to MBN on April 11. (Mike Gleichman, Michael.Gleichman@moody.edu)



NRB President Dr. Frank Wright (L) and MBN's Bruce Everhart.

Chicago, IL – NRB President Dr. Frank Wright joined new NRB Executive Committee member Bob Neff and Moody Broadcasting Network for its May Branch conference. Wright presented the weekly department devotions and joined the leadership team on a field trip to Chinatown. (Robin

Jones, robin.jones@moody.edu)

Washington, DC – WAVA-FM's Naomi Partridge welcomed attendees to The House, an after-school teen drop-in center, during a fund-raising dinner in McLean, VA. Steve Fitzhugh, former Denver Bronco and Master of Ceremonies for the event, is co-founder of The House, which is located in a former crack house and boasts a professionally equipped recording studio, sports and fitness center, computer lab, craft/art studio and game room. Also supported by Steve Case, CEO of America Online, The House is also a PowerUp Site that strives to bridge the digital divide. During the fundraiser, Washington attorney Ken Starr introduced Fox News Channel's Brit Hume, who shared his testimony. (WAVA Radio Active News, May 21)



Chicago, IL – Moody Broadcasting Network (MBN) recently completed Share 2003. Four scheduled Share events were held at 15 locations from February through May, allowing MBN to raise \$8,482,000, a 9% increase over 2002. MBN partnered with HCJB Radios for Africa to provide up to 10,000 fixed tuned radios as Share commitments are fulfilled. (Robin Jones, robin.jones@moody.edu)

Columbus, OH – WRFD-AM recently launched a business directory for Central Ohio Christians, called the *Crosswalk Directory*. The directory is designed to help businesses supplement their radio advertising and provide an instant resource for listeners. Advertisers are listed on the Web at www.crosswalkdirectory.com. (614-885-0880)

Washington, DC – Ken and Joni Eareckson Tada were recent guests on *The Don Kroah Show* to discuss the ministries that have come to fruition over the past 30 years as a result of Joni's diving accident at the age of 17. Ministries mentioned were the daily five-minute radio program *Joni & Friends* (the 2003 NRB Radio Program of the Year), a series of nine Family Retreats held nationwide to serve families affected by disabilities, and Wheels for the World. More than 14,000 wheelchairs have been collected nationwide through Wheels for the World, refurbished by inmates at correctional facilities and shipped to developing nations where a physical therapist fits each chair to a disabled child or adult. (WAVA Radio Active News, May 21)

Cary, NC – In an effort to diversify and strengthen its Board of Directors and to increase global representation, Trans World Radio (TWR) has added three new members: Daniel Blakely, president of Blakely Products Company in Michigan; David Ross Campbell, owner/operator of Camaco Financial Group Inc. in Alberta, Canada; and Barry Joseph Yen, partner of law firm Messrs. So Keung Yip & Sin in Hong Kong. (David McCreary, 919-460-3778)



Colorado Springs, CO – A *Radio Theatre* dramatic presentation of C.S. Lewis's *The Silver Chair* won Focus on the Family an Achievement in Production award at the 2003 Audie Awards on May 30 in Los Angeles, CA. Other Focus on the Family *Radio Theatre* finalists for the 2003 Audies included *Billy Budd* for Audio Drama, and the last of the seven *Chronicles of Narnia, The Last Battle*, for Achievement in Production. (Elizabeth Brinegar, 719-548-5882)



New Orleans, LA – LifeSongs WBSN-FM sponsored its first golf tournament on May 19, in which more than 60 golfers competed for gift certificates to local restaurants, a new golf bag and a new 2004 Toyota Camry for a hole-in-one. Proceeds benefited WBSN-FM's Neighborhoods and Nations outreach effort, which serves both local and international missions projects. (PDAdvisor, May 29)

Chicago, IL – WRMB-FM and morning show personality Chris Wallace hosted 23 pastors from Florida and the Bahamas on a cross-country trip to attend Moody Bible Institute's Annual Pastors Conference in Chicago. (Sondra McCarty, sondra.mccarty@moody.edu)

Boise, ID – KTSY-FM sponsored the 36th annual Treasure Valley God and Country Family Festival in July. More than 10,000 people attended the event, which featured the landing of a BlackHawk helicopter, a fly-by of two A-10 Warthog jets during the "National Anthem," a praise band formed by worship leaders from the area, and displays of military vehicles, police cruisers and other patriotic items. KTSY's morning show host Jerry Woods co-hosted the event along with NBC 7's Dee Sarton. Veterans, current military personnel and emergency responders who attended the event were honored. (Jerry Woods, jwoods@ktsy.org)

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TRADE TALK



MUSIC

Oakland, CA – The Bridging the Gap Gospel Hip Hop Conference held June 14 was designed to open a dialog between gospel hip-hop and mainstream church communities. One of the agenda items included the formation of the Urban Gospel Music Association (UGMA), a forum for all urban gospel artists that incorporates education, entertainment, social programs, conferences, retreats and more to help unify and open doors for performers of urban gospel music. (Curtis Jermany, 510-472-0177)

Nashville, TN – Dove award-winning and Grammy-nominated Christian singer/songwriter Margaret Becker signed a multi-year exclusive license agreement with Cross Driven Records. Becker's first release under the agreement, *Just Come In*, was produced by Becker and released July 1. (Janet Bozeman, bozemanmedia@comcast.net)

Nashville, TN – **MICHAEL SMITH & ASSOCIATES** Mike Smith, of Michael Smith and Associates, has launched Perpetual Entertainment Group, a Christian record label. Vocalist Charles Billingsley released *Secret Conversation* July 1, and comedian Brad Stine released the video *Put A Helmet On!* August 5. (Janet Bozeman, bozemanmedia@comcast.net)



cindydiane

Los Angeles, CA – In conjunction with the release of her national debut, *Face To Face*, Cindy Diane was a guest on FamilyNet's *At Home-Live! with Chuck and Jenni* on June 3. Diane also was the featured guest on *Life Today with James Robison*. (Emily Kohl, emily@turningpointpr.com)

Nashville, TN – Mark Miller, founder and frontman of multi-platinum selling group Sawyer Brown, formed a record label and signed its first artist, Atlanta-based band Casting Crowns. Miller and long-time friend Steven Curtis Chapman co-produced the project for the label (unnamed at press time). (Brooke Elder, 615-261-6361)

Nashville, TN – *Surrounded by Mercy* is the 11th project for 15-year music veteran Kim Hill. The project was recorded for Spirit-Led Records and released in August. Hill will participate in the Renewing the Heart conference on September 6 in Nashville. (Kandice Kirkham, kkirkham@providentmusicgroup.com)



Franklin, TN – Doxology Records announced the creation of *The Making of an Artist* for recently signed singer-songwriter, Jimmy Fedd, former worship leader at Christ Church in Nashville. The reality show, set to air in July on FamilyNet and Daystar Television, will follow Fedd from signing to completion of his debut project for Doxology. (Marlei Daugherty, marlei@doxology.com)

Nashville, TN – New label ChezMusique/Light Records, created in January 2003 by award-winning producer Sanchez Harley, debuted RiZen and its self-titled project on June 17 during the Bobby Jones International Gospel Industry Retreat in Las Vegas, NV. (Lynn McCain, lynn@mccainpr.com)



Nashville, TN – CBA music supplier Word Distribution joined Bible publisher Broadman & Holman and inspirational Spanish book publisher Editorial Unilit to reach the Hispanic market in the US. Entitled "Su Mundo Latino" (Your Spanish World) the three-company promotional campaign is designed to aid retailers throughout the nation in marketing Spanish music, Bibles and other books to more than 37 million individuals of Latin origin, an audience in which a majority of America's top advertisers are not focusing marketing dollars, according to the Association of Hispanic Advertising Agencies. (Rich Guider, RichGuider@comcast.net)



Petra

Nashville, TN – With the return of founder and guitarist Bob Hartman, Grammy and Dove Award-winning group Petra released its 20th studio record, *Jekyll and Hyde*, on August 19. The project is produced by Newsboy's frontman Peter Furler. Petra was founded in 1972, has sold more than 7 million records, has won four Grammy Awards and 10 Dove Awards, and is a member of the Gospel Music Hall of Fame. (Matt Williams, matt@thewmg.net)



AIRWAVE NEWS TELEVISION

CANADA – Travel the Road

(www.traveltheroad.com),

a 12-episode series of Christian reality television

from Cloud Ten Pictures, will air on Trinity Broadcasting Network. The program follows two young missionaries as they journey to faraway lands spreading the Gospel in exotic landscapes that range from Tibet to Ethiopia to India and beyond. (studionews@cloudtenpictures.com)



INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Timisoara, ROMANIA – Alfa Omega distributed programming to more than 30 local secular TV and cable networks in Romania during the Easter holidays. Tele7abc, a national TV channel, rebroadcast



the content via almost every cable network, resulting in the largest Christian media campaign in the history of

Romanian television. In other programming news, *The Way, the Truth and The Life*, produced by Alfa Omega, has aired Saturday mornings nationwide since February 2003. Alfa Omega also produces daily programs aired on TBN-Europe, carried by more than 200 Romanian cable TV networks. (alfa@mail.dnttm.ro)



INTERNET

Glendale, CA – After six years, Christian Pirate Radio discontinued its seven music-streaming stations. An announcement on www.mycpr.com states economics as the primary reason. (PDAdvisor, June 9)

Jacksonville, Florida – H.Victory “An Instrument of Hope,” is developing a technology resource to help hundreds of inner city rescue missions and shelters develop a powerful alliance — like a roadmap — that interactively directs resource donors to faith-based service providers at a single point. Visit www.hvictory.org. (Eric Swenson, hvic@bellsouth.net)

Inspiring Member: Dr. Andrés P Her Name Was María

María was a poor, uneducated woman who never finished fourth grade. She was born and raised in the Amazon jungle.

Her husband was a bus driver who had many dreams, but none of them were coming true. They lived in a small room, on a busy street in a big city. Half of her “house-room” had become a store that María ran to help her family make ends meet. But those financial ends rarely met. Her oldest daughter, only 12, walked through the neighborhood during the day selling the clothes that María would make during her long nights.

María had a child-like faith in God and in His Son, Jesus Christ. She believed that if she would kneel down next to her bed and ask Jesus to provide customers for her business or people to ride her husband’s bus, He would do it.

When she discovered that she was pregnant again, she did not have the faintest idea how they would fit one more person into their half-room house or one more mouth into their budget. They were deeply in debt, and she was profoundly troubled.

Also, María was seriously ill – a direct result of her pregnancy. The child she was carrying had a different blood type than hers. There was no treatment available back then for poor, uneducated women in a Third World country. Her doctor told her that there was only one way to save her: a legal abortion.

In the midst of her pain, María decided to pray. She told no one, but made a vow to the Lord: just like Hannah, this was going to be her “promise-child.” If Jesus would spare her baby’s life and hers, then she would consecrate the child to Him.

Although she was poor and uneducated, she was not dumb. Her pregnancy placed her life on the line. She had a husband and she was responsible for two little girls; she knew life was a precious gift from God, but she was ready to risk her own life to save her baby’s. And I’m so glad she did ...

María – poor, uneducated, broke and sick – was my mother. And I am her promised child.

Dr. Andres Panasiuk is director of the Hispanic department of Crown Financial Ministries (www.crown.org), based in Gainesville, GA.



Dr. Andrés G. Panasiuk



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Trends in Christian Talk Radio

The forecast for Teaching/Preaching programs calls for changing climates

BY ROBB HANSEN



In the fourth quarter of 2002, for the first time in history, the audience share of Christian talk radio dipped below that of Christian music. Many factors led to this shift, including the expansion of contemporary music outlets by Salem Communication Corporation's Fish stations, the K-LOVE network and a host of smaller entities.

Clearly, many factors play a role in this development and we should seek to understand them. But it is just as important to identify and make needed changes. For if those involved in Christian talk are united in anything, it is their desire not only to maintain but also to grow their impact on the church and culture.

Arbitron numbers lump all Christian talk stations into one category. This is mostly because stations that offer talk of one kind also offer talk of another. Is the decline among call-in programs, teaching programs or both? Only time will tell. Adequate data on listening audience trends in the various sub-segments of Christian talk are available only at the level of the individual organization or program ... and sometimes they don't want to tell.

After extensive exploration of the current environment and likely changes with many in Christian radio, the following trends seem likely over the next five to 10 years.

Trend 1: Programs will increasingly feature a presence of the Bible teacher outside of the message.

Listeners want to know the teachers in a more personal way, one that goes beyond what they can get out of the sermons. Wayne Shepherd, host of Moody Radio's *Open Line* call-in show and program host for several prominent teaching programs, sees this trend as a natural outgrowth of the relationship component of radio, which more ministries are coming to understand. "Listeners develop a sense of trust in the teachers they listen to, and over time, [the teachers] have opportunity to challenge them spiritually. That challenge might be to purchase a product that will help them grow, or to take a specific life action step."

Over the years the secular media have demonstrated the importance of having personalities

that connect with the audience. One has only to think of the way that Paul Harvey, Walter Cronkite or Ted Koppel do so to learn this important lesson. Over time, an audience feels they come to know the individual in a personal way. This relational equity is of inestimable value.

Bible-teaching programs present a special challenge in building this bank account of trust in that the core of the content of these shows is the preached Word. It is significant for a teacher to see the important connection that happens when talking directly to the listener. In some hard-to-explain way, the comments, encouragements and expressions of appreciation from the teacher, made directly to the audience, add a dimension to the relationship building that strengthens it markedly.

During my tenure at *Walk in the Word*, working with James MacDonald, we repeatedly observed an elevated response from the audience in every way when he directed his comments to them. The tailored comments for the radio listener make the teacher more real and down-to-earth, somehow closer.

More mature radio programs with established donor and listener bases may not need to worry about the importance of this trend. But newer programs seeking to gain a foothold with an audience will see this happen far more rapidly and effectively if the Bible teacher participates in the program.

Trend 2: Programs will become more produced.

Audiences today seem to expect higher quality in all of their church-related experiences, from worship to parking to childcare. The trend is entirely a result of the consumer mindset that has permeated the culture.

Bruce Everhart, station manager at WMBI-AM-FM, Moody Broadcasting Network's flagship station in Chicago, confirms this fact. "There are no free lunches any more. Everyone in radio has to do his or her work more professionally. Stations competing for listenership in the same market force this to happen and the audience expects it. In Chicago we have faced the entrance of one of Salem's Fish stations and frankly it has

made us better. We have to pay more attention to the quality of what we do, getting the greatest possible impact out of every minute of the program clock."

Determining which innovations in production are most helpful in enhancing effectiveness is more difficult. Ministries are trying a range of tactics. *Proclaim!*, the 13:30 daily with Dr. Joseph Stowell from Moody Radio, has increasingly featured a mix of teaching, music and dialog with co-host Wayne Shepherd. David Jeremiah's long-form teaching program, *Turning Point*, regularly uses on-air drama and sound effects reminiscent of radio from a bygone era, but featuring content as up-to-date as the evening news. The dramatic clips grab listener attention by their unique flavor and focus that attention on the subject matter of the teaching that follows.

Finding the right mix of production elements that fit best with the ear of today's audiences can be tricky, but with careful planning it can be accomplished.

Trend 3: Broadcasting and Webcasting will merge with radio, driving traffic to the Internet.

Programs with the right draw will develop a growing cadre of dedicated Internet-only listeners — the wave of the future. The availability of teaching through online streaming portals has already revolutionized the audience cultivation process for Christian talk. Casual listeners who might never bother to go to the hassle and expense of ordering a copy of a message by contacting a ministry now regularly return to a ministry's Web site to catch whatever portion of a message they may have missed on a traditional broadcast.

Ministries have yet to move decisively to maximize impact because of this increased traffic. Tracking the monthly volume of listeners various programs receive will give invaluable insight to ministry leaders regarding their audience. This data generally will parallel the rise and fall of product orders through the Web site, mail or telephone order centers, indicating the degree to which the audience resonates with a particular program. Assessment of this sort of data is critical for ministries in planning future broadcasting schedules.

The all-important component of relationship cultivation must be freshly examined in light of the Web as well. Few min-

istries have fully developed the process of connecting with their online listeners as they visit their sites to listen to programs or investigate other resources. Many ministries have begun to make outlines and teaching notes available online — in some cases exclusively — resulting in cost savings. But what about more interaction regarding the message as it is being delivered or afterward? A few ministries offer chat rooms or online counseling, but the massive potential of the Web offers a host of options for more effectively linking a ministry with its audience. The beauty of this two-way communication is that it costs almost nothing, compared to more traditional means.

Again, the importance of dovetailing the broadcast content with the Internet content is critical. Increasingly, the primary benefit of traditional broadcasts will be to drive traffic to Web-based resources where the all-important relational connection will occur. How well the available information and content is organized on the Web site of a ministry will determine the repeat visit rate and ultimately affect the extent of its impact, to say nothing of the revenue stream.

A word of caution is in order. Some ministries have sought to make themselves Internet-only and their experience is instructive. While it certainly is possible to reach people, to generate a following, to minister, and to develop a revenue stream through product purchases and online contributions, growth is much slower for organizations relying exclusively on the Web. For the foreseeable future, traditional broadcasting will continue to be the gateway to an audience. Traditional broadcasting brings a program the needed prominence and credibility required to sustain an audience.

Trend 4: Content delivery via the Internet will affect Christian talk ministries.

A comprehensive description of the array of tools, current and future, available to ministries online is mind-boggling and beyond the scope of this article. The key decisions for ministry leaders will be the strategic reallocation of financial and personnel resources to develop and implement Web tools, and making these decisions in more or less the right order and at the right time.

Those with broad appeal are obvious and have appeared quickly: those with high perceived value but low cost, such as mes-

4

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Continued on page 20

sage outlines and study guides. Many of these kinds of resources exist already in electronic formats and require little more than modest tweaking to prepare them for Internet distribution. Scores of ministries have ventured into this area but most are still learning to integrate their availability.

Some ministries and stations are experimenting with Listener Advisory Groups and other interactive online tools. Over time, tools will demonstrate their effectiveness and either take firm root or be tossed aside.

In keeping with the growing importance of teachers getting involved with the broadcast outside the sermon, some ministries have toyed with live call-in Webcasts where listeners can touch base with the teacher. While certainly more costly and complicated than asynchronous streaming, this technology is readily available through many of the streaming audio companies. While such efforts require an additional commitment of time from Bible teachers who already feel stretched, these efforts may grow the impact of ministries, enhance product distribution and help make connections in a more personal way, encouraging gift support from donors.

Some ministries feel strongly that local churches best meet the spiritual concerns of

listeners, therefore, the ministries do not answer queries about life issues with more than a brief paragraph. Doubtless the church is the place where nurturing is best done. However, the low cost of delivering answers to questions via e-mail will lead to a rise in ministries expanding services in this area as a simple way to connect with the audience. The difficulty often emerges in where to draw the line.

For the purposes of spiritual growth and Bible study, the Web is well suited to delivering excellent resources — so long as the demands on staff are controlled. In Touch Ministries in Atlanta has more than 14,000 individuals enrolled in online courses based on biblical study materials that have been developed through Charles Stanley's ministry. The costs of delivering the materials are low, yet the sense of personal connection is high.

Those ministries that most effectively channel staff and financial resources into online services will see their impact grow in the years ahead.

Trend 5: Commercial talk stations will continue to struggle with balancing ministry and stewardship of investments.

Even now, the juxtaposition of Bible-teaching content with commercials for the local florist or auto dealership at the top and bottom of the hour creates some dissonance for the listener. We're just not used to having commercial content right next to our sermons — it doesn't happen in my church and it probably doesn't happen in yours. This dissonance stems from the unique nature of teaching programs. Unlike music programming or call-in shows, there is no parallel in secular radio.

But long ago we made the shift from virtually unedited, unproduced rebroadcasts of sermons to more sophisticated renderings designed for radio use. It is now expected that programs will include in and out segues from an announcer explaining the mission of the ministry, making listeners aware of teaching resources available for purchase, and even asking them to give and support the ministry.

What's next? Logically we might expect new evolutions in programming. Joe Davis of Salem Communications Corporation has written and spoken extensively on the matter of a new program clock for commercial stations (*NRB Magazine*, see June 2003) that would include spot breaks for commercials and station identification within the structure of programs. Reaction to Davis's ideas has been mixed. For the most part, long-form programmers have been hesitant to embrace the idea of chopping up the programs. But significant changes are only a matter of time. As some have pointed out, sermons are already broken into pieces to make them fit the 24- or 26-minute window. Would further editing the content truly damage the potential for impact?

Devin Eckhart, executive director for Chip Ingram's 24-minute daily, *Living on the Edge*, is troubled by the trend. "While assembling the programs could be done in some other way, it seems as though the personal connection with listeners that occurs during a teaching program, where the Holy Spirit may be working to convict or challenge a listener, would be poorly served by a sudden interruption of a spot break."

Bob Butts, head of Alistair Begg's *Truth for Life*, agrees. "One of the trends in our culture is a move toward quick doses of information," he says, "sort of a *USA Today* approach to communication. Sometimes people may not want to listen to the full length of programs because the teacher just doesn't have enough to say. Our conviction



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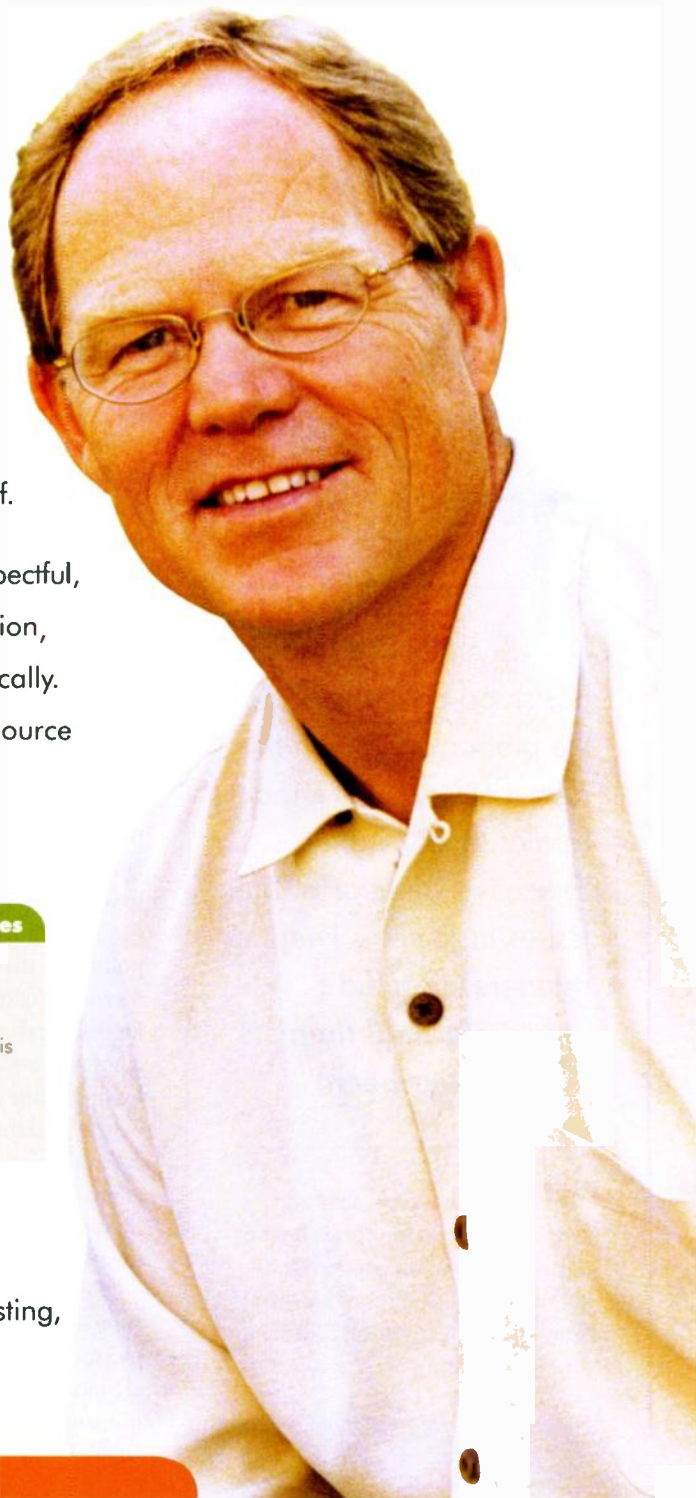


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at *Truth for Life* is that if you give people meat from the Word that captures their hearts they will stay with you."

On the commercial station side of the table, many have come to the conclusion there is no other way to make the economics of teaching programs work. As Davis points out, listeners have developed habits as to how they consume radio. In every other format — music, call-in and talk — listeners have come to expect the breakaway to commercials. While they may not always appreciate the spots, it is an accepted component of the broadcast experience. It also affects the station ratings, which in turn drives the prices charged for advertising. In theory, more and better station identification will lead to stronger audience loyalty, resulting in a larger market share, higher advertising prices and lower prices for teaching broadcast avails. Whether this improved structure works to the benefit of everyone involved is an open question.

Programs with cutaways are no longer in the realm of conjecture, but a controversial reality. Ed Young's 25-minute program out of Dallas, *Creative Connection*, has three breaks built into it, giving opportunities for station identification and commercials. Rick Dunham, president of Dunham+Company, who advises the ministry on radio strategy, indicates that the initial response is encouraging. "We have already seen a bump in the response from listeners. The increased regularity of program identification helps identify what a person is listening to and how to get in touch with the ministry." Dunham points out that people listen to radio in seven- or eight-minute segments for all kinds of reasons, such as the length of their commute or the extra time they have before leaving home on an errand. "We have to believe that the vast majority of our listeners are not sitting and listening to teaching programs from start to finish, and those who do won't necessarily be adversely affected by the insertion of breaks."

Recently, Jack Graham's program, *Power Point*, began a similar format, although it is too soon to gauge results. Other programs are in the planning stages. This new phenomenon raises many questions, not least whether programs that have spot breaks inserted will receive preferential treatment to avails or price. Salem's Davis indicates that this likely would be the case.

Such changes in how sermon material is prepared for radio may even engender new

approaches to homiletics in the pulpits. The strength of programs based on sermon material flows from the Spirit-generated power of the preached Word. But pulpit practices evolve over time as well. There is no doubt that one can still be committed to biblical orthodoxy and the centrality of the Word in teaching, and present it in a compelling and captivating manner.

Not everyone in the commercial station community is united on the need for spot breaks in programs. Rich Bott, executive VP of Bott Radio Network, feels inserting spots is a mistake. Although there is no question that stations need to be effective in generating revenue, he feels placing commercials within programs endangers the credibility of ministries. "What spots will be inserted?" he asks. "Products that induce hair growth? Weight loss?" Bott suggests that commercial stations need to be more diligent about to whom they sell their spot inventory at the top and bottom of the hour during teaching segments. "Broadcasters have a responsibility to get the teaching of the Word of God to the people of God," Bott says, adding, "Christian radio is a specialized audience with a specialized message, and if you seek to broaden the appeal of programming, it is no longer special."

More will be heard on this topic in the months and years ahead. Clearly, the future will bring changes and, as with any major shift, not everyone will be comfortable with the process or the results.

Trend 6: Ministries will need to develop distinctly different versions of programs to accommodate divergent delivery channels.

The discussion above of the changes in production that may be expected from commercial stations flows naturally into this reality. The traditional approach to teaching programs has been to produce one program between 15 to 28 minutes in length. Short features of five minutes or less were added later.

Is it possible that as the editing process becomes easier, some ministries may develop a variety of program delivery tools? It would take more work, but why couldn't the same content be delivered in a range of formats to meet the needs of particular stations? Shorter versions of programs might work both ways: ministries would have the opportunity to make inroads on stations where avails have been difficult to obtain,

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while stations may give a newer ministry a try by running a shorter feature (which would gobble up less of the program clock) and eventually transition to a longer version if the teacher's ministry takes hold with their audience.

As yet untried is the possibility of a completely separate version for online broadcast. Unconstrained by the usual time limits of broadcast versions of a program, ministries could begin to offer an extended version online, featuring additional content and discussion between teacher and program host on the Web that is unavailable anywhere else. Once captured (an uncomfortable but accurate word picture), the listener can then be made aware of the vast array of tools and materials a ministry may have to offer in ways never before possible.

Multiple versions means more expense for ministries, and potentially higher start-up costs for new broadcasters. But the investment may well be worth it.

Trend 7: The proliferation of wireless technology will change many of the rules of the game.

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ubiquitous, the reach and habits of the listening audience will change again as they did with the advent of online listening. If Christians can access downloadable and streaming audio (and eventually video) material through hand-held devices and computers in their cars, what will they choose to listen to? Clearly, this shift will mean a further splintering of audiences as certain teachers or program hosts attract and hold narrower bands of listeners than ever before.

Effective teaching ministries will be those that do all the historical things right in building relationship with listeners, servicing them, encouraging them and providing them with quality growth resources.

Trend 8: Improved digital quality and less costly yet wider Internet pipelines will change the economics of program delivery and distribution.

The availability of satellite distribution of radio programs changed the way many ministries did business with their station partners. Hundreds of stations are able to receive programs via satellite for fixed prices, with modest effort on the part of programmers. Programs can even be swapped at the last minute (or at least the day before) when the need arises. Remember how quickly sermons made it on the air following the attack on 9/11?

The expanding availability of high-speed Internet access and the improving audio quality of MP3 and other formats will change the program distribution environment again. Regionalized (or even localized) versions of programs can be made available as needed, limited only by manpower resources related to engineering the versions. If station-specific promos become readily available at no cost to the station or programmer, they will be used far more frequently.

Trend 9: Short features will increase.

The ongoing drive to professionalize the programming schedule of stations will demand more short-feature programs to fill airtime between news, music and longer shows. There will be an inevitable shakeout for such programs, with stations preferring listener-oriented offerings that build audience share and are perceived as adding value. Quality is critical. These programs will need to feature a good concept, be well produced and demonstrate staying power in terms of content.

Although branded with a distinct name,

Walk in the Word launched its one-minute *Listen Up!* just over a year ago. Its distribution has risen to more than 1000 outlets. The audience is driven solely to the program's Web site (no toll-free number), which hooks that day's program directly to the full message from which it came. Many other ministries have launched similar features in an attempt to make inroads on music stations or gain access in markets where long-form slots are not available.

As is true in every case, the short feature must complement the overall efforts of the ministry, driving traffic to the ministry's Web site, where listeners can access the full array of resources and tools increasingly available. For maximum impact, such short programs should also reinforce the message and image of the overall ministry.

Where is all this going?

Good question. In talking with key leaders across the country it is clear that Christian talk radio will be around for a long time. There are simply too many people committed to the format for it to go away. Station owners, both individual and institutional, have deep convictions about the importance of making such programming available for anyone who goes looking for it or happens upon it. They deeply believe that God uses radio teaching to draw people to Himself and that He will continue to do so — and they're right.

The fundamental issue is what Christian teaching and talk radio will look like in the years ahead. Will decision-makers continue to hold to the structures and forms of times past, or will they boldly ask the hard questions about what will make their offerings most effective? Change isn't always bad. God can richly bless new approaches to presenting the timeless truth of the Gospel. As always, the difficulty will be implementing new methods without faltering in commitment to the message.

Robb Hansen served three years as executive director for Walk in the Word with James MacDonald. He now runs Next Level Insights, an organizational development firm in the Chicago area focusing on helping small- and medium-sized nonprofits to grow — you guessed it! — to the next level. He can be reached at robbhansen@nextlevelinsights.com.

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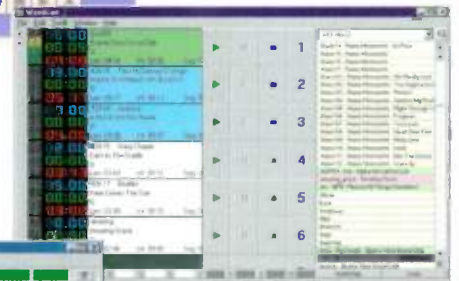
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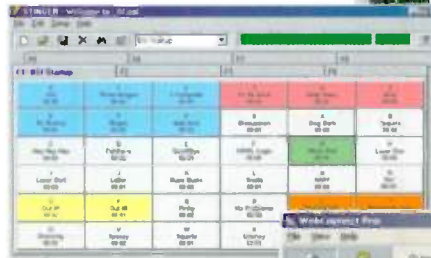


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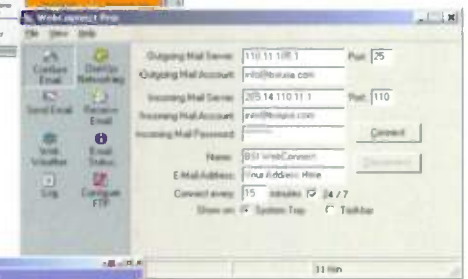
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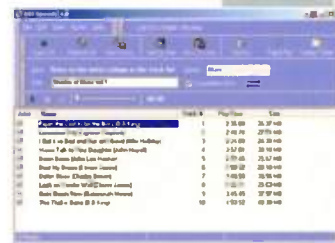
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