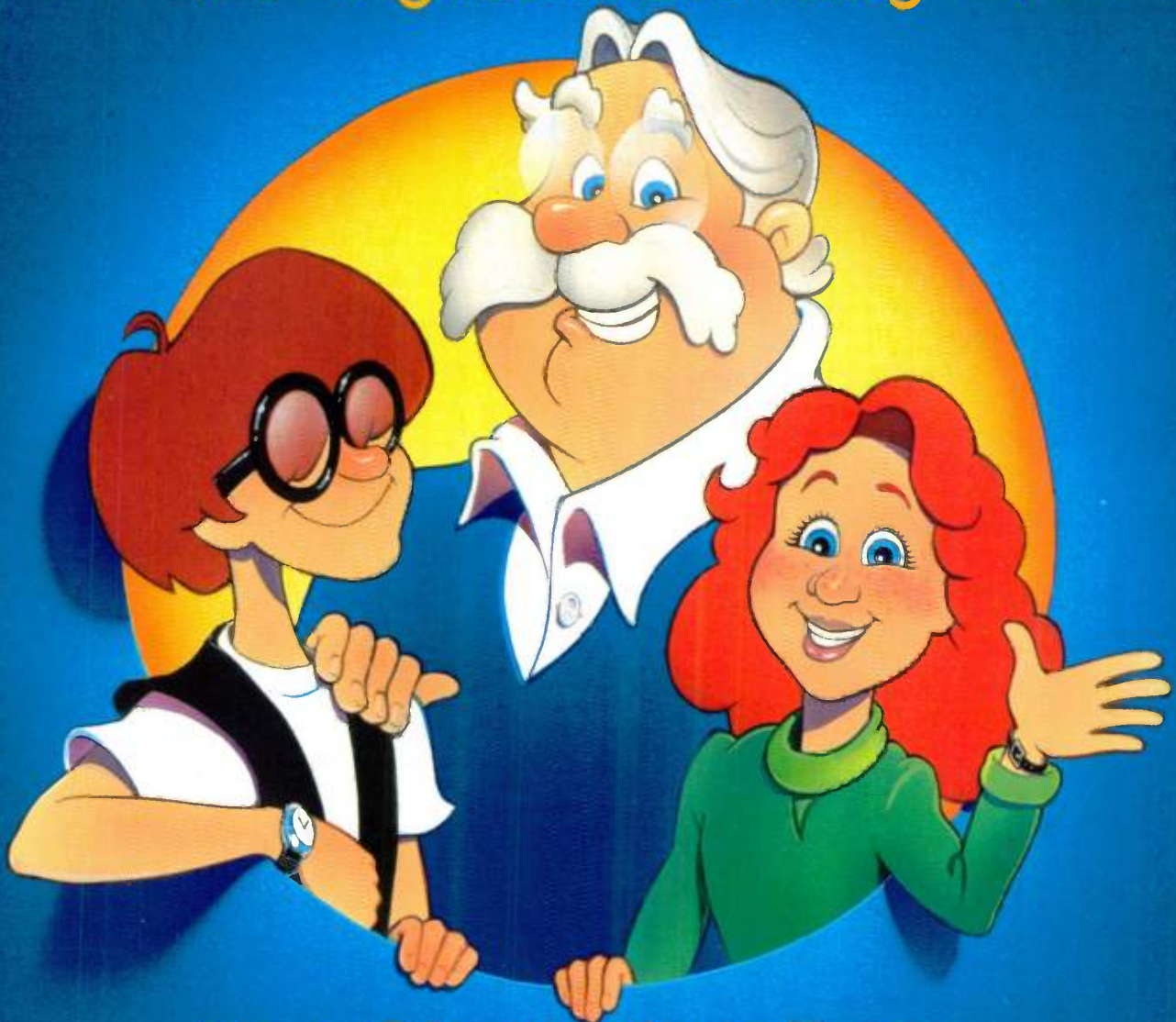


RELIGIOUS BROADCASTING

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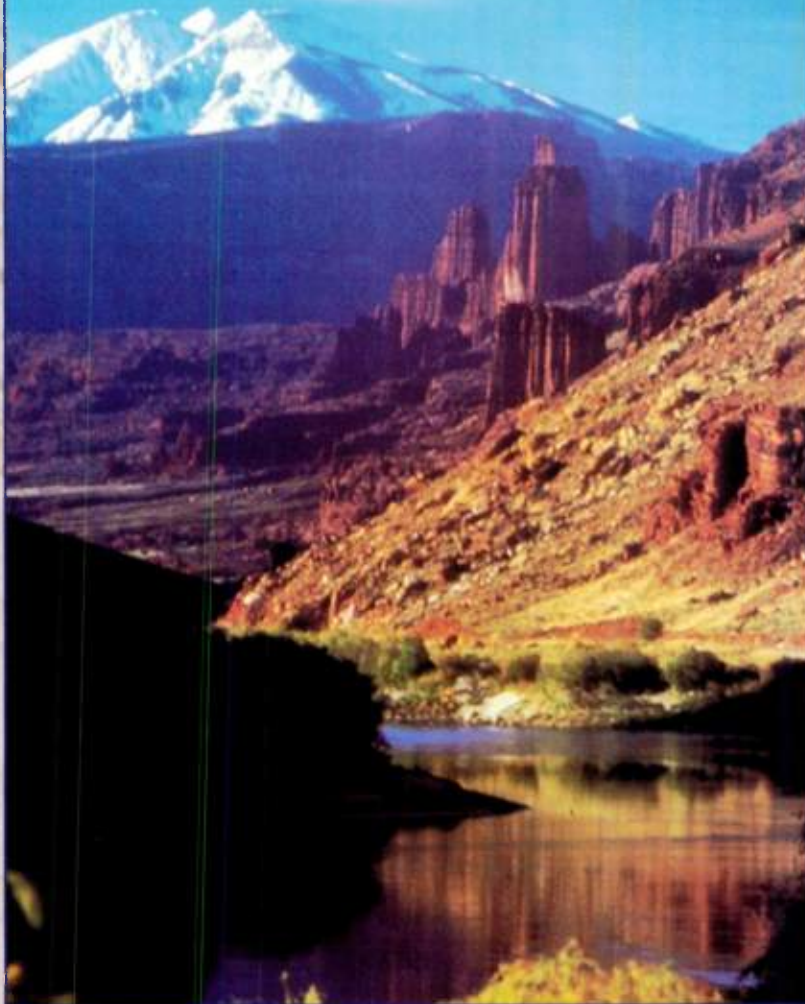
The Changing Face
of Christian Television

Inside: Industry Reaction to ACTS-VISN Agreement

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FEATURES

Turning Over the Tapestry

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Does Christian TV Have to Evangelize?

12 — by Quentin J. Schultze / The author of *Redeeming Television: How TV Changes Christians — How Christians Can Change TV* explores the idea that the longstanding evangelical definition of Christian television may be overdue for a change.

The Mouse that Roars

16 — by Elizabeth J. Guetschow / For nearly nine years, a group of Rhode Island Christians has been taking advantage of the opportunity of public access to make its voice heard and its perspective known.

Great Is Thy Faithfulness

20 — by Jerry Rose / As it proclaims the gospel from an impressive new facility, Chicago’s TV38 is an inspiring example of God’s faithfulness to those who are “called according to His purpose.”

A Necessary New Direction?

22 — As opinions and reactions fly on all sides of the recent agreement between the American Christian Television System and the Vision Interfaith Satellite Network, *Religious Broadcasting* presents the thoughts and comments of five industry professionals, each of whom is touched by the agreement in some way.

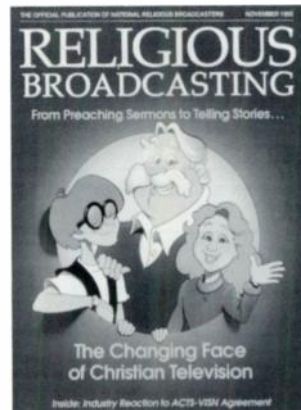
Albania Alive!

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**ABOUT
THE
COVER**



Cover Photo: Courtesy of Focus on the Family, Colorado Springs, Colo.

**From Preaching Sermons
To Telling Stories —
THE CHANGING FACE
OF CHRISTIAN TELEVISION**

The success of Focus on the Family’s *Adventures in Odyssey* video series provides one example of the storytelling power of Christian television. Beginning on page 8, *Religious Broadcasting* considers the nature of the medium — from its unmatched strength in communicating visually to its undeniable weakness in communicating intellectually — and challenges Christian broadcasters to examine their use of this industry of influence.

SIGNING ON

Never in the history of Christian broadcasting has there been an opportunity to create television programming that will fill the void left by the incredible lack of ethical values in the television programs coming out of Hollywood. The American public is fed up with the primetime fare they are being served.

A recent study done by Gallup Poll for The Family Channel reveals the profound alienation of Americans from primetime television. Nearly two-thirds of American adults say television has a negative effect on the family. Seventy-one percent say objectionable programming content influences them to watch less television.

The survey also found that sexual suggestiveness and violence were the chief sources of offense in the audience, followed by the use of foul language. One result is that 64 percent of parents are reacting by frequently or occasionally restricting their children's viewing. This number is up 4 percent from the 1990 Family Channel Gallup Poll. The poll's conclusion was a warning to program developers: "Put more emphasis on positive values and present a truer picture of personal and family values." This is more evidence of the wide and growing rift between the preferences of the viewing and listening public and the entertainment and news programming being produced by the television, radio, and movie industry.

Nearly a decade ago, the Lichter-Rothman studies showed how wide a gap there was between the American public and the producers of news, television, and movies. The survey recorded responses from the key gatekeepers in these three areas. The survey found



the gatekeepers were at odds with the majority of the moral values held by the American public.

While the results are highly similar for all three groups, just looking at the television producers was revealing. Ninety-seven percent held the belief it is woman's right to have an

Christian Broadcasters Need To Produce Positive Programming

by David Clark

abortion; 95 percent said homosexuality is an acceptable lifestyle; 84 percent found nothing wrong with adultery; 93 percent seldom attended church; 44 percent claimed to be atheists; and 66 percent believed television should promote social reform. An interesting side note is that 80 percent voted for Democrats in the past five presidential elections.

The growing rift between the American public and the producers of television has important implications for Christian broadcasters. First, current ministry programs on the airwaves must be cognizant of this incredible media morality void and address family issues in practical, biblically sound ways. Second, the void provides an unprecedented opportunity to produce innovative ministry-oriented programs. Third, we have an unparalleled opportunity to create family oriented entertainment programs to fill this void.

I believe the secular broadcast and cable networks have moved away from programming which appeals to the core of American families. We now have an opportunity to produce programs offering an alternative consistent with the biblical family values which have been the foundation of this great nation.

David W. Clark is president of National Religious Broadcasters and president of KMC Media, Inc. in Dallas.

Religious Broadcasting (ISSN 0034-4079) is published 11 times a year. To subscribe send \$24 for one year to National Religious Broadcasters, 7839 Ashton Ave., Manassas, VA 22110. Airmail orders outside the United States must add \$36 annually. Second class permit at Manassas, Va., with additional postage paid and entry at Greenfield, Ohio. Printed in the U.S.A. Copyright 1992 by National Religious Broadcasters (NRB), all rights reserved. Contents of this magazine may not be reproduced, in whole or in part, unless expressly authorized in writing by NRB. All editorial and production correspondence should be sent to *Religious Broadcasting*, 7839 Ashton Ave., Manassas, VA 22110. *Religious Broadcasting* assumes no responsibility for return of manuscripts, photographs, and cartoons, and reserves the right to accept or reject any editorial and advertising material.

RELIGIOUS BROADCASTING

Volume 24, Number 10

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Religious Broadcasting is indexed in the Christian Periodical Index and is available on 16mm and 35mm microfilm and 105mm microfiche from University Microfilms International, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106.

Advertising in *Religious Broadcasting* does not necessarily imply editorial endorsement or approval by National Religious Broadcasters. Authors' views are not necessarily those of National Religious Broadcasters, its officers, board, or membership.

POSTMASTER: Please send change of address to *Religious Broadcasting*, 7839 Ashton Ave., Manassas, VA 22110.



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION of EVANGELICALS

TUNING IN

1921 marked the first religious broadcast on a commercially licensed radio station in the United States, featuring the service from the Calvary Episcopal Church on KDKA/Pittsburgh. The broadcast was such a success that the service became a weekly program on the station.

Following this breakthrough, religious programming continued to grow and expand on stations throughout the country and before long Christian broadcasters began to think of owning and operating their own facilities. At first, only blocks of time bought from existing stations were available to Christian broadcasters while they awaited the processing of their applications for new frequencies by the U.S. Radio Commission.

On the air in 1924, Radio School of the Bible produced by the Moody Bible Institute led to the establishment of WMBI in Chicago during July 1926. During that time frame, the Church of the Four Square Gospel's KFSG in Los Angeles and The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod's KUOA in St. Louis each received their licenses.

WMBI produced its own speaking as well as music programming in two large studios. One of the two Moody studios would be used for rehearsing while the other served as the on-air facility. The production effort see-sawed back and forth between the studios for eight hours every day thanks to a full-time staff of 150. Moody students were often added to augment the talent.



Radio, Television: Avenues For Spreading Gospel

by Dr. E. Brandt Gustavson

..... attract its following in the late-1940s when TV sets became more affordable to the general public. Even though some preachers spoke out against "The Box" to discourage their adherents from watching, most Christians were viewing television programs.

Soon, evangelists, pastors, and Christian organizations realized how effectively the message of the gospel could be transmitted via television, although there was concern among some as to how the medium would enhance or interfere with the basic message of the Bible.

Today, it is more apparent than ever how television has been used to proclaim the gospel all over the world even if there have been some who abused the medium. Hopefully the days of "over-glitz" by preachers is in the past and those like Dr. D. James Kennedy, *Day of Discovery*, Pat Robertson, Dr. Billy Graham, Lloyd Ogilvie, and Robert Schuller — examples of quality use of television in relaying the Christian message — will remain to carry on their work in years to come.

Time has proven Christian radio together with Christian television has helped to fulfill the Great Commission of Jesus Christ in Matthew 28:19-20. To God be the glory.

Dr. E. Brandt Gustavson is the executive director of National Religious Broadcasters and publisher of Religious Broadcasting magazine.

The establishment of *Old Fashioned Revival Hour*, *Marching Truth*, *Back to the Bible*, *Hour of Decision*, and *Radio Bible Class*, as well as dozens of others, made it possible to add solid, meaningful programming to secular and religious stations across the nation.

Radio continued to rule the airwaves, drawing more listeners until television began to

"Dr. John C. Willke is well established as the pro-life issues expert throughout Christian radio in America.

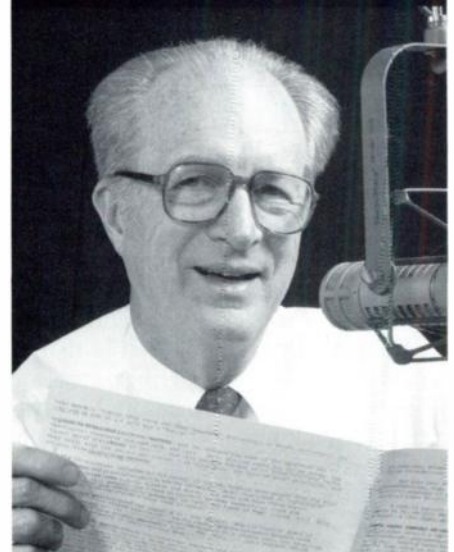
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WASHINGTON WATCH

During this election season, candidates for federal office in some ten states have run Pro-Life campaign commercials displaying pictures of dead fetuses. Stations which have run the commercials reported they had received numerous viewer complaints, and, in at least two cases, unsuccessful efforts were made in state courts to prevent the advertisements from airing. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) staff has received similar complaints numbering "in the hundreds."

Stations Seek Commercial Ban

Representatives for several television stations asked the commission for authority to ban such commercials during future campaign periods, or, alternatively, to

The FCC's Mass Media Bureau refused to rule that, as a general matter, any depiction of dead fetuses or fetal tissue is indecent. Such a broad determination, the bureau stated, would be inconsistent with the agency's usual case-by-case review of alleged indecency. Specifically with regard to the Georgia complaint, the staff found neither fetal material nor the expulsion of fetuses met the dictionary definition of "excrement." Therefore, the commercial did not depict "excretory activity" and so was not indecent under the commission's rules.

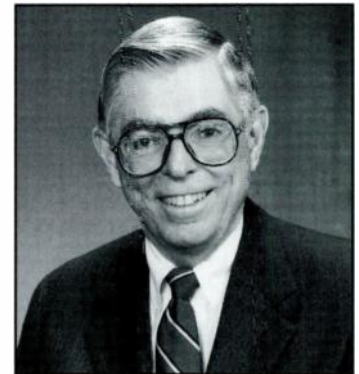
However, a broadcaster may run "appropriate warnings" immediately prior to airing such commercials if the broadcaster in good faith judged that the material could be disturbing to child viewers, the Mass Media Bureau ruled. "In the circumstances presented here, we would not regard such an advisory, presented in a non-editorializing and neutral fashion, to either violate" FCC rules or federal statutes, the bureau said.

The bureau offered an example of an acceptable viewer advisory: "The following political advertisement contains scenes which may be disturbing to children. Viewer discretion is advised." By recognizing the interest of Congress and the agency in serving children's special needs, such an advisory represents a "reasonable accommodation" between protecting young viewers and promoting the goals behind the political broadcasting rules, the bureau stated.

Prior Restraint Policy Upheld

The staff also held a broad finding of indecency would contradict the commission's policy against imposing "prior restraints" on protected speech by making rulings in advance of actual broadcasts. The bureau cited Section 312(a)(7) of the Communications Act as the basis of its ruling. This statutory provision requires stations to make "reasonable amounts of time" available to legally qualified federal candidates to promote their candidacies.

Under the act, broadcasters generally may not direct candidates to unwanted time periods of the day or night or ban candidate commercials completely from certain dayparts. Thus, the bureau ruled blanket limitations on air times also would be invalid. Even restricting all candidate commercials to certain time periods in an attempt to avoid singling



FCC Rules On Pro-Life Commercials

by Richard E. Wiley

channel them into time periods when children were unlikely to view them. The stations argued that the "graphic and shocking" commercials were indecent under FCC rules. The agency has defined indecency as "language or material that, in context, depicts or describes, in terms patently offensive as measured by contemporary community standards for the broadcast medium, sexual or excretory activities or organs."

As part of its request for a ruling, an Atlanta station submitted a tape of a Georgia congressional candidate's commercial which the station had previously aired. The licensee claimed the advertisement's depictions of fetuses covered with "menstrual gore" constituted "excretory activity" under the commission's definition of indecency. The station also argued even if the commercials did not satisfy the definition of indecency, broadcasters should be permitted to exercise good-faith judgment in refusing to air the ads or limiting the air times because the material was "unsuitable for children."

out the controversial Pro-Life ads would "deprive federal candidates of their rights to determine how best to conduct their campaigns."

Although candidates for state and local offices do not have a Section 312 right of access to broadcast stations, all qualified candidates for office have a federal statutory right to "equal opportunities" to use broadcast facilities. In practice, this provision requires broadcasters who air one candidate's commercials to offer equivalent broadcast time to opposing candidates for the same office. As a result, the bureau held restricting controversial candidate commercials to only certain hours could violate a federal or state candidate's equal opportunities rights.

Noting the Atlanta station wanted to restrict the commercials to "later hours of prime time," the Mass Media Bureau said this would impose a broader limitation against such speech found to be indecent. Currently, the FCC enforces its indecency rules against material aired between 6 a.m. and 8 p.m. (Last year, an appellate decision struck down a 24-hour ban against indecent broadcasts and directed the agency to define an appropriate "safe harbor" for indecent speech, but as of press time, the commission had not taken formal action on the matter.)

Richard E. Wiley, a partner in the Washington, D.C. law firm of Wiley, Rein and Fielding, is a former chairman of the Federal Communications Commission and is general counsel for National Religious Broadcasters. He was assisted in the preparation of this article by Rosemary C. Harold, an associate in the firm.

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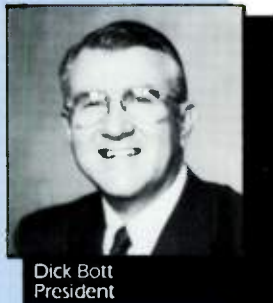
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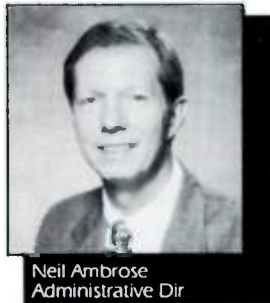
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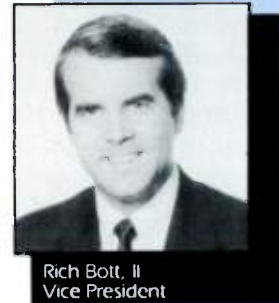
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Turning Over

What television — that mysteriously powerful device used by actors to entertain, politicians to campaign, advertisers to entice, and Christians to evangelize — does well, it does very well. It can make us feel. It can help us see. But at the points of its greatest weakness, television is very weak. It rarely shows what cannot be seen. It often oversimplifies the complex. Together, these strengths and weaknesses form the pieces of a complex puzzle.

"I compare television to a tapestry," says Coleen Cook. "It's kind of slick and

On TV the emphasis shifts inevitably to the seen at the expense of the unseen . . . In an image-oriented medium, the invisible God of the Bible will be short-changed to some degree every time.

beautiful on the front side, then you flip it over to the back side, and you see the tangled threads and the loose ends that come together to make up this illusion. My book [All That Glitters] is an attempt to flip over the tapestry for people and enable viewers to understand how those various threads come together to affect the end product. I like to think of it as an inside journey into the other side of TV."

With some ten years of experience in the mainstream media as a television news anchor, producer, talk show host, and reporter, Cook offers an "insider's perspective" on the television industry. But All That Glitters, her book which delves into this complex world, does not attempt to be merely a defense of the industry. Rather, it is an examination of television, of its strengths and weaknesses. And to those who use the medium — whatever their perspective — All That Glitters serves as a warning that some of the very characteristics that make televi-

sion powerful also make it weak.

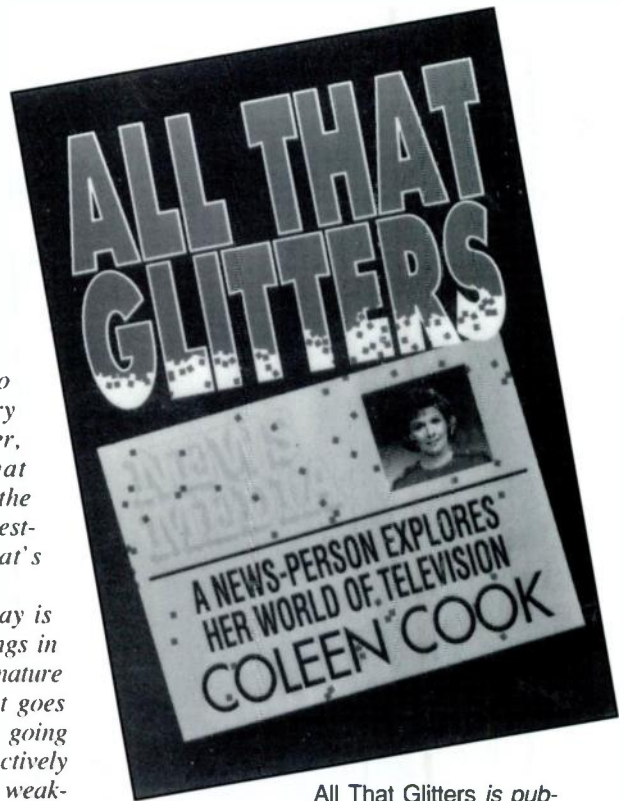
"I claim an insider's perspective," Cook explains. "That doesn't mean I'm the most expert person on the subject of television; I'm just a voice crying in a vast 20th-century technological world . . . one voice among many who may have something to contribute to the discussion of this subject.

"It's so important for us to realize the threads of the tapestry — that the camera, not the reporter, is the dominant storyteller; that imagery is deceptive by nature; the idea that television has to be interesting, often at the expense of what's important.

"Really what I'm trying to say is that there are certain inherent things in the technological and institutional nature of TV that affect whatever product goes through it, and the only way we're going to use something that powerful effectively is with a full understanding of its weaknesses and inabilities as well as its abilities. If we don't realize that this is a visual medium that's primary strength is to project imagery and move people emotionally — and we try to make it do something abstract and unpicturable and complex and unemotional — we're going to be using it ineffectively."

Such inherent limitations in the medium of television should perhaps be more troublesome to religious broadcasters than to their secular counterparts, for the message of the Christian broadcaster is not merely one of entertainment but one of conviction, a message of eternal significance. For Christian broadcasters, and for Christians in general, to ignore or be unaware of the limitations of television is to naively place the message of Christianity in the hands of an imperfect medium.

"I think if you're going to use television in a Christian sense at all, you've got to be alert to [its] weaknesses," Cook says. "What I call the 'dilemma of the electronic pulpit' is that television can do the same things to Christianity that it does



All That Glitters is published by Moody Press.

to news, to entertainment. The same weaknesses of TV, the threads of the tapestry, can affect televised Christianity.

"We need to realize that visual mediums are at their best when they're storytelling. What television can do better than anything else is not communicate truths but role model values and ideas."

And beyond an awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of television, Cook warns that Christian broadcasters must be aware of the needs and wants of the audience they are attempting to reach and of where the members of that audience are in their understanding of Christianity.

"I'm just not convinced that to merely take our 'inner circle' Christian culture and photograph it and project it up at a skeptical world will be the most effective way to use television," Cook offers. "It's like we're sitting next to a swimming pool and there's somebody drowning in the deep end, and we're sitting down at the shallow end, calling to them and saying,

the Tapestry



Coleen Cook says she is "just an ordinary reporter who discovered that television does only what it is capable of doing."

'You really need to be down here!'

"You have the whole church culture, with our traditions and our language and all the things that we're very comfortable with, and so often we take [this] and project it up in its depth to a skeptical world [that] doesn't understand it, doesn't understand our language, our style, our customs, and then we wonder why they don't respond."

"Are we willing to recognize the dilemma of the electronic pulpit? Are we willing to be in touch with what television is capable and incapable of doing? And then are we willing to humble ourselves to the point of reaching out to the least among us?"

What follows are excerpts taken from two chapters in All That Glitters which particularly address religious broadcasters. Within these chapters, Cook calls on Christians to recognize the influence of a medium which is at once enormously powerful and undeniably weak.

— Elizabeth Guetschow

What is television doing to Christianity? TV is doing to Christianity what it does to everything else. The same weaknesses of television — human, technological, and institutional — afflict televised Christianity. The scandals of recent years have established that the electronic church is not immune to ideological bias and power lust — such problems plague preachers as well as journalists. Ignorance is a problem for reporters and preachers alike. As one Christian station manager notes, some Christian broadcasters have drifted into theological never-never land because they are professional personalities and theological amateurs.

Certainly not all Christians agree on doctrines and issues, and Christian television inevitably reflects to some degree the particular ideological views of the handful who control it, to the exclusion of ideas held by those who don't. But more important, Christian television, like its secular counterpart, is at the mercy of TV's technological limits and demands,

and comes out the same, including the gospel.

Between a Rock and a Hard Place

It is not my purpose to critically analyze television evangelism but to simply underscore the dilemma of the electronic pulpit. The TV evangelist faces the same limits of a secular producer. He must either start with a message simple enough to fit the narrow confines of TV communication or take his theology and adapt it for survival on the tube. The message must be geared toward broad appeal, because mass communication is dependent on audience numbers to survive.

The need to build interest and hold viewers, the demand for visual attractiveness — all such production demands exert their influence in the realm of Christian TV. Because TV communicates visually and emotionally, it was inevitable that televised religion would

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

TURNING OVER . . .

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

become a Christianized cult of personalities. It was unavoidable also that TV's lust for the visual would shift the attention away from an invisible, mysterious, incomprehensible, highly complex God and elevate the personality attempting to communicate the message.

Since emphasis on TV shifts inevitably from content to style, what the preacher has to say becomes secondary to his technique, cosmetic appearance, and personal charisma in saying it. Some of the emerging stars of the evangelical TV screen are not necessarily the best and brightest theologians but the most magnetic personalities and the best entertainers. They succeed, not so much because of theological prowess, but because of their story-telling ability and their skill at visually holding our battered attention spans.

Since TV can't convey complexity, it automatically does a complex subject such as Christian theology an injustice. Preachers who achieve any degree of audience success have discovered they must keep their message short and simple. The Christian programmer must conform the gospel to fit the television format, if it is to find an audience.

The TV preacher can overwhelm, confuse, or turn off a listener or viewer with technical Christian jargon. He can stick doggedly to terms such as sin, sanctification, and justification, saying all he wants is a no-frills setting. But he will communicate only to a select few, most of whom are probably already predisposed to the message. Or he can simplify his message, add the cathedral, greenery, and fountains, and suddenly he has a larger and more diverse audience. Such elements create interest.

The chief sin of man may be to be separated from God — but the chief sin of TV is to be boring. Boredom is the sin that separates the programmer from viewer. Does the preacher risk boring the very audience he wants to reach when so much money is invested in technology and air time? God may own the cattle on a thousand hills, but would He slaughter the entire herd for a feast no one is attending? It is a difficult question indeed.

As we have already seen, on TV the emphasis shifts inevitably to the seen at the expense of the unseen. On religious TV shows, notes communications professor and author Neil Postman, "The preacher is tops. God comes out the sec-

ond banana." In an image-oriented medium, the invisible God of the Bible will be shortchanged to some degree every time.

Postman charges that no great religious leader, from Moses to Luther to Jesus Himself, offered people what they wanted — only what they needed. "But television," points out Postman, "is not well suited to offering people what they need." It's too easy to turn off. He con-

*I wonder what kind
of treatment Jesus Christ
would have received
at the hands of 20th
century producers had
He chosen to come at a
time when television was
the prevailing medium
of communication.*

cludes: "As a consequence, what is preached on television is not anything like the Sermon on the Mount. Religious programs are filled with good cheer. They celebrate affluence. Their featured players become celebrities . . . Christianity is a demanding and serious religion. When it is delivered as easy and amusing, it is another kind of religion altogether."

The \$100,000 Question

Why did Christ miss the "age of television"? It is a question worth pondering. Modern day religious leaders are certainly enamored with its potential. Pope John XXIII once called television "God's greatest gift for communicating the Gospel." More and more Christian groups now rush headlong into the electronic video arena in an effort to fulfill the Great Commission. Some proclaimed television to be "a tool used of God to present the Gospel [to] millions who otherwise would never set foot in the doors of the church," and "a perpetual advertisement for local churches."

One particular denominational leader predicted that Christian television would provide churches with a constant flow of people responding to the national and local programs his group planned to produce. Cardinal John O'Conner once told a group of New York state broadcasters: "With 30 seconds of time given to me free on television or radio, I reach more people than Christ reached in a lifetime

— in 33 years."

As a child, I remember wondering why Christ hadn't come when television was available to beam His message to the four corners of the earth. Going into all the world to preach the gospel to every living creature sounded like a big job for just 12 people. Wouldn't it have been easier and far more effective if Jesus had just founded the Christian Broadcasting Network? His arrival could have been announced before millions, just as was Justice O'Conner's appointment to the Supreme Court.

I now know that television is best at creating illusions, not at communicating truth. Since Jesus was in the truth business, television might have presented some very perplexing problems for Him.

I wonder what kind of treatment Jesus Christ would have received at the hands of 20th-century producers had He chosen to come at a time when television was the prevailing medium of communication. Would He have been the target of biased interpretation? In his book, *Christ and the Media*, Malcolm Muggeridge muses about a fictional Fourth Temptation. While wandering in the desert for 40 days, Jesus is offered free prime time television coverage by the devil but turns it down.

Notes television writer Lloyd Billingsley, "[Christ] knew that through the miracle of editing, the network illusionists could make Him appear however they chose, something they frequently do with His more outspoken followers [these days.]" Or, perhaps worse, would the media just have ignored Him altogether?

If Christ had come for TV, would He have waited to perform His miracles until cameras arrived? Would He have repeated them for the benefit of a network crew that arrived late or whose camera suffered a technical failure? Would He have jumped off the Temple as Satan suggested — something really visual and spectacular — to attract the "right" kind of coverage?

Would Christ have risked the integrity of His ministry [for] a medium that inevitably generates illusion? Would He have catered to a medium where the premium is on visual performance rather than on unseen attitudes of the heart? If Jesus' message had come under the excruciating time constraints of television, would we have heard only one of the nine Beatitudes?

Would we have rated Jesus on how warm, witty, and dynamic He was on the

tube? We pick our politicians this way — and certainly our news anchors. I wonder, would we have chosen a Savior that way?

God's Way of Doing Things

Jesus' way of communicating stands in stark contrast to 20th century sophistication. His words traveled beyond the crowds in Galilee simply by the faithful repetition of His disciples, who repeated them countless times with others. Unaided by modern methods of communication, those words finally came to rest in handwritten manuscripts, copies of which have survived the ages. Jesus had no electronic tools for broadcasting, but how profound and far-reaching His communication was and continues to be!

Jesus may have "missed" modern media technology, but He was not without powerful ways of getting His message across. Someone once said that the best way to send an idea into the world is to wrap it up in a person. God understood the power of person-to-person communication, so He met and made His disciples face-to-face — one at a time. Perhaps ABC anchor Ted Koppel was partly correct when he referred to Jesus Christ as "the ultimate extra-terrestrial." Yet Christ was far more than a visitor from outer space. He was the Infinite penetrating the finite. God became a human being, dying and delivering the good news of forgiveness person-to-person.

In this electronic age, we should be careful not to lose sight of the effectiveness of God's approach. Christianity is far more than simply broadcasting a message over a mass medium. It is living the gospel out in multidimensional detail before the eyes of the world and personally reaching people at their point of deepest need.

Scripture reminds us that Jesus came at the most effective time for communication. The Bible tells us that "when the time had fully come" God sent His Son into the world (Galatians 4:4). Far from "missing" the modern media, the Scriptures insist that Jesus arrived at the ripest possible moment in history to communicate.

Wisdom for a Modern Society

Whatever use Christians make of television, we must first define it strictly along the lines of the strengths and weaknesses of the medium or it will not be effective. First, we must recognize the dilemmas of the electronic pulpit and resist trying to make television do what it is incapable of. Second, we must identify our audience. Who are the people we

want to reach, and what will they respond to? The answer is not just the unchurched or unsaved. Who are these people really?

Christian broadcasters must recognize that we now live in a post-Christian culture that does not understand our spiritual terminology, church traditions, or cultural mannerisms. Today's unchurched audiences are far more discriminating than many would-be evangelists realize. They are deeply conditioned to salivate to a particular type of imagery with a certain look and feel to it. They have been trained subliminally by highly polished advertising and programs. The production standards by which Christian TV programs are measured in the minds of audiences are those set by the major networks and professional production companies.

We need to learn what we can from secular television producers. Norman Lear, the highly successful producer of *All in the Family* and other prime time hits who has been preaching his own

Christianity is far more than simply broadcasting a message over a mass medium. It is . . . personally reaching people at their point of deepest need.

gospel of social values for years via TV, says that ideas are more convincing when they come gift-wrapped in drama and humor: "People," he points out, "accept information more readily when they're being entertained." Is it possible that we need to "preach" less directly and more subliminally?

If I could use TV any way I wanted to preach, I would use it to tell more stories and preach fewer sermons. I have been personally more enthralled by the beauty of the movie *Chariots of Fire*, more moved by the emotion of *Shadowlands*, more convicted by the powerful Christian symbolism of the TV movie *The Doll Maker*, and more instructed by the moral lessons of Walt Disney's *Pinocchio* than by much of the evangelism I have seen on TV. One of the most powerful pieces of "TV evangelism" I have ever seen was a recent "20/20" interview by Barbara Walters with former baseball star and Christian Dave Dravecky about the tragic amputation of his pitching arm.

Am I saying there is no place on TV

for preachers? Not if they are good speakers with a contemporary style and if they possess a strong sense of how to relate Christianity to the felt needs of secular culture. But if Christians are to use a mass medium like television with any degree of success in terms of changing the audience, they must move out of merely broadcasting church services and sermons and into the storytelling business in a significant way. To spend millions to merely broadcast speakers is to use TV's power only in a limited, secondary sense.

And, finally, the electronic church must face the fact of what it is competing against. Currently, much of existing Christian broadcasting is merely competing against itself for the same audience already agreeable to its present style. There is much duplication of effort. We need to stop rivaling each other for a share of the "already convinced" and design programming that will compete with secular programming for the "unconvinced."

In spite of the millions of dollars spent to "evangelize" America via the airwaves, a survey by Christian researcher George Barna suggests that confidence in the local church continues to decline. According to Barna, only 38 percent of Americans believe that the church is relevant for today.

One positive use for television would be to build audiovisual images that link Christian beliefs with the felt needs of the culture. But in many cases, millions of dollars are spent on amusing the already saved with images they are comfortable with, while those same images intimidate, confuse, and, in some cases, repulse those who are beyond the boundaries of the established church and who, sadly, are the ones most desperately in need of a change of heart about Christianity.

Christian television must be more than a man reading the King James Version of Scripture into a TV camera. We cannot treat television as though it were merely radio with a picture. But we dare not continue to use it, as some do, blindly or ineffectively if we are to meet the felt needs of our culture, project an image of credibility on behalf of our Lord, and penetrate the skepticism of this age.

— Coleen Cook

Taken from All That Glitters by Coleen Cook. Copyright 1992, Coleen Cook. Moody Press. Used by permission.

Coleen Cook is the author of *All That Glitters* and now works as a freelance writer from her home in Merreo, La.

I recall a college physics professor who told students, "To cook a hamburger fast, you must cook it slowly." He proved his point by cooking two burgers in the classroom — one on high heat and one on medium. The high burner turned the burger black on the outside, forming an insulating layer of carbon that kept the insides uncooked. The medium burner slowly cooked the other burger all the way through.

I believe that evangelicals could learn a lesson about evangelism from this physics chef. In their attempts to fulfill the Great Commission ("Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father



His Place, a talk show of sorts produced by Cornerstone Television in Pittsburgh and set in a fictitious diner, provides one example of innovative Christian programming. The show, which airs each week-night, targets young, active Christians in the Pittsburgh area and features information about local events, news commentary, Bible studies, and entertainment. Above, Jeff Reddinger and Rhonda Miller gather at His Place.

Does Christian TV

by *Quentin J. Schultze*

and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Matthew 28:19 NIV), Christian broadcasters may be losing the culture wars that determine how fertile the soil is for massive religious conversions.

Christian broadcasters need not be embarrassed or feel like second-class citizens if their programs are not explicitly evangelistic. Religious conversion is not the alpha and omega of all Christian activity in the world. The mass media increasingly cultivate the cultural "soil" for evangelism. All broadcasting that promotes Christian values, attitudes, and sensibilities, whether it is music, news, or drama, is essential for the reclamation of God's world.

The Burden of the Great Commission

American television has suffered considerably because of evangelicals' narrow linkage of "Christian" and "evangelistic." By using these terms interchangeably, and by assuming that the pri-

mary purpose of television programming must be to convert viewers to Christ, American evangelicals ironically have created their own broadcast ghettos.

Moreover, the preoccupation with the Great Commission has led to mis-

All broadcasting that promotes Christian values, attitudes, and sensibilities . . . is essential for the reclamation of God's world.

placed and often unfair criticism of talented Christians who sought careers in broadcasting. A 60-year-old evangelical friend, highly successful in broadcasting and convinced that he has never compromised his beliefs, tells me that his mother still cannot understand why he would have entered such an evil business.

Finally, the emphasis on immediate

evangelization has sometimes stifled creativity and resulted in inferior quality programming. Perhaps this is also why some Christian TV has typically turned the power of the gospel into a hackneyed tale. So do we really need more romanticized conversion stories or docu-testimonials that distort the way the Holy Spirit normally works in the lives of real people? Or do we need more realistic drama that compellingly witnesses to the grace of God and the life of faith? Which do we need more of today — films like "Chariots of Fire" or preaching-teaching shows?

Suppose we evaluated all of our communication today — everything we wrote and said — in terms of whether or not the gospel was proclaimed. Most of our college lectures would be unnecessary. So would most musical recordings and concerts. In fact, if we said "I love you" to someone, it could be construed as non-Christian. When the Great Commission is our alpha and omega in

communication, we fall into such naive views of television.

Everything we do has an evangelistic dimension to it in the sense that all of our actions reflect our own "witness" to the lordship of Christ. But it is simply wrong to reduce our view of communication to whether or not it was intended to proclaim the gospel. Yet this is what many evangelicals want to do with the arts, including film, theatre, literature, and now television.

Communication and Creation

Our redemption in Christ should prompt us to do more than proclaim the gospel. We must see the Great Commission and all other human communication in the context of the creation, not just as a backdrop to the Second Coming. Our vocation is to obey God, to be responsible servants in all aspects of

our lives, not only to serve the more specialized roles of evangelist or pastor. Since Adam named the animals, humankind has been using communica-

Any communication that furthers God's interests in this world is Christian, whether it comes from the mouth of an evangelist, a television news reporter, or an actor.

tion to build cultures, from Babylon to Israel to America. The Cultural Mandate (see Genesis 1:24-31) given to humankind in the first few chapters of the Bible established all peoples' vocation in life: to

responsibly take care of and develop the creation — to be stewards of God's world. This is indeed what we all do, for good or bad, and for work as well as play. And we do it through communication.

The Latin root for the word communication actually means "to share," or literally "to make common." It is the same root for communism (having property "in common"), and communion (having the sacrifice of Christ "in common" as we celebrate the sacrament). Christianly speaking, communication is first of all the process of creating a common culture in a godly society.

In other words, communication enables us to fulfill the Cultural Mandate by working and playing together as image bearers of God. It is hard to think of a single human task that does not require the ability to "share culture" — to have common ways of life. Without such commu-

Have to Evangelize?



Thom and Cathy Hickling, associate producers of *His Place*, developed the show to reach baby boomers, people age 25-42 who are largely untargeted by Christian television.

nication, our lives would be impoverished, and we could accomplish little, from building homes to playing tennis.

Secular Influences

Ironically, the tendency of the church to limit its notion of communication to evangelism parallels secular trends in Western society. In the last few centuries, Western conceptions of communication shifted gradually from the idea of "sharing" to the concept of "controlling." This led eventually to the popular view that communication is transmission — the "sending and receiving of messages."

By the time of the telegraph, for instance, a few

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

people still viewed communications as a means for creating social harmony and universal brotherhood. But growing numbers of people perceived it as a means for sending economic news faster and more profitably than before. The telegraph would give a competitive edge in the stock market or futures trading; it was a way of achieving personal or corporate gain, not principally a means of improving society.

As a result, the mass media were increasingly identified with manipulation and control — with getting other people to think or do things. Modern industry was partly responsible for this shift, too. Contemporary communication is greatly influenced by advertising and public relations, which have made “communication” and “persuasion” nearly synonymous. The church increasingly imitated the communication theories of modern business, especially since World War II.

Evangelicals, in particular, quickly and naturally adopted the “manipulation” mode of communication because it seemed to fit so well with the emphasis on the Great Commission. They used secular models of communication and marketing to reach the world for Christ. Along the way, however, evangelicals also lost sight of the scope of communication in the church’s broader task of fulfilling the Cultural Mandate.

Why Communicate?

Communication is central to practically everything we do as human beings — work, play, worship — and not only to explicitly persuasive activities. Nearly every area of life depends on the use of communication to maintain culture. Family meals, schoolroom lessons, and bedtime prayers are (or should be) meaningful communication.

Communication enables us to “share” our lives with others in both profound and mundane ways: to worship with others, to work with others, to get to know others, to break out of our loneliness and alienation with each other and God. What would be more destructive to our godly vocation in life than to deny us our ability to communicate? How little we would accomplish, and how meaningless life would be for us!

Television can help us to enjoy, to take care of, and to develop God’s creation. Any communication that furthers God’s interests in this world is Christian,

whether it comes from the mouth of an evangelist, a television news reporter, or an actor. Responsible communication is Christian, and to be responsible is to establish and maintain the kind of culture that glorifies God. In other words, humankind’s vocation is not only to evangelize, but also to be good and faithful stewards of creation.

All of our communication and culture are witnesses to the gospel, or at least they should be. “Christian television” includes far more than televangelists, gospel music programs, and conversion dramas. It means much more than per-

*Producers and viewers
should seek the most
appropriate uses of the
technology for the good
of humankind and the
glory of God.*

suading people to accept Christ as their Lord and Savior — though it certainly includes that!

Television as Technology

As a communications tool, television is not culturally neutral. It will always, by its very nature, communicate differently than other technologies. It becomes part of the message, and therefore part of the culture. Each communications technology influences society and individuals in particular ways.

Compared with printed communication, for example, television may indeed be an inferior medium for elaborate philosophical argument. Printed media are probably more appropriate. But that does not mean that the technology of television is inherently evil. Instead, producers and viewers should seek the most appropriate uses of the technology for the good of humankind and the glory of God. Every communications medium offers some potential contribution to fulfilling the Cultural Mandate and the Great Commission.

It appears that the real power of television is not so much to persuade people to change their basic allegiances in life, from their faith commitments to their political loyalties. Rather, television’s power radiates from its remarkable power to shape the contours of a culture. The tube “massages” the ways of life of a people, thereby establishing the scope of acceptable values, beliefs, and attitudes.

This year’s Presidential race is an excellent illustration. Behind all of the direct attempts to persuade voters to support one candidate or the other is television’s constant shaping of the public agenda. Campaign rhetoric may not change voters’ political allegiances, but it undoubtedly influences the way media defines the debate.

For example, in only a few weeks, “family values” became a major campaign issue. Suddenly one speech by the Vice President created a national discussion of the topic. This is typical of how television works, shaping the nation’s cultural agenda. Television programs are the closest things we have to a national culture.

More than anything else, we should keep in mind the fact that evangelization takes place in a cultural context more or less fertile to the gospel. If Christians lose the battle over the culture, evangelization will be exceedingly difficult.

Communication was not given to humankind by God only to fulfill the Great Commission, but to fulfill the Cultural Mandate. Christian broadcasters should consider the full scope of the medium’s role in creating, maintaining, and transforming culture for the glory of God. Explicitly evangelistic programs are not enough. News, drama, entertainment, sports — all fall within the scope of the Cultural Mandate if they are done to the glory of God. Communications and culture are different sides of the same human ability.

We do not have to feel guilty about producing programs that never preach the gospel. Nor should we fail to use TV for explicitly evangelistic purposes. However, we do need more programming that contributes in godly ways to the fabric of our culture and the quality of our lives. Christian broadcasters are first and foremost to be responsible caretakers of television.

Television belongs to God. It should be used wisely and discerningly, just like all other resources. As things now stand in North America, I wonder if Christian broadcasters are winning some souls but losing the overall culture. If so, perhaps this process can be reversed partly by a broader definition of Christian television. After all, the hamburger that cooks slowly might cook most quickly.

Quentin Schultz teaches at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Mich., and is the author of *Redeeming Television: How TV Changes Christians — How Christians Can Change TV*, from which this article is adapted.

DEATH, HOMELESSNESS, POVERTY, AIDS, CRIME, HAPPINESS, PEACE, LIFE.

Every major American city is confronted with problems and opportunities. The problems of death, homelessness, poverty, AIDS, crime ... the opportunity to bring messages of life, happiness, peace confront us everywhere. On September 8, 1992, TV38 president and former three term president of the National Religious Broadcasters, Jerry Rose, delivered an editorial message to Chicagoland entitled "Battling for the Soul of a City." In that message he committed himself, TV38 and all it's resources of staff and facilities to stand tall and strong in reaching out to touch a city with Godly solutions. To address the problems with solutions that are so desperately needed and to make a difference is our goal, and we are committed

to the task. "Greatness has to do with the courage to do the right thing for the long term, even though it may not solve all the problems of the moment. My prayer is that God would grant our leaders the wisdom and the courage, to seek greatness for our future." The heart of TV38's ministry is to broadcast the Good News through the best variety of programs for today's Christian family. Programs for children and teens, inspirational music, real-life drama, world news and Good News plus nationally-

known teachers, and local worship services. If your vision is to reach Chicagoland, then join all the other ministries that have made TV38 their broadcast choice. If your need is television production, let TV38 put its award winning team, our facilities, and our commitment, to work for you.

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THE MOUSE . . . CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17

sake of controversy. "We try not to ambush people," Dempsey says. "If a guest comes on the program, I think I have certain humane responsibilities."

In the spirit of fairness and balance, and with the goal of encouraging informed decision-making, Dempsey investigates the topics and guests presented on the program "fairly in-depth." Dempsey also begins each show with an introduction of the guests involved in order to establish credibility for the audience. "It's important for me to give the audience reason to believe whatever the guest may say," Dempsey says.

The general format of the program is to ask "the tough questions people are murmuring about," and, in addition to bringing in the Biblical perspective, to provide viewers with a "body of information" about the topic.

For its efforts, *Chapter and Verse* has received several awards, including an award of excellence from the National Association of Local Cable Programmers in Washington, D.C. Dempsey notes that the program has earned its reputation for

excellence while working within a budget which he says can barely even be described as a shoestring. As a public access group, those who produce *Chapter and Verse* are not entitled to any fundraising; Dempsey says they are only allowed to broadcast a post office box number.

The "How-to's" of Public Access

Dempsey advises other Christian groups interested in taking advantage of the opportunity of public access that the most necessary element for success is commitment. "There are some really legitimate reasons why operators wouldn't want to work with a group, and one of the reasons is a lack of commitment."

Beyond the need for loyalty to the project, Dempsey warns that access groups must respect the equipment and the operators at the local station. "As long as those ground rules are met, there really shouldn't be any reason why there couldn't be a mutually beneficial alliance between the operator and the local access group."

Finally, Dempsey suggests that members of the crew — including cameramen, directors, audio technicians, floor managers, and talent directors — be

"cross trained" to do each others' jobs. The *Chapter and Verse* crew consists of eight people who work in the studio two times each month, an arrangement which accommodates varying career schedules.

Chapter and Verse airs on Friday evenings, Sunday afternoons, and Wednesday mornings, a set of negotiated time

The important thing is to follow your interests. If there's something about which you're excited, find out who's doing the exciting things and track them down.

slots which allows interested viewers to see the program whatever their schedule.

Of particular benefit to the program is its involvement with the statewide interconnect cable network, which Dempsey says basically connects all the cable television homes in the state and allows *Chapter and Verse* to be on more than one cable station, "so that anybody anywhere in Rhode Island who has cable has us."

Rhode Island residents who do not have cable can tune in to *Church Focus*, a radio program now affiliated with *Chapter and Verse* of which Dempsey is a co-host. Dempsey says the radio program allows him to talk with numerous guests who are not able to appear on the cable program. Guests on *Chapter and Verse* have included Billy Graham and Mother Teresa. "We've had a lot of happy events like that," notes Dempsey. "There are some astounding guests who've made what I believe is a lifetime impression upon me and on some of those in our audience."

In finding and attracting guests for both *Chapter and Verse* and *Church Focus*, Dempsey cites the importance of interest and perseverance. "The important thing is to follow your interests. If there's something about which you're excited, find out who's doing the exciting things and track them down." Dempsey warns that the process of "tracking them down" can be a discouraging one, but he says tenacity can — and usually will — pay off. "It's not over," Dempsey asserts, "until whoever it is you want to interview is looking at you in the rearview mirror as you're going away. Until then, hang in there."

Elizabeth Guetschow is the features editor of *Religious Broadcasting* magazine.

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The unexpected turns of May 30, 1992, seemed to somehow fit in with the 16-year history of WCFC-TV/Chicago (TV38). TV38 has been known as Chicago's Christian television station since it signed on the air in May 1976. Ironically, TV38's first broadcast originated from a cramped, rented studio in Chicago, directly across the street from where TV38's newly constructed Communications Center now stands.

Prior to May 1976, few people expected TV38 to succeed. A group of Christians had been trying for six years to establish a Christian television station in Chicago. The group was headed by Owen Carr, a Kansas-born preacher who was the first to admit that the only thing he knew about television was where to find the on/off button. But Carr and the others who shared his vision believed that God could overcome any obstacle if His people were willing to obey His call.

Strange things began happening to the obstacles which were expected to stop WCFC. The power of God collapsed one obstacle after another as word spread that a small group of people were working hard to give Chicago its very own Christian television station. More and more people caught the vision of how God could use Christian television to make Chicago a city with none of the doors that had previously been closed to the Gospel message.

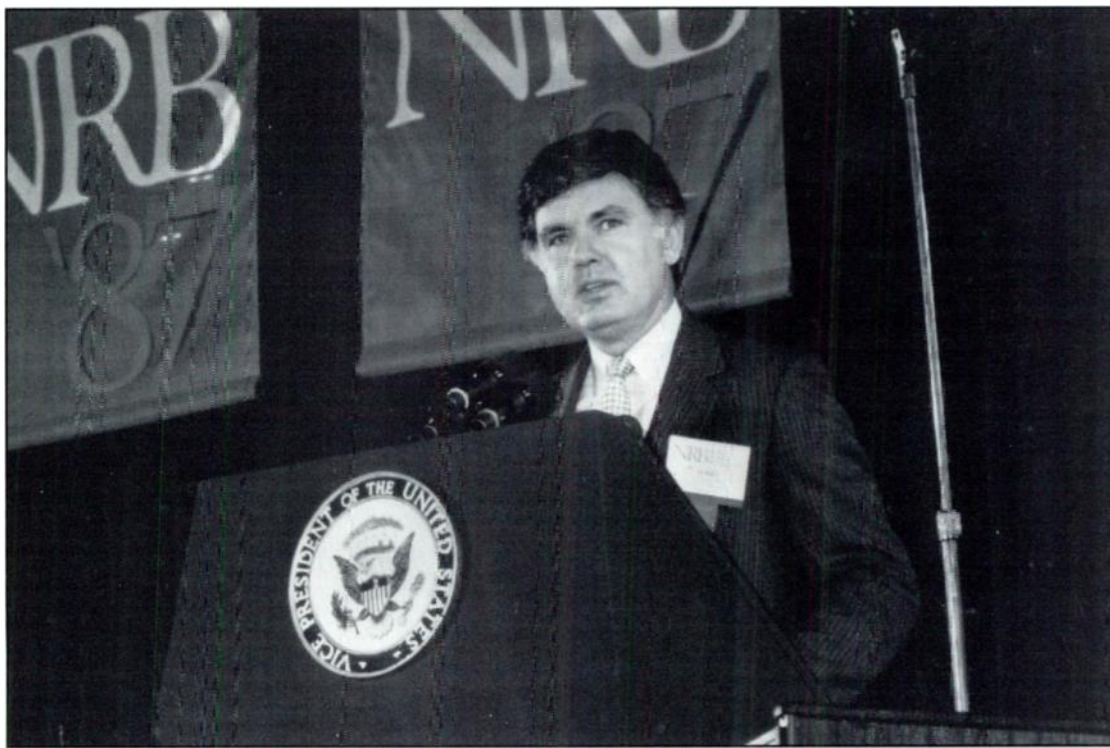
But just as TV38 was about to sign on the air, reality took a turn for the worse. TV38 faced a deadline to sign on the air — or risk losing its broadcast license. The station had no studios or equipment of its own, so it arranged for the use of a cramped studio plus the necessary equipment and personnel through a Chicago production company. The deadline was only a few days away, and all the details seemed to have been taken care of, until someone

GREAT Is THY FAITHFULNESS

by Jerry Rose



TV38's Communications Center is a 42,000 square-foot facility located in a growing area of downtown Chicago.



Jerry Rose serves as chairman of National Religious Broadcasters' (NRB) International Advisory Committee and is the immediate past president of NRB.

realized the rented studio had no land link to TV38's transmitter. Installing such a line would take weeks, and TV38 only had days to live.

Station officials convinced a phone company technician to come to the studio over the Memorial Day weekend. The technician began probing phone lines which everyone thought had been cut some time before and announced that he had found an active line that could easily be used to transmit TV38's signal. Appropriate to the timely intervention by God, TV38's first picture was a closeup of the first verse of Genesis 1:1. A voice off-screen began to read, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."

That day in 1976 was the beginning of a 16-year journey of faith and testing that would take TV38 through valleys and to mountain tops. But the faith that held TV38's vision together in its beginning days also carried the station to a new goal for its ministry.

Even during the fledgling days of its ministry, TV38 and its viewers had prayed that TV38 would someday be independent of rented facilities and would be blessed with its own ministry home. In 1986, TV38 purchased 1.1 acres of land owned by the city of Chicago. Even though the land was located in downtown Chicago, it was in an area of mostly vacant and run-down buildings. The city

hoped it could encourage redevelopment of the area by offering land at prices below market value. TV38 took advantage of the opportunity and purchased the land. Today, TV38's newly constructed Communications Center is the showpiece

The modern television facility was designed and equipped to meet the challenge of a rapidly changing world where mass media is playing an increasing role in shaping people's lives.

of an area of Chicago that is quickly becoming the heart of new development in the city.

But renewing the spiritual heart of Chicago has, after all, always been TV38's mission. The construction of its Communications Center is evidence of a continuing faithfulness to obey God's call to reach the lost, both now and in the future. The modern television facility was designed and equipped to meet the challenge of a rapidly changing world where mass media is playing an increasing role in shaping people's lives. The 42,000 square-foot Center includes three teleproduction studios, computer editing, and

mobile production capabilities.

These resources were put to an unexpected test during the live broadcast of the dedication ceremonies on May 30, 1992. That morning, dark clouds blew across Chicago's skyline, leaving a trail of rain and cold wind. More than 1000 folding chairs were sitting in TV38's parking lot in anticipation of an outdoor ceremony. The entire service — including hundreds of TV38's friends — moved indoors just 20 minutes before it was to be broadcast live to the entire Chicago area.

The dedication ceremony for the new facility included congratulatory remarks by representatives from the offices of the governor of Illinois and the mayor of Chicago, plus leaders from Chicago's business community. National Religious Broadcasters executive director Dr. E. Brandt Gustavson spoke on behalf of the organization's members, noting that Christian broadcasters like TV38 are vital tools for spreading the Gospel in the United States and around the world.

For nine hours, the broadcast originated from two of TV38's three studios. This required two full production crews working simultaneously with split-second timing. When a portion of the broadcast was completed in one studio, live coverage immediately continued from the other studio while stage hands worked quickly to prepare the first studio for the next segment of the broadcast.

When the formal dedication was over, the live broadcast continued with in-studio concerts from Christian recording artists Jessy Dixon, Karla Worley, Albertina Walker, and pianist Larry Dolton. In spite of the rain and sudden change of plans, TV38's guests shared a common sentiment felt by many who have followed the station's ministry since 1976 — the successful outcome of the dedication ceremony was just another way the Lord has shown His faithfulness to WCFC in unexpected ways.

Jerry Rose is the president of TV38, WCFC-TV/Chicago.

The ACTS-VISN agreement: A NECESSARY NEW DIRECTION?

On October 1, 1992, the American Television System (ACTS) and the Vision Interfaith Satellite Network (VISN) officially began operating under a channel-sharing agreement approved July 25 by the ACTS executive committee and signed by the two networks on July 28.

The agreement allows the ACTS network, which primarily carries evangelical Christian programming, to reach some 1000 additional cities in areas where Southern Baptist presence is limited and serves to maintain the financial stability of the denomination's Radio and Television Commission.

Like most events of any significant impact,

reactions to the agreement have been varied, from cautious optimism and acceptance to skeptical questioning and disapproval.

The article that follows is not intended to be a commentary on the agreement's soundness nor a statement in favor of one reaction or the other. Rather, it is intended as an overview of a significant event — one which will doubtlessly affect numerous broadcasters and viewers of religious programming — from five different perspectives.

The comments below are by no means inclusive of all possible views on the issue but are simply presented as a sampling of thoughts on an agreement of importance within the religious broadcasting industry.

Steve Gregory, Director of Public Relations, Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission:

The recent decision by ACTS (the American Christian Television System) to provide programming to VGI (Vision Group, Inc.) for its new Faith And Values Channel, VISN/ACTS, is consistent with the stated objective of ACTS' parent organization, the Radio and Television Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention (RTVC). And that objective is "... to support the Convention in its task of bringing individuals to God through Christ by preaching the gospel over radio and television."

One of the Commission's goals in



pursuit of its objective is securing "the widest possible use of its materials on cable television, radio, and television stations." For the past eight years, the Commission has owned and operated ACTS in order to accomplish part of that goal — to secure the widest possible cable television audience for its programming.

And, it took the full time efforts of a national marketing director, three regional managers, many state ACTS directors, and many more local ACTS boards, plus a handful of dedicated support personnel to achieve the audience that ACTS had developed prior to October 1 — 8.4 million confirmed subscribers on 655 cable systems in 41 states, representing 22.6 million potential viewers.

At no point during its eight-year history had ACTS, or the Commission, been presented with an opportunity to significantly expand its cable television audience and maintain its proportionate share of programming time and control ... until VGI came up with the VISN/ACTS concept.

On July 28, in Denver, Colo., ACTS signed an agreement with VGI increasing its audience on October 1 to 21.3 million television households on 1374 cable systems in all 50 states, with 57.5 million estimated potential viewers. With the stroke of a pen, ACTS more than doubled its cable television audience and reduced future marketing and satellite transponder expenses to practically nothing. The result is savings that will be used to increase and improve RTVC-produced programming.

ACTS also gained access to markets that previously had been "closed" and very well might have remained closed; these markets include Manhattan, Los Angeles, Salt Lake City, San Francisco, and many more.

But these gains were not without some costs. For instance, a few charter and long-time ACTS affiliates —

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Ron Harris, Minister of Media, First Baptist Church of Dallas:

I have been an interested observer of religious broadcasting through the RTVC since the early 60s. In 1967-68, I co-hosted a religious radio program called "Omniscope" for the Commission. It was aimed at college campus radio stations.



When Dr. Jimmy Allen became president of the Commission and introduced the concept for ACTS, I was asked to help develop, produce, and direct the pilot programs of *Invitation to Life*. When the network was launched and a televised awards program was begun to highlight exceptional work by local affiliates, I was asked to produce and direct this project. I have now directed seven of the eight ACTS programs, five of which were live network presentations.

My involvement with the network includes both on-camera and behind the scenes work, both as an affiliate and as a producer for network productions. Often my time was volunteered. I have never been employed by the Radio and

Television Commission, except for contract work. I am close friends with many of the Commission's executives, as well as many of their production and engineering personnel. I also relate directly with many network affiliate leaders through personal and professional friendships.

I say all of this to give some background of my relationship to the situation concerning ACTS and the recent steps taken by the Southern Baptist RTVC. To assess the steps ACTS officials have taken, I would have to say that I feel they have taken a step backwards in their efforts to accomplish their mission.

For years, the network has called [itself] "a channel you can trust." That can no longer be true. Because of the wide diversity of programming accepted by VISN, it is uncertain if a degree of "trust" is possible. Though the merging of airtime on one channel will mean that some programs will reach other markets not previously accessible, the converse is true. Programs that VISN carries that are not in keeping with evangelical Christian teaching will now be spread to the eight million homes that ACTS cultivated through the years.

Comments from RTVC personnel in recent days have said that evangelical Christians should not be concerned about

the teachings of other faiths, even though some are non-Christian and cultist. The Bible clearly warns us to beware of false teachers. Yet it appears the ACTS network will be working together with those many would consider to be false teachers or prophets, assisting to build a large audience for their message.

If you were to ask me to assess the impact this change has had on local affiliates, I would quickly point out that each affiliate will have their own ideas on how it will help or hurt them. However, many I have talked to have been concerned on two points.

First, they are concerned that, in some cases, local Baptist churches, organizations, or schools will now be down-linking and sending to the cable system programs of the Mormon church, the Christian Scientist church, and the Muslim religion, to name a few. That causes concern, for those groups did not work or spend great sums of money to bring in the ACTS channel to that community. Typically, local ACTS affiliates worked for months or years to get the cable system of their area to carry the ACTS channel.

The other major concern voiced by

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The Radio and Television Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention is located in Fort Worth, Texas.

Jerry Rose, President, WCFC-TV38/Chicago:

There were those of us who, from the very beginning of VISN, were concerned about [its] basic premise for going on the air — and that was to replace us. VISN came in to this totally from a negative base. They came in to push us off and to get on; they were going to do it all right because we were doing it all wrong. In some markets, we're still having to go in and really fight hard because VISN has gone in and [tried] to replace us.



It appears to me that the merge between VISN and ACTS is a pragmatic, financial decision; they're having difficulty making it on their own, so they're combining. I hope that this doesn't negate ACTS' ability to be a strong evangelical voice on cable.

**David Clark, President,
National Religious
Broadcasters:**

Cable television in America is a dynamic information delivery system. It has been in constant change since the 1950s. These changes will continue beyond the year 2000 until the technology and its markets have matured. At that point, some new technology may emerge to challenge cable's marketplace.



The combining of the ACTS network and VISN is one manifestation of the technological pressures bringing changes to the cable marketplace. A new generation of satellites forced ACTS to make a decision on whether to stay on the old transponder — and lose significant audience on local cable systems — or move to the next generation of satellites with the major net-

works. Since the cost of such a move was prohibitive for ACTS alone, an invitation by the VISN network to join them in sharing a transponder made economic sense.

It also made marketing sense since it guaranteed that ACTS would not lose audience by being on the wrong transponder. In fact, the move appears to guarantee a significant net gain in households because of the larger number of cable systems that carry VISN. The best estimates are that ACTS' programs will now be seen in somewhat more than 20 million homes, or about double the previous amount.

Another aspect of the marketing is that the evangelical programs on ACTS will be on a network which previously accepted few such programs. VISN carries a wide variety of Christian and Jewish theological traditions. Depending on your perspective, this can be seen as leaven that will change the whole or as compromise with theologies which most evangelicals find highly objectionable.

Assuming that the ACTS/VISN agreement will give [ACTS officials] total theological freedom to program the time they control on the new network and that their agreement is one with long term guarantees, the added audience may provide unique opportunities for effective new ministry.

On the other hand, there is an undeniable sense of loss at seeing the 24-hour evangelical network disappear. While the remaining FamilyNet will fill some of that void, a vacuum remains for many households that can no longer see 24-hour programming.

**GREGORY . . .
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 22**

supporters who had been with ACTS from the beginning and had seen the "network" through some difficult times — have chosen not to make the transition. Unlike many who took a "wait and see" attitude, some never even gave the new channel a chance.

Another "cost" was that ACTS' programming schedule was reduced from 24 hours per day to eight (even though the 24-hour schedule included as many as 16 hours of re-runs and "bonus" programming), and that some of ACTS' programs are now aired side-by-side with the programs of other faith groups.

It has always been the policy of ACTS to prohibit fundraising, proselytizing, and maligning of other faiths; it is the same with the new channel. Neither ACTS, nor the Radio and Television Commission, is condoning or agreeing with the beliefs or the principles of the other faith groups represented. Instead, we are confident that the truth will prevail.

All of these things were considered at great length by ACTS' 29-member board of trustees and its nine-member executive committee. And, in the end, it was felt that securing the widest possible cable television audience for ACTS' programming and insuring its future were not only consistent with their objective, but were also their responsibility and their duty. There was no opposition to the agreement.



DR. RON PHILLIPS

- AUTHOR
- PASTOR
- TEACHER
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Rod Payne, Minister of Media, First Baptist Church of Wichita Falls, Texas:

God, through His providence, placed me in the audience on the evening of the very first American Christian Television Systems



(ACTS) awards presentation. I remember telling someone the next day that I had seen a glimpse of God's plan for my life while watching that program. I knew one day I would be working in full-time Christian media. I hoped that career would somehow involve the ministry of a local church linked to a national service such as ACTS.

My call to First Baptist Church (FBC) in Wichita Falls fulfilled both of those dreams. FBC has been involved with ACTS almost since the day the satellite service began broadcasting. My predecessor, Ron Harris, produced the very first ACTS Program of the Year with his show *First Things First*. Last year, we were named the ACTS Affiliate of the Year, the network's highest honor. In April, I began my term as the ACTS affiliate council chairman.

Our church, like many others around the country, invested much time and money in our local presentation of the ACTS signal. In Wichita Falls, we have built up trust in our presentation of Christian programming, not only with the ACTS network but also from other local churches.

We felt secure in the programming goals of ACTS. Though we were not

fond of the "infomercials," we knew, as did ACTS affiliates across the country, that we could turn to our broadcasts 24 hours a day and not hear a false gospel being preached.

During yearly ACTS affiliates' meetings, we were told to continue to pray for cable systems across the country — to pray that these systems would choose to carry ACTS rather than a major competitor, VISN. This network, we were warned, was being carried in several major markets because of its ties with a large cable company. A reading of a VISN program schedule revealed programs from sources which are considered by the most reliable research to be cults.

Suddenly, it seems to most ACTS affiliates, the ACTS network did an "about face" and entered into an agreement which finds them sharing a channel with VISN's lineup. VISN broadcasts programs which would have never been accepted on ACTS under the guidelines by which the network was originally formed. Yet the affiliates were told that because of financial considerations and the promise of being able to enter those markets ACTS had been virtually locked out of in the past, the network was now going to share a channel with the VISN group.

Affiliates who did not wish to be a part of the VISN/ACTS program were often left without choice because of the clout provided in the cable industry by those who were in VISN's corner. Some, like one affiliate in Arkansas, publicly stated their intention to shut down their broadcast operations rather than to share time with some of the programs carried during VISN's allotted time on the shared channel.

It appears on the surface that the ACTS leaders felt that if word spread about the proposal, it might not go through. They may have been right. However, it is unfortunate that the leaders felt that they must keep grass-roots supporters totally in the dark on an issue that so dramatically affected their local ministry. It is easy to see how some feel as if they were used to build support for the network and then were discarded or overlooked when it became expedient to move away from that kind of relationship.

For Southern Baptists, and for evangelical Christians in general, it looks as if the leadership of the ACTS network and

The argument that we have often heard from both the VISN and ACTS representatives is that people in our communities would be able to distinguish between those portions of the broadcast which carry VISN programming and those which would carry ACTS programming. As anyone who has worked in real broadcasting would note, this is simply not the case. The American television viewer will not make a distinction when VISN broadcasts for three hours followed by two hours from ACTS, even if both services use an "ID" logo, during their portion of broadcast time.

The result will be confusion for those who have not yet accepted Christ. Will not the confused viewer wonder if the God spoken of during one program is not the same "god" spoken of during another when both broadcasts are back to back? Will the "god" of Mormon doctrine become confused with the one true living God in the mind of an unsaved viewer? I wonder.

Yes, for those cities which did not have access to a number of hours a day of the televised broadcasting of the gospel, this will be a great opportunity to shed light into darkness. But for those of us who have had the ACTS signal all these years, this agreement could not — in fact should not — be the answer.

I only wish the Christian broadcasting community, perhaps in the form of another broadcasting entity, could have been used of God to come to the rescue of ACTS — rather than the alliance [it has] now formed. I continue to pray for the Radio and Television Commission and for its ministry.

the Radio and Television Commission has lost sight of its original vision, and has caught hold of a lesser one . . . VISN. The original vision was to impact the country with strong, creative, evangelical Christian programming. Now, they are content to be a small part of a national religious access channel, squeezing their programming into one or two hours between religious programming that may espouse teachings that Christians see as heretical. Though the agreement is signed and the shared channel arrangement under way, the issue may not be over for the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission.

HARRIS . . .

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 23

some affiliates is in how this arrangement between ACTS and VISN was made. Even though ACTS was designed from the beginning to build a relationship with and gain strength from local affiliates, these affiliates were not informed until the agreement was already signed by the two networks. In fact, the Baptist Press noted in an article released after the agreement was completed that it had been asked to refrain from releasing anything about the pending agreement.

ALBANIA

Alive!

On August 20, 1992, Dr. Paul Freed, president of Trans World Radio (TWR), signed a contract with Skender Bucpapaj, the general director of RTVA-Albania, allowing TWR to broadcast the gospel message on Albania's Radio Tirana. This historic event establishes Tirana as TWR's eighth transmitter site, and marks the first time that TWR has broadcast God's Word from Albania, the only country in the world registered with the United Nations as atheistic.

When communist dictator Enver Hoxha banished God from Albania in 1967, people were forbidden to worship. For more than 20 years, religion was outlawed. Today, with the opening of the world's only officially atheistic society, Albania is experiencing a virtual flood of religious diversity from around the world.

On October 1, TWR gospel broadcasts began airing on Radio Tirana, a powerful 1 million-watt AM station. Recently, Freed and vice president of U.S. Ministries Dr. Alan Travers shared about their trip to Albania and about what the historic event means for the people of Eastern Europe and for TWR.

Dr. Freed and Dr. Travers, you've recently returned from Albania where you witnessed an historic moment for Trans World Radio — gospel programming for the first time on the airwaves of Radio Tirana. What events made this possible for TWR?

Travers: During his dictatorship, Enver Hoxha built a nation of fear where we were told that one out of every three people was considered to be an informer; you could not sit at a table in a dining room anywhere without believing that at least one of the people sitting at that table was an informer.

Freed: These people have really undergone incredible terror and suffering. But now, it's gradually coming out. As Alan said, one out of every three people was an informer. The people were terrified. They absolutely could not say one word about religion. They could not have one single church service; not one church was open. Religion was declared to be extinct.

What happened to change all that?

Freed: In 1985, Hoxha died. He was succeeded by one of his cohorts who in the spring of 1990 finally surrendered to the revolution that overtook all of Eastern Europe. Albania dropped communism and adopted freedom of religion. Today, it is a country of people who are Muslim, Orthodox, and Catholic, but who were forced to worship in private. We could really see the effects of this when we

went into the homes of these people who had suffered incredible repression and isolation. Now they are unified on the premise that they must have democracy.

With freedom of religion, each person is now free to worship as he chooses. How have Albanians responded and will this have an effect on Trans World Radio's ministry?

and forced them to keep their religion secret, they learned to live and work together and developed a remarkable tolerance for each other. It's really quite unique that in Albania, the Muslims, Orthodox, Catholics, and Protestants live together in mutual respect. We need to pray that this tolerance for other religions won't break down soon because it will allow Trans World Radio to do what we believe God has called us to do there.

Why is the agreement with the



Dr. Paul Freed, president of Trans World Radio (left), and representatives of the Albanian government sign a contract permitting TWR gospel broadcasts on Radio Tirana, a powerful former communist propaganda station.

Freed: Not only is Albania open, but all other religions are being welcomed as well. Right now, Albania is 68 percent Muslim, 18 percent Orthodox, and 14 percent Catholic. When we asked about the Protestants, they told us that there weren't any. But we know now that there are some Protestant congregations. I attended a service while we were there. However, there are still not enough Protestants to make a statistic.

Travers: The intriguing fact is that because Hoxha forced the people together

Albanian government to broadcast gospel radio such a tremendous breakthrough for TWR?

Travers: I really must emphasize that this contract we've signed is for a station which was the number one communist propaganda station in all of Europe. It has a most powerful signal. It is clear and has no interference.

Freed: Now suddenly, Trans World Radio takes this signal, this station of 1 million watts AM, powerful transmitters, and a tremendous antenna system and

puts the gospel on the air — on a clear station that is open to us. TWR has the opportunity of having the number one signal broadcast from Albania all throughout Europe every night. To me, this is a modern miracle!

Were you able to visit the transmitter site at Radio Tirana when you were in Albania?

Freed: Yes. When we went to Radio Tirana and stood at what was the number one propaganda station in all of Europe, I could not believe my eyes. There was a giant transmitter — actually two 500's coupled together to make 1 million watts of power — that were placed there for the propaganda. As I walked out of the building and saw the antenna system, I was absolutely amazed to see a mass of systems, five sets of antenna towers to all directions of Europe. I noticed that one array of eight towers was directed into Russia.

As I stood there and looked down on that array, somehow I could look way beyond it and I could see what it was doing. That powerful signal on the standard AM broadcast band was now beaming right through Yugoslavia to Romania and Hungary, through Czechoslovakia,

on into the Ukraine and beyond to Russia. Imagine today to have that kind of power which we never had before with a clear frequency to direct in that way. I could see in my mind's eye the homes, the villages, the people who had not heard [the gospel] before. Now there is a clear signal proclaiming the truth of Jesus Christ to all of Eastern Europe!

There's no doubt that the Lord is at work in Albania and Eastern Europe today and that this is a significant time in TWR's history. Can you describe what this exciting event meant to you as a part of TWR's ministry?

Freed: It was exciting to be there when we signed the contract. It was exciting to sit in the Director-General's office and have the papers passed and signed and to realize that this was an historic moment.

Travers: Indeed, it is a remarkable time for Eastern Europe and for Trans World Radio. I know that it is entirely possible that God might just be planning to use the people out of the countries where He was declared non-existent to spread the gospel around the earth. And we at Trans World Radio have a chance

to be a part of that.

Freed: Today we are truly seeing a miracle of what Almighty God has done. As it is for every site, our purpose is to share the power of God's love and goodness to the ends of the earth. Once again, we see how the Lord has proved Himself faithful to His people and to the ministry of Trans World Radio.

Travers: God turned the tables on something that was intended for harm and made it good. That phrase has been used before when we talk about TWR's Monte Carlo transmitter site, that God used the wrath of men to praise Him. That powerful station was built by Hitler. Hitler never got to use the Monte Carlo building, but the forces of godless, atheistic communism in the person of Hoxha [did use] the transmitters in Albania.

Freed: It seemed to be a triumph of evil meant for the world, and now the Trinity of God has taken control of it. It is going to be used to proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord. That's a wonderful truth we are excited to share. We rejoice in this miracle of God's grace and that we can help Albania and Eastern Europe become alive in Christ!

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MEDIA FOCUS

• NATIONAL •

Groups Offer Aid, Hope To Hurricane Victims

Editor's note: The following is a report about those who assisted in helping the victims of Hurricane Andrew. This is in no way a comprehensive report, but merely a collection of those news releases Religious Broadcasting received concerning the recent natural disaster. Because of Religious Broadcasting's long lead time, much of this will be old news, but we felt these groups needed to be commended for their part in aiding those left desolate by the hurricane.

— Sarah E. Smith, news editor

MANASSAS, Va. (NRB) — The rebuilding of south Florida is well under way as the majority of those affected by Hurricane Andrew are putting their lives and homes back together in the aftermath of what *Newsweek* called "the most costly storm in U.S. history."

In late August and early September, America watched and listened in horror as survivors told of what the devastating 164-mph winds had done to their homes, families, and lives. Losses of public- and private-owned property topped the \$20 billion mark with an estimated 250,000 homeless and 86,000 out of work in south Florida. The casualties were few — 14 people died as a direct result of the hurricane with an additional 18 attributed to storm-related causes.

Scenes of the ruin caused by the Category 5 hurricane (the first to strike the U.S. mainland since 1969) were shown on the news broadcasts and in newspapers and news magazines along with stories of how the Federal Emergency Management Agency was mismanaging the relief effort in disaster-torn areas. The biggest controversy came in the wake of the storm — who was responsible for helping those who were

left desolate in the hurricane's wake?

In answer to south Florida's plea, the Red Cross, the National Guard, and a composite corps of Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine personnel showed up to lend a hand in putting south Florida back together. Even President George Bush gave a handout, promising on national television disaster aid at 100 percent federal reimbursement.

But the biggest commandment of forces came not from already formed organizations, but from ordinary citizens who donated food, clothing, time, and money to help their fellow man. Many Christian organizations and churches assisted in the relief effort in a variety of ways.

The Samaritan's Purse provided mobile homes for homeless families; building materials, such as lumber and

food vans throughout the areas hardest hit by the storm, they also distributed Bibles and New Testaments courtesy of the ABS.

Baptist World Aid, through the Southern Baptist Convention Brotherhood Commission, sent monetary donations as well as "disaster teams" to Florida, which helped in the feeding and housing of those affected by the hurricane. Masterserve, a non-profit assistance organization, volunteered skilled workers from around the nation to assist in the rebuilding of homes, businesses, schools, and churches destroyed by Hurricane Andrew.

Even colleges got involved in the relief work. Toccoa Falls (Ga.) College set up a relief station, collecting food, clothing, and other items as well as sending students during their fall break to



In Homestead, Fla., one of the hardest hit communities, transmitter buildings (photo 1) lie in ruin after Hurricane Andrew toppled WCIX-TV's 1800-foot tower on to the station's building (photo 2). As a result, three Miami-based radio stations were knocked off the air: WXDJ-FM, WRTO-FM, and



WMCU-FM. WMCU went back on the air September 13 with 18 to 20 percent of its former power. According to station manager Stephen James, full power will not be restored until a new tower is constructed on the old site in about ten to 12 months.

plastic; and other needed items as well, while coordinating volunteer teams of skilled laborers from churches wanting to assist with repairs and construction. The International Bible Society, together with various denominations and Christian organizations, launched Operation Andrew to bring 115,000 Spanish and English Bibles to the hurricane victims.

The American Bible Society (ABS) and the Salvation Army branches in Florida and Louisiana combined efforts to provide emergency services to residents needing assistance in those states. While the Salvation Army deployed its mobile

help with the clean-up and rebuilding process.

But the work is not over yet. Even after the relief workers have gone back to their homes, the restoration process in Florida and Louisiana will continue. While Hurricane Andrew brought to the foreground the generosity many only remembered as existing in the past, it was one history lesson most would have rather left untaught.

(Information in this article came from the September 14 issue of Newsweek and other press releases received by Religious Broadcasting.)

Photos provided by WMCU

YOUTH WAVE

Because of my radio show *Dawson McAllister Live*, I receive a lot of mail. And even though the show is designed for teenagers, many adults write me, too. Some talk of how painful it is to listen to the show and hear about so many kids in need. Others want to share their problems, many of which started when they were teenagers. But amidst all of the pain, I get letters of encouragement and hope.

Because the show is not simply about the pain of teenagers, but about teenagers in general, we do have encouraging moments where we can see hope for this generation. God has not given up on the youth of America. There are thousands of students who are standing for Christ. Not long ago, I received a letter from an adult who had caught the beauty and the power of Christian kids living for Christ in these troubled times. She wrote:

Encourage Students Who Stand For Christ

by Dawson McAllister

Every time I'm convinced that God is shut out of life today, you open those phone lines and your heart and we meet kids who love the Lord and aren't afraid to proclaim it—quite a statement considering how much contempt many of us adults get for saying Jesus is Lord!

I got to thinking about what she said in her letter and you know she is right. There is a lot we can praise God for when it comes to Christian teenagers. Some of them are taking a stand for Christ under pressures you and I never experienced growing up. And yet, not only are they standing up against the pressure, they are doing something for Christ.

This last September, our program did a whole two-hour show around a powerful idea called "See You At the Pole!" The plan was simple: on September 16, students from all over America were to go to their flag pole at seven in the morn-

ing and pray for their teachers, leaders, and other Christians in the school. As it turned out, somewhere between 1 and 2 million teenagers went to their schools' flag poles to pray for their campuses.

The Sunday night before the "See You at the Pole" event was to take place, we opened our phone lines for kids to call in and share with us about their plans for their school. It was truly an amazing experience to hear one student after another from middle schools through college talk about how they were mobilizing Christians in their school to pray.

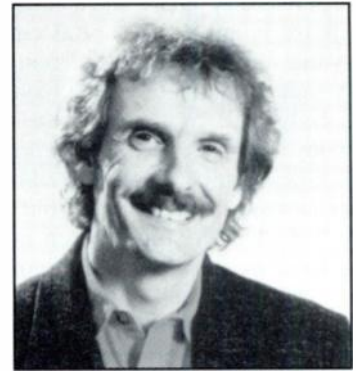
One caller in particular comes to mind. His name was Matt from Sumter, S.C. I asked him if he was going to get involved with "See You at the Pole." He answered me by saying:

Most definitely. Sumter High School is looking forward to it and we're going to have a great turnout. . . This is the first year that I've heard about it and we didn't have anything like this at our school last year and I was very disappointed. . . . We're a school of about 3000 people and we should at least have 300 for a turnout and we're praying and hoping for more. . . I do the announcements for our high

Every time I'm convinced that God is shut out of life today, you open those phone lines and your heart and we meet kids who love the Lord and aren't afraid to proclaim it.

school and I'm pushing that [See You at the Pole] and FCA [Fellowship of Christian Athletes]. We have people putting up banners and posters and all the churches in Sumter are pushing it. We have it on WMHK-FM Columbia, S.C., here. We're really pushing it and we'd love to see a great turnout and just somebody come to the Lord. Even if one person would, it would be worth it.

I had several thoughts about Matt's response. First of all, the fact that he was



at a school of 3000 kids in no way intimidated him. It seems to me Christian teenagers are in many ways becoming bolder about Christ than ever before. He actually believed 300 kids would turn out and be at that flag pole praying. Secondly, he had no fear of making an announcement over the public address system at his high school. Here are kids who clearly understand the effect of reaching as many people through media (school's P.A. system) as possible.

I was struck by one other thing he had to say. He said, "We have it on WMHK here." WMHK is a large Christian FM station in Columbia, S.C. The fact that the Christian station was behind the "See You at the Pole" event encouraged Matt to be all the more bold and aggressive for Christ. Somehow, Christian stations all over America must find a way to not only bring large blocks of teenagers to their stations, but to also find a way to encourage these young Christians to do even greater things for Christ.

Who knows, while most of us are lamenting the decline of America, God and these kids may fool us. Maybe these strong Christian students will start something so great it will literally change this country for Christ. As for me, I am going to do all I can to encourage these teenagers.

Dawson McAllister is a nationally known youth speaker, evangelist, author, and host of the weekly call-in radio talk show *Dawson McAllister Live* for teenagers. The show is broadcast on the Skylight and USA Radio networks.

GLOBAL CHALLENGES

Times are changing even in North Korea. A Roman Catholic and a Protestant church are open in the capital city of Pyongyang and now former President Jimmy Carter is to follow in the footsteps of Dr. Billy Graham in sharing the message of love with the North Korean people.

The devastating Korean war [1950-53] not only divided a nation, but also decimated the Christian church in the North, ruled by the self-styled "Supreme Leader," Kim Il Sung. But now the aging Kim Il Sung wants to seek a possible reunification with the prosperous and capitalistic South and a "normalization" of relations with the United States. And the price he is willing to pay is religious freedom for his people.

North Korea Welcomes Christianity After 40 Years

by Dan Wooding

First Steps Taken

Due to the far-sighted diplomacy of North Korean-born Dr. David J. Cho, founder and international director of the Korea International Mission, and Dr. Dale W. Kietzman, chairman of the division of intercultural communications of William Carey International University in Pasadena, Calif., and chairman of ASSIST (Aid to Special Saints in Strategic Times), the doors are beginning to swing wide open. The pair have paid a visit to North Korea, telling the government if they want friendship with the South and the United States, they need to allow freedom again for the Christians of the country.

"We suggested a first step would be to organize the teaching of Christianity in the schools of North Korea and to allow the import of thousands of Christian books into the country," said Kietzman. "Both have now been achieved."

Cho added, "The first Protestant church is now functioning in Pyongyang and another is being built. There is also a Roman Catholic church open and . . .

some 500 house churches meeting around the country with . . . between 10,000 and 12,000 Christians now allowed to worship freely."

Graham Visits North Korea

The pair paved the way for Graham to pay his recent visit to the country, becoming the first American preacher to be allowed to preach since the end of the Korean War. I recently met with two Korean religious leaders from the Democratic People's Republic of [North] Korea who agreed Graham's visit was a "great success."

The Rev. Young Sup Kang, chairman of the Christian Federation of North Korea, said, "I would like to say that Billy Graham's visit to North Korea was very successful, not only inside the country, but also outside of the country." Kang explained that at one time, Pyongyang was the center of Christianity in the Oriental countries, even housing a school for missionary children.

"It was the only [school] in Asia," Kang said. "But unfortunately, because of the war, Christianity lost its influence on the people. Before the war, there were about 120,000 Christians in the country, but after the war, Christianity was dramatically reduced in numbers. Many of the former Christians lost their faith because of the war, and . . . the church in our country was not able to maintain its Christian lifestyle. The new age did not turn to Christianity and nowhere in the North were there any churches. The government today is willing to give more freedom to exercise the Christian ethic."

Korean Reunification

With Korea reunifying, would South Korea become communist or North Korea capitalist? Kang said, "There should be no threat from any other side. We will mutually respect each other's ideology, structure, and religion. Otherwise, there will be no hope for reunification. . . . The current structure and orientation should remain as each would wish. But our common consensus is that we are one race, one nation, one language — so we have to maintain the national spirit as one."

Kang addressed the issue of how the North Korean Christians would feel about the large South Korean churches. "Numerically speaking, we are very small, and in South Korea, they claim to



have more than 10 million Christians," Kang said. "But even though we are small in numbers, we are trying to train our people well, devotionally, and in nation-building, so we don't have a complex."

The greatest need for the Christians of North Korea is self-propagation without assistance from the outside, said professor Sung Buk Park, head of the Institute of Social Science in Pyongyang. "One of the big needs is Christian publications, that is why we are eager to cooperate with the scholars outside, because we do have a very limited supply of pastors and leaders."

Park also commented about Christianity in a socialistic country. "I have great concern on how to develop Christianity in a socialistic country. Also, I am concerned as to how to make Christianity the church of the nation rather than imported from outside. We want the Christian faith [in North Korea] to be an indigenous faith," Park ended.

Now the North Korean Christians are preparing for the upcoming visit of Carter, who will be allowed to preach and have a meeting with Kim Il Sung. "It is a very hopeful sign in the new relationship. [Carter] will be a most precious guest for the nation," said Sung Buk Park. As for the Christians of North Korea, they can now echo the words of Martin Luther King Jr. — "Free at last, . . . thank God, Almighty we're free at last."

Dan Wooding is an award-winning British journalist who lives in Garden Grove, Calif. He is the founder and international director of ASSIST (Aid to Special Saints in Strategic Times), as well as a commentator for the UPI Radio Network and a syndicated newspaper columnist.

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Dr. David W. Clark
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TRADE TALK

AIRWAVE NEWS

LJUBLJANA, Yugoslavia — Gospel Media, founded in 1987, is celebrating five years of service to Yugoslavia. Winner of the NRB International Award for achievements in the Christian media field in 1989 and the Silver Angel Award for its national television program in 1991, Gospel Media has produced 25 Christian audio and video programs in three languages: Slovenian, Croatian, and Serbian. Despite the conflict now raging in Yugoslavia, Gospel Media is continuing to spread the gospel message.



Volunteers from the local church in Grenada train with cameras on studio production for the Lighthouse television station.

FORT WORTH, Texas — Lighthouse TV-Grenada, a 24-hour Christian station, has been on the air since summer. Missionaries Mike and Maureen Magnuson of Caribbean Outreach have been coordinating the building and operation of the station.

THOUSAND OAKS, Calif. — Mark Finley is the new host of *It Is Written*, following George Vandeman who hosted the program for nearly four decades. Finley premiered as the speaker on the September 27 broadcast while Vandeman will continue as speaker emeritus and serve as a consultant in the program's foreign markets.

NEW YORK — In celebrating 40 years of The Christophers television outreach, the Rev. John Catoir, host of *Christopher Closeup*, presented vintage clips from the archives of early Christopher productions and more recent guests on the October 11 program.

TIRANA, Albania — Trans World Radio (TWR) reached an agreement August 20 to begin broadcasting from Radio Tirana in the capital city of Albania. The contract is the first signed by Radio Tirana with an external corporation. The agreement gives TWR, an international gospel radio network, exclusive rights for Protestant religious broadcasting on Albania's transmitters.

SAN DIEGO — *Power Play*, a daily music video program currently airing in 34 markets nationwide, combines music videos with topics affecting young adults. Viewers are given a crisis hot

line to call and receive a referral to a counseling center or protective agency near them. Since going on the air in June, more than 28,000 young people have been assisted.

Quaker Hilton Hotel in Akron. Among those inducted were Joe Tait, Leon Bibb, Doug Adair, Charlie Walker, Eddie Blazonczk, and Lawrence Welk.

CHICAGO — The Radio Hall of Fame will induct four new faces and one of radio's most legendary programs during the November 15 ceremony in Chicago hosted by ABC radio's Paul Harvey, a 1990 inductee. This year's inductees are Don Ameche, Casey Kasem, J.P. McCarthy, Leonard Goldenson, and *The Grand Ole Opry*. The program will be fed live via satellite free of charge to all radio stations in the United States.

MUSIC NEWS

BRENTWOOD, Tenn. — Brentwood Music has announced its formation of a new label, Brentwood Bluegrass, to market artists The New Tradition and Doyle Lawson & Quicksilver. The Brentwood Bluegrass label will promote contemporary and traditional bluegrass music with strong gospel influences. Also, Brentwood Music has entered into a three-year exclusive distribution agreement with Essential Record Group of Costa Mesa, Calif. Essential Record focuses primarily on a small group of quality releases, including Magdallan, Bloodgood, Uthanda, and Lanny Cordola.

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Petra performed a benefit for Love Ministries at the prestigious Auditorio Nacional in Mexico City August 7. Love Ministries, based in Mexico City, gave Petra a plaque commemorating its commitment to the children of Mexico City through the group's donation of time and talent to Love Ministries. Also, Petra will be releasing its Spanish version (*Petra En Alabanza*) of the 1988 *Petra Praise: The Rock Cries Out* recording this fall.

BRENTWOOD, Tenn. — *Adventures in Agapeland* on tour with special guests Psalty and the Friendship Company is a live musical very similar to *Sesame Street Live* and *Disney on Parade*. Co-produced and direct-

AWARDS

AKRON, Ohio — The Broadcasters Hall of Fame celebrated its 10th Anniversary Ceremony of Enshrinement with an all-star production October 7. ABC Sports commentator Chris Schenkel, a 1991 inductee, delivered the keynote address at the banquet in the



Chris Schenkel and Lawrence Welk

People Like What They're Hearing...

"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

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(Circle 155 on the Reader Service Card)



Adventure in Agapeland touring cast

ed by Michael Meece, *Adventures in Agapeland* is scheduled to play in cities throughout North America beginning this fall and continuing through the fall of 1993.

NEWS BRIEFS

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. — Founded in 1989, Colorado-based Celebration 2000, has launched an effort to bring about the world's largest birthday party in honor of the 2000th anniversary of Jesus' birth. The group is preparing for this event through seminars, radio interviews, books, and research reports to let the public know "the reason for the season." According to executive director Jay Gary, 18 global bimillennial networks have plans-in-the-making for the celebration.

PEOPLE

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — A former vice president of Wal-Mart Stores, Inc., Leslie E. Dietzman, has accepted the position of vice president and group executive of The Zondervan Corporation. He will also be president of Family Bookstores, Zondervan's retail arm and the largest Christian bookstore chain in the world.

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Southern Baptist Convention executive committee president/treasurer Harold C. Bennett retired September 21. Dr. Morris H. Chapman was also inaugurated as the new executive committee president/treasurer.

LOS ANGELES — IDB Communications Group, Inc., has announced the promotions of both Bob Boxer and Jill

Jameson to director of audio sales in IDB's broadcast services unit. Boxer will be based in Los Angeles while Jameson will remain in New York. Also promoted was Howard Miller to vice president and general manager of IDB's broadcast unit.

ATLANTA — Dr. Ed Hindson was appointed vice president of *There's*

Hope and minister of Biblical studies at Rehoboth Baptist Church in Atlanta. Hindson, who most recently served as vice president of Missouri Baptist College in St. Louis, was formerly an assistant to the executive director of National Religious Broadcasters and senior editor of *Religious Broadcasting*.

BELLINGHAM, Wash. — Steven J. Hortegas has joined Baron & Company as an account manager, where he will be



Steven Hortegas

responsible for development, planning, and implementation of advertising and marketing campaigns and strategies for commercial and nonprofit clients.

PUBLISHING NEWS

ST. LOUIS — SonRise, a new software program from the computer products department of Concordia Publishing House, automatically brings a Scripture passage to the monitor every time the computer is turned on. The more than 100 texts from the New International Version are accented with colorful computer graphics.

EUGENE, Ore. — Harvest House Publishers has signed an agreement with the Lockman Foundation and Precept Ministries to publish *The International Inductive Study Bible* in the new American Standard Bible. The newly revised edition will be available January 1993.

SALES SPOT

Do Christians make more money than the average American adult? According to Soma Communications' *Tri-S Christian Media Report* † (1992), the answer is yes. Simmons Market Research Bureau †† (1991) reports 19.8 percent of all American adults have personal incomes over \$30,000 per year. In a nationwide survey of about 1500 Christian American adults conducted by Soma, it was revealed that at least 23.4 percent of all these radio listeners have incomes as high. Overall, Christian radio ranks 18 percent higher than the national average for reaching adults in Simmons' highest income bracket.

The Power of Christian Radio — Part Two

by Gary Crossland

Professionals

This is not only true of adults in general, but among those who are job-classified as professionals, managers, or administrators. It would not surprise anyone to learn Christian radio plays to a certain number of professionals, just like any other radio station. What will surprise most people is Christian radio stations play to a higher concentration of professionals than any other radio format (except for classical radio stations).

In the same report, Simmons revealed Christian radio listeners are 8 percent more likely to be professionals. This beats news/talk radio (5 percent above average) and all news formats (also 5 percent above average). In fact, among executives, Christian radio is more likely to reach professionals who read *Financial World*, *Business Week*, *Forbes, Inc.*, or *U.S. News*.

The report went on to say the type of young professionals and managers (ages 35-49) who tune in to Christian radio rank second only to all news station listeners for having incomes over \$30,000 per year. Among personal and professional service executives, Christian radio listeners are 10 percent more likely than the national norm to earn over \$30,000. Among managers

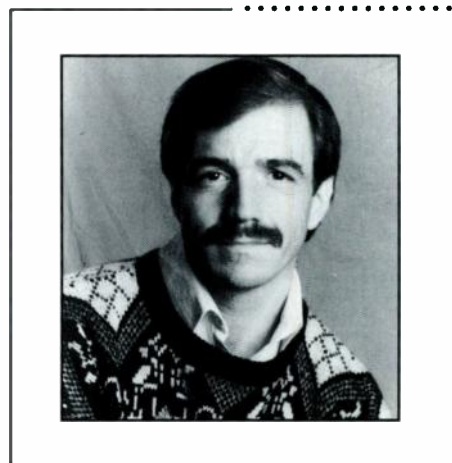
and administrators, these listeners are 9 percent more likely to earn this much. And among those who are employed by large corporations (1000+), Christian radio listeners are the *highest paid* among those who listen to all 14 radio formats.

Does all of this suggest Christian radio listeners are generally card-carrying members of America's social elite? While we are not ready to put them on a par with Ross Perot, we are sure the information published by both Simmons and Soma will dispel the myth that Christian radio listeners are not well represented among America's more comfortable citizens. This information is of importance to all advertisers, and in particular to those who are generally spending their money with one of the default business and mediums, such as news radio, newspapers, and city magazines. Dollar for dollar, it would certainly appear Christian radio stations are now poised to seriously compete for their fair share of executive-oriented advertising budgets.

Programming Types

What types of Christian programming attract the most prosperous listeners? First of all, block programming tends to draw listeners with higher incomes. However, any type of program, even news or sports, tends to attract listeners with higher incomes. This is why, for example, program-oriented Christian stations reach an audience where 28.5 percent of its members earn over \$30,000 in personal income. Non-commercial stations also tend to have higher-paid listeners.

When compared to Christian radio, some other Christian mediums excel. Among America's highest paid Christians are readers of *Moody Monthly* where 39.4 percent have incomes over \$30,000, while 30.2 percent of all Christian card deck readers have



incomes this high. In comparison, 29.1 percent of those who listen to *20: The Countdown Magazine* are in the highest-paid bracket.

Among Christian telephone directory users, 29.8 percent have incomes over \$30,000. Christian book purchasers at 28.2 percent also do well. As can be expected, 32 percent of all Christian men earn over \$30,000, where only 16 percent of all Christian women do as well (since a great majority of them do not work at all, but are still figured into the averages).

Credit Cards

But financial prosperity has several indicators. Not only do recent statistics reveal Christians have higher incomes, but also the credit to match. In fact, the type

Card	Percentage of Americans	Percentage of Christians
MasterCard	15.7	28.6
Visa	25.3	44.7
American Express Green	5.2	7.6
Discover	9.7	13.8
Gasoline card	15.8	22.0
J.C. Penney	16.4	19.9
Montgomery Ward	5.2	6.3
Sears	19.1	22.5
Other department store	16.5	21.4
Other clothing store	6.1	8.8

of people who tune to Christian stations are heavy users of both major credit cards and department store cards. According to Simmons, 15.7 percent of all Americans used a Mastercard in the last year.

When asked the same question, 28.6 percent of Soma's Christian respondents said they had also used a Mastercard within the last year. If this is true, it means Christian radio listeners are 82.2 percent more likely to use Mastercard than Americans in general. The same was true of Visa — 25.3 percent of Americans used a Visa card within the last 12 months and 44.7 percent of all Christian radio listeners did the same.

In fact, every time we brought up a different card in our survey, Christian radio listeners reported having used that particular card more than Americans at large. The entire list is listed in the chart: the second column shows the percentage of Americans who used a particular card within the past year and the third column shows the number of Christian radio listeners who used the same card in the same time period.

With the number of institutions eager to extend credit, it does not benefit the Christian radio audience to say they own credit cards. However, to say they *use* them is another matter entirely. The statistics listed in the chart clearly indicate more Christian radio listeners have used credit cards in the last year than Americans in general. While we do not know if this means they actually used the cards more times, or they actually spent more money, based on their income level, we expect both of these to be the case.

While all of this does not necessarily suggest Christian radio is the hotspot to target the socially elite, it does indicate these listeners are more likely than most people to afford what advertisers are selling. It is a given that Christian radio listeners are the most loyal among all radio audiences. As we have often reported, 64.5 percent of the average Christian radio station audience would rather buy from an advertiser who promotes his product or service on a Christian radio station (Soma, 1991).

In fact, the only radio format which has a more loyal audience is Spanish radio (for reasons which are all too obvious). It is universally accepted that Christian radio has the highest concentration of women listeners. As a format, it plays to the most exclusive audience in radio. So in addition to these, advertisers can now be sure Christian

radio listeners not only take the credit, but they have the cash to back it up.

†The Tri-S Christian Media Report is compiled annually by Soma Communications Inc. via 113 field representatives who administer a written survey to approximately 2500 people nationwide (105 markets). The margin of error of the survey is 4 percent.

††Information for the Simmons Market Research Bureau is compiled via field representatives who

administer both an interview and a written survey to approximately 20,000 people nationwide. The margin of error for the surveys is about 4 percent. Simmons is the qualitative source for many agencies who either buy or sell secular media, including print and broadcast. The published numbers relating to Christian radio constitute only approximately 0.001 percent of Simmons' work.

Gary Crossland is president of Soma Communications Inc. of Dallas, publisher of Tri-S sales and research books.



An industry without research?

The average corporation in America spends about 7% of their annual budget on research. After all, if you don't know your market, you're *dead*. That's it. Christian media is an industry like any other. Thousands of organizations sell it. Even more use it. What is amazing is that there are so many *Christian* companies who try to navigate in and out of the icebergs *without any research at all*.

Well Soma has taken away both the guesswork and the high cost of research. Every month we publish thousands of facts about Christians' media habits, demographics, lifestyles and purchasing habits.

It's the only standard statistical source tool for Christian media buyers and sellers all across America. What's more, if our publications don't pay for themselves, *they're free*.

We study *all* Christian media groups (not just radio). Every month we publish data which is indispensable in *every branch of Christian advertising*.

In these tough times, you need to do better than just take a stab in the dark. You need tools. You need to give yourself a fighting chance. And hopefully, your company will help shape history instead of being part of it.

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Christian Best Sellers!

CLOTHBOUND

- * (1) 1. *The Coming Economic Earthquake*, by Larry Burkett, Moody Press
2. *Laugh Again*, by Charles Swindoll, Word Publishing
3. *The Wonderful Spirit-Filled Life*, by Charles Stanley, Thomas Nelson Publishers
- (13) 4. *And the Angels Were Silent*, by Max Lucado, Multnomah Press
- (2) 5. *The Anointing*, by Benny Hinn, Thomas Nelson Publishers
- (3) 6. *Investing for the Future*, by Larry Burkett, Victor Books
- (5) 7. *Love for a Lifetime*, by James Dobson, Multnomah Press
- (4) 8. *In the Eye of the Storm*, by Max Lucado, Word Publishing
- (6) 9. *My Utmost for His Highest*, by Oswald Chambers, Barbour & Co., Discovery House Publishers (Thomas Nelson)
- (12) 10. *His Needs, Her Needs*, by Willard Harley, Fleming H. Revell Co. (Baker Book House)
11. *The Hidden Value of a Man*, by Gary Smalley and John Trent, Focus on The Family Publishing (Word)
- (9) 12. *Quiet Times for Couples*, by H. Norman Wright, Harvest House Publishers
13. *Joshua in the Holy Land*, by Joseph Girzone, Macmillan Publishing Co.
- (10) 14. *Charismatic Chaos*, by John Mac Arthur Jr., Zondervan Publishing House
15. *My Utmost for His Highest*, Updated Edition, by Oswald Chambers and edited by James Reimann, Discovery House Publishers. (Thomas Nelson)
- (11) 16. *Fit to Be Tied*, by Bill and Lynne Hybels, Zondervan Publishing House
- (7) 17. *The Power of Vision*, by George Barna, Regal Books (Gospel Light Publications)
- (14) 18. *Think Big*, by Ben Carson with Cecil Murphey, Zondervan Publishing House
- (8) 19. *Miracle Man*, by Nolan Ryan with Jerry Jenkins, Word Publishing
- (18) 20. *The New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, by James Strong, Thomas Nelson Publishers

PAPERBACK

- * (1) 1. *Prophet*, by Frank Peretti, Crossway Books
2. *The Measure of a Heart*, by Janette Oke, Bethany House Publishers
- (4) 3. *Stick a Geranium in Your Hat and Be Happy!*, by Barbara Johnson, Word Publishing
- (2) 4. *In My Father's House*, by Bodie Thoene, Bethany House Publishers
- (6) 5. *Splashes of Joy in the Cesspools of Life*, by Barbara Johnson, Word Publishing
- (3) 6. *This Present Darkness*, by Frank Peretti, Crossway Books
7. *The Final Adversary*, by Gilbert Morris, Bethany House Publishers
- (8) 8. *Good Morning, Holy Spirit*, by Benny Hinn, Thomas Nelson Publishers, Walker & Co.
- (7) 9. *Piercing the Darkness*, by Frank Peretti, Crossway Books
- (5) 10. *They Called Her Mrs. Doc*, by Janette Oke, Bethany House Publishers
- (10) 11. *Sea to Shining Sea*, by Michael Phillips and Judith Pella, Bethany House Publishers
- (9) 12. *The Illuminati*, by Larry Burkett, Thomas Nelson Publishers
- (13) 13. *The Bondage Breaker*, by Neil Anderson, Harvest House Publishers
- (20) 14. *Becoming a Woman of Excellence*, by Cynthia Heald, NavPress
- (11) 15. *Once-a-Month Cooking*, by Mimi Wilson and Mary Beth Lagerborg, Focus on the Family Publishing (Word)
- (12) 16. *God Uses Cracked Pots*, by Patsy Clairmont, Focus on the Family Publishing (Word)
- (17) 17. *My Utmost for His Highest*, by Oswald Chambers, Barbour & Co., Fleming H. Revell Co. (Baker Book House)
- (14) 18. *The Blessing*, by Gary Smalley and John Trent, Pocket Books
19. *Love Is a Choice*, by Robert Hemfelt, Frank Minirth, and Paul Meier, Thomas Nelson Publishers
- (19) 20. *Mere Christianity*, by C.S. Lewis, Macmillan Publishing Co., Walker & Co.

*Last month's position +Includes sales of board sets
 This listing based on actual sales in Christian retail stores in the United States and Canada during August. All rights reserved. Copyright 1992 CBA Service Corp. and Spring Arbor Distributors. Distributed by Evangelical Christian Publishers Association.

THE BOOK SHELF

Criteria for Selecting Bible Commentary

Compiled by Harry Conay

Recently I was invited to participate in a two-day Christian education convention sponsored by the Northern New Jersey Sunday School Association. Since my workshop included remarks about one-volume commentaries on the entire Bible, permit me to share some insights.

While newer single-volume commentaries on the entire Bible offer the obvious benefits of recent scholarship, one should not ignore the time-proven *Matthew Henry's Commentary* (early 1700s) and Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown's *Commentary on the Whole Bible* (1860s).

Sadly, most single-volume editions of these insightful classics are considerably abridged, leaving inquiring minds to wonder what potential useful data has been sacrificed. The only (virtually) unabridged, single-volume edition of Matthew Henry (Hendrickson, 1991) is a hefty, oversized volume with incredibly miniscule print that is as difficult to lift as it is to read.

General Guidelines

This demonstrates the importance of a commentary's size, shape, and weight for comfortable use. Its format should allow convenient access to its content. Notably, its typography should be readable and varied enough to enable specific areas of concern to be quickly pinpointed within the body of the text (as superbly done in *The International Bible Commentary* ed. by F.F. Bruce. Zondervan, rev. 1986, but not in the otherwise excellent *Evangelical Commentary on the Bible*, ed. by Walter A. Elwell. Baker, 1989).

As a Bible study tool (and never a substitute for Scripture itself), a commentary should not be so succinct as to be cryptic (a tendency of some smaller ones), nor belabor the obvious (as Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown have been accused), nor interject too much supplementary material — at the expense of the commentary — to fulfill a secondary agenda (as does Lawrence O. Richards in his *Teacher's Commentary*, Victor, 1977),

nor be as narrative as a survey (as in William Neil's paperback *Pocket Bible Commentary*, Harper, orig. 1975).

Because a commentary is usually the collective effort of a team of scholars, a knowledgeable reader can discern much by examining contributors' names and credentials, and bibliographic references. On this basis one may preliminarily distinguish between a conservative commentary (such as *The Interpreter's One-Volume Commentary on the Bible*, ed. by Charles M. Laymon Abingdon, 1972). For this same reason, one should anticipate some inconsistencies in style, in doctrine, and overall quality even within a seemingly conservative commentary.

Theological Stances

Regarding dogmatic theology, a commentary is to be criticized for being silent, wishy-washy, or evasive on difficult Scripture, and, conversely, for narrowly assuming its doctrinal interpretations of problematic areas to be exclusively correct. However, it should be faulted for espousing a particular biblically justifiable position (i.e.: Traditional Reformed/Calvinist, Arminian, Dispensationalist) if it fairly and consistently presents equally justifiable, contrasting viewpoints (as per Daniel 9:24-27 in the informative *New Bible Commentary*, 3rd ed. — also published as *Eerdman's Bible Commentary* — ed. by D. Guthrie and J.A. Motyer Eerdman's, 1970).

All else being equal, it is convenient to consult a commentary based on that particular Bible translation most frequently used by the reader, but this factor alone is less important than the other criteria noted because most serious students of the Bible do not rely merely on one translation of Scripture to the exclusion of all others.

Lastly, never purchase a one-volume commentary on the entire Bible based solely on a blurb in a catalog or comments in a review (even mine). Personally examine the titles mentioned above (and others such as the user-friendly *Wycliffe Bible Commentary*, ed. by Charles Pfeiffer and E.F. Harrison Moody, 1962), to determine which is best for your needs.

Harry Conay is an educational media specialist who lives in West Orange, N.J.

Interview Insights

by Jonathan Petersen

This year marks the tenth anniversary of *The Bookshelf*, a book review program aired on WBRG-AM/Lynchburg, Va., whose format is commercial adult-contemporary Christian music. *The Bookshelf* comes in two versions: a 30-second Monday through Friday spot, which reviews one book per day, and a pair of two-and-a-half minute spots airing Saturday and Sunday, reviewing two or three books each.

"It all began ten years ago when a record promoter from The Benson Music Group came to the station," producer-editor John Abbott recalls. "He asked if I currently had a book review program on the air. I said I didn't, but I would if Zondervan would send books for me to review." From there, Abbott contacted other publishers to receive review copies and now he reviews books from both Christian and secular publishers.

Abbott says station surveys have shown *The Bookshelf* is the number one locally produced feature among listeners. "We try to make each spot informative and interesting, upbeat. We use a music theme under the review to keep it moving and help identify the program," Abbott adds.

Timeliness is important. "Whenever possible, I try to schedule reviews of books that are currently in the news or on another program on the station, such as [Dr.] James Dobson's book *Dare to Discipline*, when it is being discussed on *Focus on the Family*," Abbott says.

He recommends having fun with the reviews by going after a wide variety of topics and book styles. And do not only give good reviews. "I review every book sent to me. I don't like every one, so consequently, some are not recommended," Abbot explains. He sees this as being honest with his listeners, refusing to praise every book published.

The criteria he uses to judge the good from the bad books is lead by the belief that, "if a book comes from a Christian publisher, it [had] better con-

form to traditional orthodox Christian doctrine." If it is a secular publication, he decides whether its perspective is morally sound. Once its biblical world view is established, Abbott ascertains to whom the author is writing and whether it hits the target in readability.

"I expect books for the theologians and professionals to be more academic than those targeted to the lay reader," Abbott says. "It isn't so much a matter of whether I personally like every book, but whether it effectively communicates to its intended audience." To that end, for example, he asks his teenager to read youth books and his wife to read those directed at women. When it comes to fiction, he evaluates each to see if it is fun, a good story, entertaining, believable, can hold the reader's attention, and has a well-crafted plot and subplots.

The actual production of a Monday-Sunday set of *The Bookshelf* programs takes about one afternoon. All scripts are written on Abbott's IBM-compatible computer. He takes his production very seriously. "I see my scripts as a part of my servanthood Christianity and stewardship obligation to the publishers," Abbott notes. "Publishers entrust me with their books, and in return, expect me to tell what I think of them."

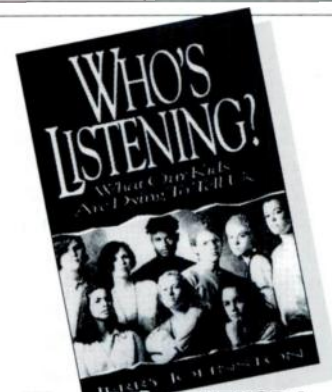
Abbott is meticulous about sending to each publisher copies of his scripts on station letterhead, what he thinks of the books, and when the reviews aired. Abbott has also devised a tracking method on his computer to record the date he receives each book: title, date received, and when he sent the script to the publisher. He also keeps a program list by day and what aired each day.

Write to me with how your station produces book reviews and author interviews. My address is Media Relations, Zondervan Publishing House, 5300 Patterson Avenue SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49530.

Jonathan Petersen is director of media relations for Zondervan Publishing House and executive producer of the Zondervan Radio Network, Grand Rapids, Mich. He is the former religion news editor of UPI Radio Network.

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AUTHOR AVAILABILITY: Overland Park, Kan., and by telephone.

CONTACT: Media Relations, 800-727-8004.

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MUSIC MATTERS

Founders and New Faces

by Darlene Peterson

NO COMPROMISE Remembering the Music of Keith Green

Executive producer: Peter York
The Sparrow Corporation

Although Keith Green's earthly life ended ten years ago in a plane crash, his music and the testimony of his life have lived on to inspire countless Christians, including the contemporary Christian musicians featured on this new recording. Susan Ashton, Brown Bannister, Margaret Becker, Michael Card, Steven Curtis Chapman, Glad, Steve Green, Rich Mullins, Charlie Peacock, Petra, Melody Green Sievright, Russ Taff, and Kelly Willard each sing a Keith Green song in this beautiful and moving tribute to his life and ministry.

Each artist's reflections on Green's music are included with the written lyrics, adding a personal touch to the collection. And the recording itself provides a double joy: some of the best of Green's music performed by some of the best contemporary Christian artists. Who could ask for more? I enjoyed hearing each artist's interpretation of a song. Included with the recording is a booklet describing the ongoing work of the Last Days Ministries, which Keith and Melody Green started in 1977.

This forward-looking organization publishes a magazine and tracts, does video production, has a music ministry, and has a school of desktop communication, illustration, video and print production, and worship and discipleship training. All this shows how God can use someone who is totally committed to serving Him and sharing the gospel.

REZ — TWENTY YEARS I & II

Grrr Records/Ocean Records

Another founder of contemporary Christian music was the Resurrection Band, now known as REZ. Like Keith Green, REZ's members do more than make music — they have a vital ministry



REZ—Twenty Years

in inner-city Chicago. REZ is part of a Christian community located among the poor and needy and serves them by providing meals, shelter for the homeless, drug rehabilitation, tutoring in job skills, running a crisis pregnancy center, ministering to AIDS patients, and many other services as well as publishing *Cornerstone* magazine. I mention all this because to me their lives are as inspiring as their music — they truly practice what they sing.

This two-volume, live recording presents songs spanning the 20-year history of this pioneer band. When REZ started, most Christian artists were performing in a more mellow pop style. REZ introduced its own style of harder, blues-oriented rock. REZ's strength has always been its live delivery, and that comes through on this high-energy release. If you're not familiar with REZ, this set is an excellent introduction. If you're already a fan, this is a release you won't want to miss.

CHIZ RIDER

Produced by Brian Tankersly
Myrrh

Not to make the members of REZ feel old, but this new artist hadn't even been born when they started their ministry. However, at 18, Chiz Rider has already been performing in public for ten years. At age four, he discovered his father's high school trumpet and at age eight, he gave his first public concert.

Although young, Rider is an accomplished trumpet player and on this, his

debut recording, he is supported by some excellent instrumental talent, including jazz guitarist Larry Carlton in one song. Rider's style embodies a jazz-pop sound that has been influenced by such versatile jazz musicians as Wynton Marsalis, Maynard Ferguson, Jon Faddis, and Brandford Marsalis. Energy, versatility, and excellent musicianship make this recording an upbeat treat.

PRAY FOR RAIN

Produced by Jimmie Lee Sloas
and Bobby Blazier
Executive Producer: Brown Bannister
Vireo Records

"When a mighty storm comes through and washes everything away, a day or two later things look different. All the clutter by the curb has been washed away. Things look greener; things are brighter," says Pray for Rain's lead vocal-

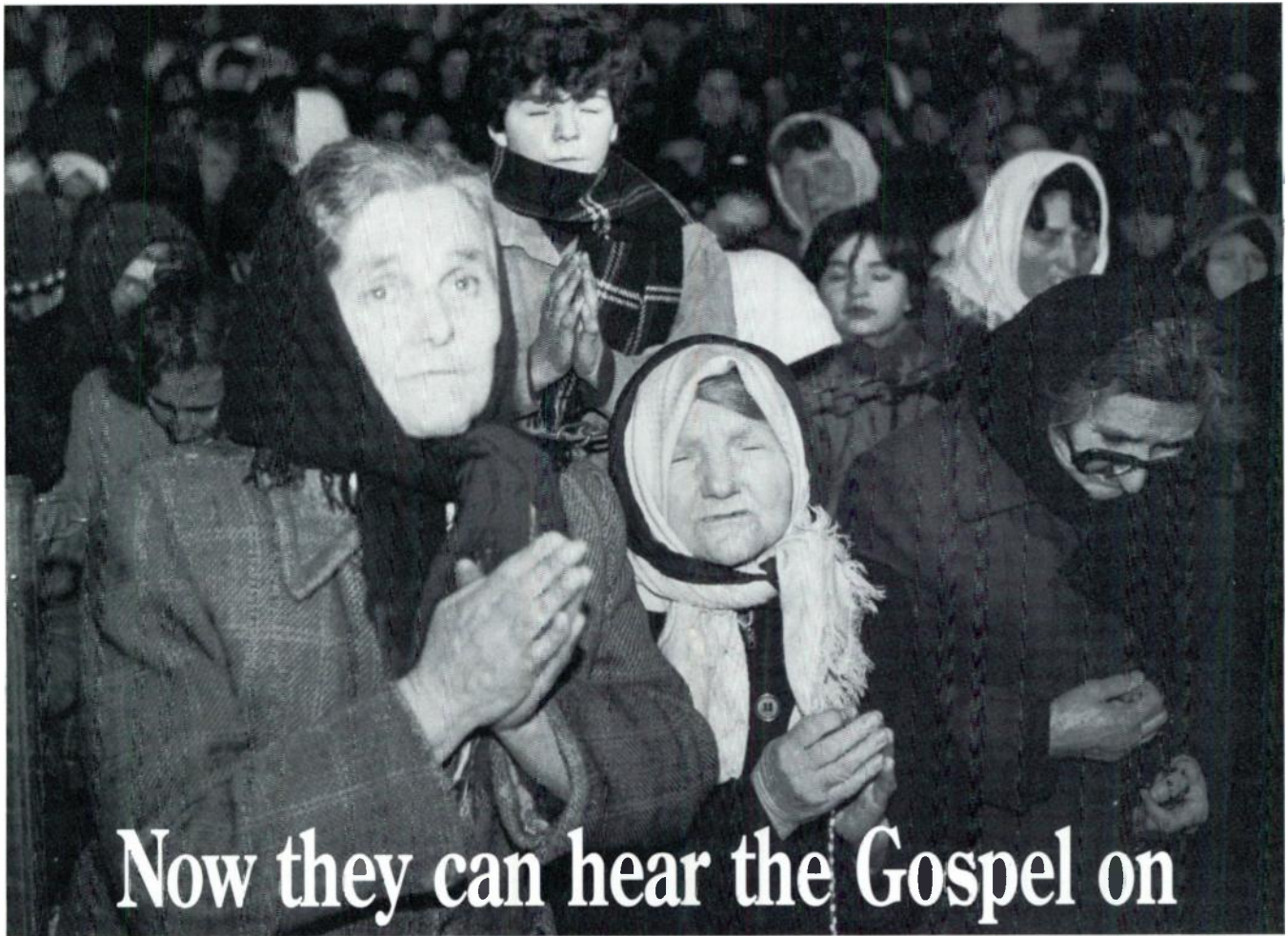


Pray For Rain

ist/guitarist Joel Hanson when explaining the band's name. True to its name, this new group brings new life to the traditional format of guitar, bass, and drums.

Blending styles ranging from '60s pop to alternative music, Hanson, bassist Patrick Andrew, and drummer Mark Nash create energetic pop/rock with a flair for memorable melodies and classic harmonies. The lyrics have depth and creativity while, at the same time, the personal tone of a friend sharing his innermost thoughts and discoveries. In short, this recording communicates basic biblical truths in a fun and friendly way.

Darlene A. Peterson is the music reviewer for *Religious Broadcasting* magazine.



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PROGRAMMING ISSUES

Do you have a favorite magazine? I do. The day *Popular Science* arrives at my home is circled on the calendar. I enjoy it not because I understand all that "What's New" techno-gadgetry, but because I like reading of the future and how electronic inventions will change my life. *The Wall Street Journal* recently reported 16 percent of Americans are *technology-driven* consumers like me.

It would seem that figure is much higher in the broadcast community. The National Association of Broadcasters' (NAB) convention floor testifies to the interest of the industry in the latest products. We'd all like to find that "magic box" which works faster, better, longer, cheaper, and is more durable than the one we now have.

Advancements Sometimes Disadvantage For Stations

by Jim Sanders

As they relate to Christian broadcasting, are these changes good? Perhaps in a way, they have worked to our disadvantage.

Among many strides in technology for broadcasters, science has brought us the age of satellite program delivery. Syndicated programs increasingly are distributed via satellite. Local stations become "super-stations" with minimal risk and expense. In the days ahead, satellite radio, terrestrial digital audio broadcasting, video dialtone, and cable radio will only muddy the waters as the number of audio frequencies available to consumers increases dramatically.

Technology has provided the footing to make entrances to new markets heretofore impossible to reach because of financial constraints. This has resulted in a rapid expansion and proliferation of Christian radio. But again, the question remains, "Is that good?"

Growing up, our summer family

vacation always included a trek up the Pacific coast. Often we wandered through one-stoplight towns featuring some greasy spoon burger stand. To my constant disappointment, there were no recognizable fast-food restaurants. Where was McDonald's?

What I didn't understand then was Elementary Marketing 101 — you can't survive financially where there is no base to support your product. McDonald's can't make a living in Four Corners, Idaho, population 16.

Frankly, neither can Christian radio stations. In the decade of the 90s, our industry has been marked by:

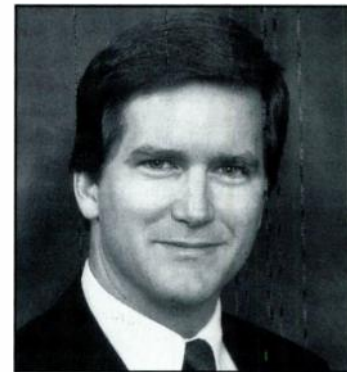
- Broadcast facilities losing money;
- General devaluation of radio property;
- Depressed advertising revenue;
- Increased operating expenses;
- Rising legal and employment complications;
- And drop-offs in listenership and response.

Ironically, while it's never been more difficult to make a go of operating a local station, there has been a rapid growth of Christian radio stations in the United States. Satellite-delivered programming and technological advances as well as low-budget earth stations and LMAs have been key factors.

Naturally, to ensure listenership, most new stations are turning to well-known products which happen to be already available in a given market. Even though new entries claim to have as a format objective "something different," they continue to ask for the same national ministries heard on other radio stations already in the market, use the same news services, and play similar music. No doubt there are a few "under-served" areas, but they are virtually non-existent in the United States anymore.

The bottom line is perhaps there are too many Christian-formatted radio outlets in this country and technology has only made matters worse. New stations in a market *do* give program producers more choices for placement. But is it possible for an area of 500,000 listeners to support four or five religious-formatted facilities?

It may very well be the healthiest thing for the Christian radio industry to reduce the number of religious-formatted facilities in a number of over-served mar-



kets. Those who create the broadcast products are many times guilty of making matters worse by likewise expanding to new markets without discretion.

It is clear God does prompt us to expand into other areas. There is room for a variety of Christian formatted stations in most markets.

Both broadcast producers and station operators who are considering new markets would be well to ask these questions:

1) *Is the Lord the one who is directing my expansion, or is this a personal motivation?*

2) *Have I sought the confidential counsel of those who have a broader perspective of the market I'm targeting?*

3) *Is expansion really in the best interest of the community or to my favor?*

4) *Can the new market support another broadcast facility without severely handcuffing the Christian broadcasters who are already there?*

Technological advances will only provide additional and more cost effective means by which to deliver broadcast products to consumers. Three major television networks have seen their audience dwindle as the number of cable outlets, independent television stations, and LPTV facilities have grown. No doubt the same will be true for the radio industry.

In the days ahead, our charge is to wisely utilize the technological tools, given to us by God, with insightful marketing stewardship. Perhaps for Christian radio today, it is true more than ever — less is more.

Jim Sanders is senior producer and director of satellite services for Ambassador Advertising Agency in Fullerton, Calif.

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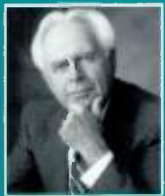
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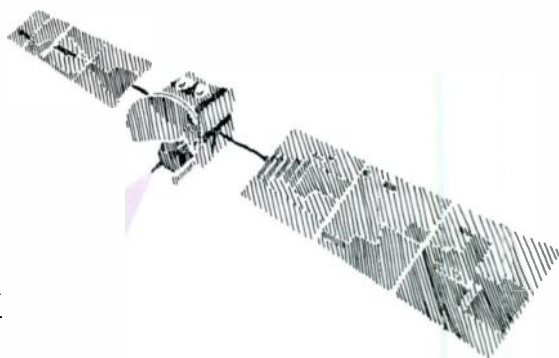
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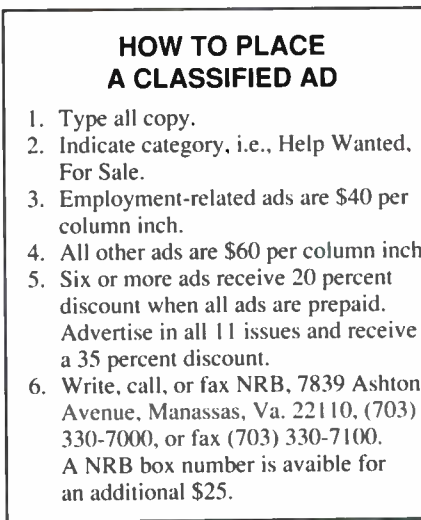
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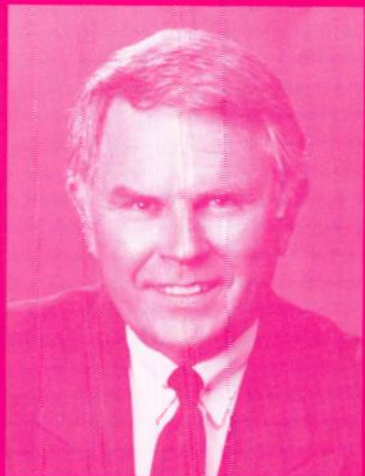
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Magazine Week Seminars 92; The San
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Image World Atlanta (Video Expo and
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Chinese Mission 92, "Mobilizing the
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*51st National Association of Evangelicals
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Orlando, Fla. Information: Darrell Fulton
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March 17-19, 1993

Image World-The Government Show
(Video Expo & The Cammp Show);
Sheraton Washington, Washington, D.C.
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March 28-April 1, 1993

Gospel Music Association Week;
Nashville Convention Center, Nashville,
Tenn. Information: Wendy Holt, (615)
242-0303.

April 19-22, 1993

*23rd General Assembly of The
International Association of Broadcasting
and National Association of Broadcasters
Convention;* Las Vegas. Information:
Walt Wurfel, (202) 429-5350.

May 6-8, 1993

World By 2000 (international radio evan-
gelism seminar); Atlanta. Information:
John Yakligian, (310) 947-4651.

May 10-12, 1993

*Evangelical Press Association Con-
vention;* St. Paul, Minn. Information:
(804) 973-5941.

June 15-17, 1993

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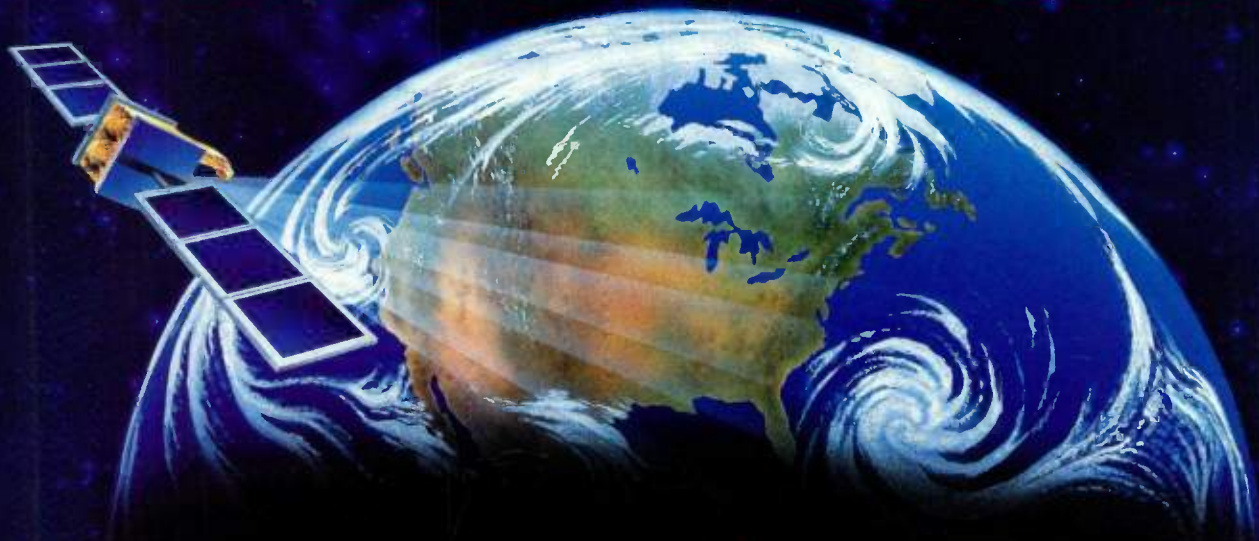
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