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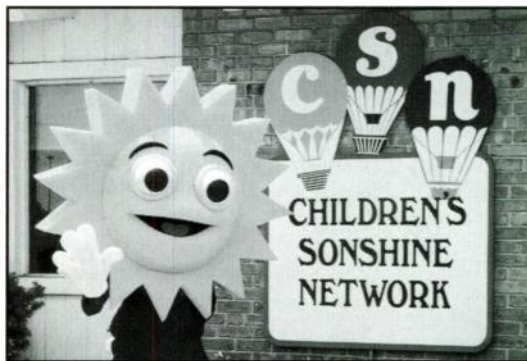
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Forecasting a Sunny Future

by Michelle J. Constant

The future looks bright for Children's Sunshine Network, a full-time Christian radio ministry just for kids.

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Progress Report for Children's Programming

by Karen M. Hawkins

How is children's programming progressing? What makes it good? Not so good? How can it be better? Find out in this interview with Rob Loos and Bill Myers, co-laborers on McGee & Me!

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Constructing a Successful Children's Series

by C.C. Risenhoover

Building on a solid foundation of content is one of the many specifications of this blueprint for children's television.

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Cheering for Children's Bible Hour

by Uncle Charlie Vander Meer

What makes the longest continuous running children's program on radio today something to shout about? Ask Uncle Charlie.

Challenging Children: Programming That Plays

This month's issue of Religious Broadcasting is dedicated to the most impressionable audience: children. Though ministry to children is often overlooked and underfunded, perhaps the greatest mistake big people make is simply to occupy children's time with fluffy entertainment. Today's children are tomorrow's responsible — or irresponsible — adults. Find out how to increase the former and decrease the latter with quality children's religious programming.



Illustration by Stephanie McLachlin
Text by Bethany DeCeglie

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RELIGIOUS BROADCASTING

The Official Publication of
National Religious Broadcasters

May 1996, Vol. 28, No. 5

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Feature articles should be sent to the attention of Christine L. Pryor while **News** items should be addressed to Sarah E. Smith.

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.

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.

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



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 22110-2883. Canadian orders must add \$6 annually; all other foreign orders must add \$24 per year. Second class postage paid at Manassas, Va., and additional offices. Printed in the U.S.A. Copyright 1996 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 22110-2883. *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.

As Long As You Can

While attending the recent 54th Annual National Association of Evangelicals Convention in Minneapolis, I heard John Corts, president and CEO of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, deliver a challenging message. His illustration, "Stay in the field as long as you can," so impressed me with its power and simplicity. Here it is:



Bob Straton is chairman of National Religious Broadcasters and senior vice president of Walter Bennett Communications in Fort Washington, Pa.

I grew up the eldest boy in a family of six boys and one girl in a little town in Ohio. My father would take us "city slickers" to visit our grandfather on his farm in northern Indiana.

On these visits, our cousins who lived nearby would always have a lot of fun with the city kids who were given chores. Because I was the eldest, Granddad gave me certain responsibilities. One of our jobs was to pick up hay bales and we would go out all afternoon to get them. To those of us from the city, it was fun. To my cousins, it was sheer drudgery.

As we went out to work, Granddad would always say, "Boys, when you're through, we'll go down to Thornhope for a Pepsi." Pepsi came in big bottles then — bigger than the others. After the Pepsi, we went home for ice cream, the homemade kind.

One day, Granddad put me in charge. I wasn't more than ten years old and not very big. He said, "John, you're in charge." Then he gave everyone else a lecture: "Nobody is going to Thornhope for Pepsi and nobody gets ice cream unless you do what the boss says." For the first time, I was boss and that was a big responsibility.

I remember how seriously he gave me instructions. "Son, you stay out there and I want you to [finish the job] before you come back. Now, it could rain, but I think you'll have time to get done. I want you to stay out there as long as you can."

We went to work and we no sooner got to the field than one of my little brothers bumped his head on the wagon. All the boys said, "Let's go back, somebody got hurt." We were out there working a little while and someone said, "It's awfully hot out here; it would be cool back there just sitting on the hay in the barn." We also had plenty of disagreements about where to put the bales, who was carrying the most, and who was next in line to work.

It wasn't a lot of fun being the boss. I was constantly asked, "Can we go back now?" But I remembered what Granddad said, "Stay in the field as long as you can."

Toward the middle of the afternoon, the clouds started to come in. You say to yourself, "Well, if we see some lightening, we better get out of here." Then a little while later, there is the rumble of thunder in the distance. Someone in the wagon said, "Come on, John. Let's go now. It's time to go back!" I reminded them how nice Pepsi and ice cream was and that we should stay as long as we could to finish the job, like Granddad said.

What we need to remember today is that our God has given us a mission. He has not changed what He had to say to us and He has called us to the harvest.

It is interesting to look at all of the figures that Jesus uses in speaking about his work and his relationships: the shepherd to the sheep, the reapers to the harvest. The one simple thought I would like to leave is just what my Granddad told me — stay in the field as long as you can. The thunder may roar, the lightning may flash, the heat is on, someone may get hurt in the process, it isn't our normal stretch, we have to move out to new avenues and new possibilities. But stay in the field as long as you can because one day, we too will be able to come home, for a loving Father. "I will reward those that stay in the field as long as they can."

Sometimes life's challenges may discourage us, but we can't give in. We must not become complacent in our responsibilities. It is the person who perseveres and continues to stay on the front line who will be rewarded. Stay in the field as long as you can — the harvest will be worth the effort.

Bob Straton

Do We Love the Children?

My parents arrived from Sweden when they were teenagers, coming to the land of opportunity when things were dark in Europe to find new potential and hope. Rockford, Ill., was their destination — a place where many other Swedes had settled on the east side of town.

When I was a young boy we lived on 14th street and I attended John Nelson Grade School. Because my family had never been confronted with the Gospel of Christ, I did not attend Sunday School.

Bradley Hoffman was my playmate from across the street. I was five and Brad was four. We had become good friends and because there was a street separating our homes, our mothers had to watch for cars and walk us across. Bradley's mom one day asked my mom if I could go to Sunday School with them. That invitation began the adventure of faith in my young life as they took me with them each Sunday for quite a long time.

I loved Sunday School. My mother told me years later that when Monday morning came, I would ask if it was Sunday yet. Yes, I enjoyed the flannelgraph stories, the treats, and the songs we sang, but most of all, I knew that Doris Johnson, Mrs. Frank Peterson, and "Aunt" Olga — my early teachers — loved me and wanted me there each week.

Do we have that same burden to reach children for Christ? Do we reach out to neighbors, friends, and associates to try to bring their children under the Gospel message? I'm sure glad the Hoffmans and my teachers cared so much. Later, my sister, mother, and father came to church and God began moving in them.

I had developed a strong desire to get into radio broadcasting. I visited stations in my hometown and also appeared on the children's broadcast over WROK-AM, a program sponsored by our church.

By the time I was in high school, I was a confirmed Christian and very active in Youth for Christ (YFC). I also worked at WBEL-AM/Beloit, Wis. In 1954 I won the national song leading contest of YFC and was offered a scholarship to Northwestern Schools in Minneapolis (now Northwestern College). I was thrilled to not only go to school, but to work at KTIS-AM-FM/Minneapolis, the Christian station owned by the college.

As I look back at life, and especially those childhood days, I see the hand of God's direction in it all. I have been privileged to serve in Christian mass media for over 40 years, and it all started with a simple heartfelt invitation from a caring neighbor.

We have the potential with our stations and programs to help children and youth come to Christ and grow into useful servants of Christ. Let's spend some time, effort, and money to do just that. I'm sure God will be pleased and we will have great pleasure in the results. I remember so well the outreach of Aunt Theresa of WMBI-AM-FM/Chicago, Aunt Bertha of *Children's Bible Hour*, and now, programs like *Adventures in Odyssey* from Focus on the Family. May God lay that same burden on others of you to serve the new generation.



Dr. E. Brandt Gustavson is president of National Religious Broadcasters and publisher of Religious Broadcasting.

Dr. E. Brandt Gustavson

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CSN is a 24-hour satellite radio network that targets children ages 3-12, and provides a mix of stories, music and live programming to encourage and entertain our young audience. Popular children's programs include "Adventures in Odyssey," "Funlight Radio," "Kids Corner," "We Kids," and the "Sonshine Safari."

Both the daily "Sonshine Safari" and "Saturday Morning Sonshine" offer music, news, and devotional features. In addition, kids can participate in giveaways and special call-ins through a toll-free 800 number.

CSN is also pioneering the development of live, interactive programming for kids on the Internet.

You can visit us on the World Wide Web at:
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For more information on how your station can become a part of the Children's Sonshine Network, call 1.800.530.9779, or fax 1.616.942.7078.



THE
CHILDREN'S
SONSHINE NETWORK

A MINISTRY OF CORNERSTONE COLLEGE



The Children's Sunshine Network features bright



Forecasting

by Michelle J. Constant

KIDS ARE DRAWN TO technology like magnets to refrigerators. From the comic book of the 1940s to the Internet of the '90s, parents have been concerned with their children's media choices.

Though media change, the same questions remain: What messages are children hearing? How will these messages impact them? What choices are available?

Religious broadcasters have traditionally offered few alternatives for the entire family. Today, Cornerstone College of Grand Rapids, Mich., is meeting this challenge by providing a way for parents and broadcasters to fill the programming void with the Children's Sunshine Network (CSN) — full-time Christian radio just for kids.

Associates in Adventure

For the past eight years, the staff of CSN has diligently put together a careful blend of music and programs with a weekly variety that captures young listeners.

Dodd Morris has served as network program director since the

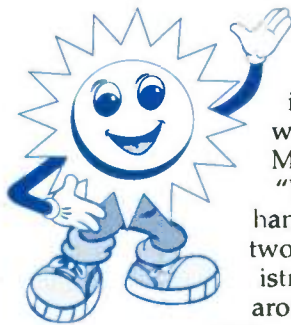
ministry's inception. It is his belief that the success of the endeavor is due largely to the way God has blessed the camaraderie of children's program producers.

In defining the network's mission, Morris explains, "We've joined hands with over two dozen ministries from around the United

States and Canada to do one thing: to point young listeners to Christ. It's that simple!"

According to Morris, CSN's program producers operate within a framework of cooperation instead of competition. "Each broadcaster speaks differently to the kids. If we all said the same things in the same way, there would be no need for what we're doing. The Holy Spirit works with each production crew weeks in advance to touch listeners in unique and creative ways."

This outlook frees Morris and



his staff from feeling they need to duplicate the efforts of others, allowing them to fill perceived gaps and focus on different aspects of their special outreach.

Throughout the day, CSN is able to target kids ranging in age from 2 to 12. Broad appeal is

Continued on page 12

programming for children's religious broadcasting.

a Sunny Future



Above. The staff of CSN carefully blends music and programs in a weekly variety that captures young listeners. (Left to right) Cal Olson, Tami Morris, Suzie Cross, and Dodd Morris.

Left. "Sunny," mascot for Children's Sonshine Network, waves a friendly hello outside the radio network's headquarters in Grand Rapids, Mich.

FORECASTING A . . .

Continued from page 13

Each program is built on an educational theme and hosted long-distance by Ken "Mr. Nick" Boone of *We Kids* using ISDN equipment.

Billed as the best CSN has to offer, SMS is also available to main-channel AM and FM stations seeking to incorporate a block of children's programs into their own formats.

Netting a New Audience

Today's technology has religious broadcasters scrambling to discover where they fit in. Alongside traditional broadcasting, CSN utilizes the Internet as an effective ministry tool.

CSN general manager Lee Geysbeek sees this new medium as another opportunity to reach kids for Christ. "We know that narrow-casting will be essential on the Internet. It's our goal to position ourselves now to be accessible today and for the next generation of communication systems."

Bold colors and big buttons adorn CSN's home page on the

World Wide Web. Located at the Gospel Communications Network, CSN's site provides affiliate and programming information, as well as a "Just for Kids" page.

With the weekly "Nutty News" and "Sunny's Favorite Sites," families can visit often to find new things to see, to do, and to learn.

Since imaginative stories naturally appeal to the child in everyone, adventure drama programs are a large part of CSN's daily mix.

Internet users with a sound card can hear a 60-second program sampler or the audio version of "Nutty News."

Host Cross believes this look at the lighter side of the news is serious business — sort of.

"OK, so there's no great truth to impart here," Cross smiles. "The

whole point is to tickle your funny bone!"

With bright music and zany sound effects, these stories highlight unusual happenings around the globe. From tales of giant tacos to farm animal funnies, "Nutty News" keeps kids — and adults — coming back for more.

And though it may be a bit . . . well, nutty . . . the offerings retain the high quality that is CSN's standard. "In a real way, what we place on our web page is a testimony to the world," states Geysbeek. "It's got to be quality."

CSN's website is proving popular. In the first two months, files accessed number more than 35,000 — by surfers from 23 countries. Future offerings may include programs to download, interactive Bible quizzes or games to play, and background music for listening to or for playing while surfing the 'Net.

Forecast: Sunny

While the Internet will likely change the future of broadcasting, CSN's main focus remains the

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Saturday Morning Sunshine

There is still some kid in each of us. Why else are we tempted to sneak extra cookies, shoot rubber bands, and ask curious questions?

But that's not bad. Jesus said we're to be converted and "become like children" before we can enter the kingdom of heaven. Though the Lord was talking more about having a receptive, believing heart than making mischief, kids mix well with play.

So how can an adult in kids' radio ministry be like a child? Easy! Just cut the exalted big-people stuff.

"What's fun?" is a childlike question that jounces my childlike mind like a basketball in a barrel. The broadcast result is bright music and lively comments punctuated with sound effects.

The question, "Why is this like it is?" prepares the way for teaching on Bible basics.



Ken "Mr. Nick" Boone

I talk *with* youngsters, not at them or down to them. Chatting at rug level means using plain words, short sentences, and easily understood concepts. Pausing and saying, "What do you think?" is appropriate. As are radio hugs.

The CSN folks have gone a step further by using technological toys that make interactive kids' programs like *Saturday Morning Sunshine* possible. The kids actually call our toll-free number [(800) 819-KIDS] and *tell us* what they think. It's a hurricane of happiness!

Christ-centered radio for youngsters would be valuable if it were just an alternative to Saturday morning TV. But greater than that is its purpose as a teaching tool to help point little ones to God. Is anything more important?

— Ken "Mr. Nick" Boone



IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD
...And That's More Than Just Talk!



Dick Bott, *President*
Bott Radio Network

Americans want to return to the traditional values that made America a great nation. Issues of family, faith and freedom should not be ignored.

Media pundits say "talk radio" will continue to be a major factor in informing, motivating and activating voters in future elections.

Clearly, it is true that talk radio is a powerful medium! **But, talk is cheap without a solid Biblical foundation.**

President Abraham Lincoln said, *"But for the Bible we could not know right from wrong. All things most desirable for man's welfare ... are to be found portrayed in it."*

TALK is cheap!

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

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



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Kansas City Kansas City Richmond St. Louis Memphis Oklahoma City Oklahoma City Ft. Wayne Fresno/Modesto

FORECASTING A . . .
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same: to make Christian radio for kids even better.

Local Christian broadcasters are the links that deliver CSN to families around the nation. Utilizing FM sub-channels, 27 stations use their existing facility to offer this ministry to their listeners.

The outlook for CSN and its future availability to children across North America shines even brighter with a recent alliance with the Companion Radio Network.

This network offers other subscription-based programming services and expects to expand CSN to the top 100 markets in the next five years, making CSN available to more kids than ever before.

By programming for children and for Christ, CSN's forecast promises to be favorable.

Michelle J. Constant is a free-lance writer who resides in Grand Rapids, Mich.



The Children's Sunshine Network studio provides a bright, organized work environment. Echoing CSN's balloon logo, the wallpaper and border add a constant reminder of the network's audience.

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Constructing

by C.C. Risenhoover

CONCERN ABOUT THE impact of media on society — in particular the negative impact on children created by gratuitous sex and violence in media — is not limited to one segment of the population, to one religious group, or to one political point of view.

According to polls in news magazines, the majority of Americans agree that the entertainment industry has been irresponsible, and that such irresponsibility has had a direct impact on rising rates of crime and self-destructive sexual behavior in this country.

The world is being imagined for children through secular television by particular persons with vested interests and specific agendas.

Concern for America's children has many religious organizations and groups scrambling to develop alternative media that teach Christian family values in formats that appeal to kids of various ages. Hard-sell or soft-sell, the emphases of Christian media are primarily on characters who are noble, intelligent, and fundamentally decent.

Cracked Foundations

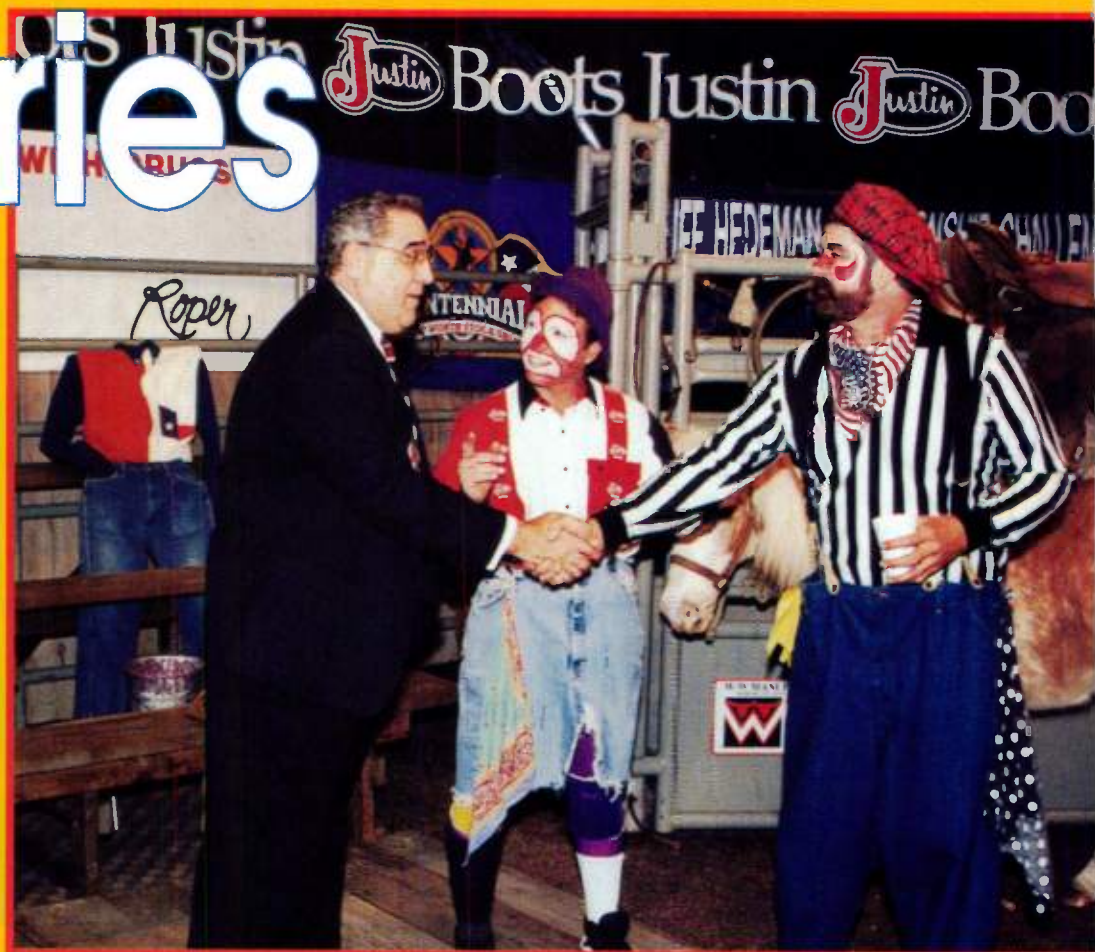
In developing religious media for children, producers must be aware of the atrocities kids face each day in the real world: instability of marriage and the family; cruel competitiveness in sports, education, and business; racial and ethnic

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a Successful

Series



Above left. The cast of *Clowning Around* poses on its rodeo set. The pilot for the new children's television series was recently shot in Fort Worth at a studio owned by the Radio and Television Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Above right. Jack Johnson, president of the Radio and Television Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, greets clowns Starvin Marvin (right) and Jabbers (center) on the set of *Clowning Around*.

Far left. "You have to use proven techniques of entertainment in order to teach children. You have to get their attention and make them feel compelled to watch."
— Bob Thornton, vice president of television services for the Radio and Television Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention

Left. "There are a number of content issues [I look for in children's programming], which include subject matter and message. Obviously, I'm concerned with the moral and spiritual content of the program. I'm also looking for creativity and fresh ideas in both look and approach."
— Deborah Key, vice president of network operations for the Radio and Television Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention

CONSTRUCTING A . . .

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sermon they've ever heard might stay with them for 30 minutes."

Building Quality

"Entertainment is the key to teaching kids," Houck emphasizes. "[We take] education and make it entertaining."

Bob Thornton, vice president of television services for the RTVC, agrees. "You have to use proven techniques of entertainment in order to teach children," he says. "You have to get their attention and make them feel compelled to watch."

Thornton has not seen many Christian-produced programs for children that were done well; he asserts that most programs suffer as a result of a badly constructed set, poor technical quality, inferior scripting, or inadequate talent — or any combination of the four.

"In a 30-minute children's program, you have time to drive home just one point," he cautions. "You can do that in a number of entertaining ways, but everything must be fast-paced. Children love music, so that's one very important element that can be used.

"As children get older they want high-tech animation. That's very costly. An alternative would be a children's program with a magazine format and children as host of the program. Kids will watch other kids.

"The important thing is to get them watching before setting the hook," Thornton says.

Built to Last: *Sunshine Factory*

In the '80s the RTVC produced 200 episodes of the children's program *Sunshine Factory*, which is still being telecast on FamilyNet and ACTS, the broadcast and cable television services of the RTVC.

"Each program features a value of some kind," explains Thornton.

"It may be parental authority, whatever, but each program deals with some specific value. Every skit in the program deals with that value.

"The host of the program is a guy named P.J. Kids go to P.J.'s workshop and talk to him about some specific problem. He takes them into the Sunshine Factory, which is in another dimension where computers and life-size puppets talk.

teach a lesson and is it in harmony with biblical values?

"I'm also looking for creativity and fresh ideas in both look and approach," Key continues. "Another factor is suitability for a targeted age group. And the pacing of a program must be right for a specific age group."

Key's quality issues include technical quality, or the overall production values of the program, but



Paul Brock

In the television series Sunshine Factory, kids are led to the problem-solving factory by their friend P.J. The factory is set in another dimension where computers and life-size puppets talk.

"It's a 30-minute program that offers solutions to a single problem," Thornton continues. "Music, choreography, and Bible stories are a part of the total program mix. It's a little like *Sesame Street*."

FamilyNet Blueprints

Deborah Key, vice president of network operations for the RTVC, said that when looking for children's programming for FamilyNet and ACTS, her major criteria are content, quality, and affordability.

"There are a number of content issues, which include subject matter and message. Obviously, I'm concerned with the moral and spiritual content of the program. Does it

"quality factors also include talent and writing. Is the acting believable? Are the characters real? Is the script strong or weak?"

Regarding affordability, Key must determine if a program is worth the price being asked by the producer. "Affordability is an issue only if a program meets our content and quality requirements. If a program meets those requirements, then it becomes a matter of whether the program is available through license, barter, or purchase. And on program concepts we have to determine whether to consider co-venture or co-production."

Continued on page 24

Sunshine Factory



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Children's
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Cheering for Children's Bible Hour



Left. "Uncle Charlie" Vander Meer of Children's Bible Hour has been a staple on the radio program since 1943.

Below. Nine-year-old Charlie Vander Meer began in radio as the "Story Boy" for Children's Bible Hour.

Right. "Uncle Charlie" Vander Meer and "Aunt Bea" (Bertha) Shooks of Children's Bible Hour hold places of high regard in the hearts of thousands of children and adults.



by Uncle Charlie Vander Meer

DO KIDS STILL LISTEN to the radio? Let me answer with a resounding yes!

Children's Bible Hour (CBH) is the longest continuous running children's program on radio today. Starting on one Grand Rapids, Mich., station in 1942, today CBH programming can be heard on 600-plus radio stations across the United States and in 100 other countries as well.

More than just aiming the program at children, CBH seeks to pre-



sent something the entire family can enjoy together. Bright music — with lots of variety in the sound — and a fully dramatized story are the anchors of each half-hour program. But how did it all begin?

CBH History

More than 50 years ago, a little girl wondered to her uncle why there were gospel broadcasts for adults and young people, but none for children. This thought became a vision. During November 1942, a group of men headed by David Otis Fuller inaugurated the first CBH broadcast in Grand Rapids.

I started as a 9-year-old kid on *CBH* in 1943. Except for college days, I've been with the ministry since. Recently joining the staff is "Uncle John" Elmore, coming to *CBH* after 10 years with Focus on the Family. Together we are looking to a future filled with programs aimed at the young and the young at heart.

Children's Bible Hour has dealt with such '90s topics as single family issues, "good touch" versus "bad touch," divorce, drugs, and even sexual purity.

How well I remember the early days of *CBH*. The hour-long live program allowed no chance to do anything over. A large studio audience in the Grand Rapids radio station watched each week's presentation. In fact, I got my start by sitting in the studio audience!



"Uncle Mel" Johnson, a dear friend to this day and a recent recipient of NRB's Milestone Award, was the director and program host. He came around with a "roving microphone," and as he likes to say:

"Charlie, I stuck that mic in front of your face and you haven't shut up since then."

I joined the broadcast and read letters from listeners, did a weekly audio object lesson called "Charlie's Scrapbook," and eventually became the junior emcee for the program. Those live radio days were full of surprises.

One particular incident always comes to mind. I would close the program, keeping one eye on the clock and the other on the script. The script was marked with several good spots to close, depending on the time.

The director at this time was "Aunt Bertha" Shooks, who was standing by me as I closed out one particular program — one in which I was not watching the clock. When the time was up and it looked like I was going on with another para-

choir to churches, people come up to tell us they were faithful listeners to "Aunt Bea," as she came to be known.

CBH Upgrades

During the early 1950s, *CBH* began tape recording its programs. At first, the ministry taped them like live radio, having everyone sit through the entire program: music, story, and all. Today everything is segmented, with the various groups recording at different times. Even introductions of the songs are recorded separately from the music.

Instead of recording directly to 1/4-inch tape, everything is done with 8-track DAT and a digital audio workstation — for easy editing and better sound — and then dubbed to 1/4-inch tape for duplication.

Over the years, the ministry has added more to its lineup. During



Above. The renowned Children's Bible Hour Choir travels the country, reaching boys and girls for Jesus.

Left. Recently joining the staff of Children's Bible Hour is "Uncle John" Elmore, coming to the radio program after ten years with Focus on the Family.

graph, she simply stepped behind me, reached around, and stuffed her handkerchief in my mouth!

Aunt Bertha was director of *CBH* from 1949 to 1972, and received her "Coronation Day" in heaven in August 1980. It was my privilege to step in as director and radio host of *CBH* in 1972. Even today, when we go out with the

May 1965, *CBH* began its 15-minute *Storytime* weekly and daily programs, featuring the story taken from the half-hour weekly programs.

During September 1984, *CBH* launched its 4 1/2-minute *Keys for Kids* program (six times per week) based on the bi-monthly *Keys for*

Continued on page 28

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CHEERING FOR . . .

Continued from page 27

Kids devotional books.

And just last year, both the audio and print formats of *Keys for Kids* were posted on the Internet through CBH's relationship with the Gospel Communications Net-

*There is room
for both the
sweetness of entertainment
and the solidity
of teaching in religious
children's radio today;
religious radio needs
programs that are
beamed at children.*

work (<http://www.gospelcom.net/cbh>). Technology continues to advance, bringing new opportunities for ministry.

CBH Cares

Though the technology the ministry uses changes rapidly, some things at CBH haven't changed at all. Kids still need to hear the Gospel. Kids still need to know they are loved. Kids still need to feel they are more than just a number in a computer.

But some of the problems children face have changed. Unfortunately, kids have to grow up much too fast these days. CBH has dealt with such 90s topics as single parent issues, "good touch" versus "bad touch," divorce, drugs, and even sexual purity — on a children's program.

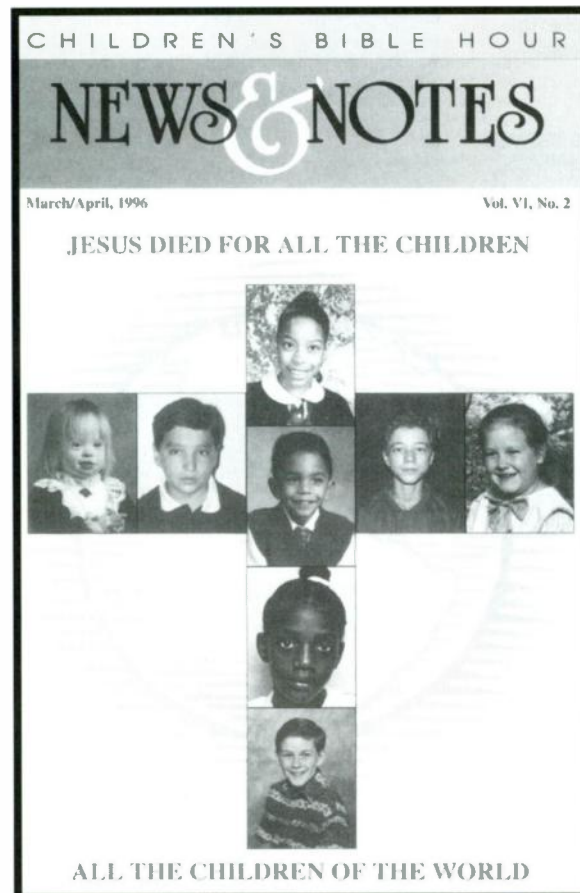
While some well-meaning parents have written that they don't want their children to hear about those topics at such an early age, CBH gently reminds them that children are going to hear about those subjects regardless of parental concern and that the ministry believes it is better to hit those important issues head on from a Christ-centered perspective.

Adults can't pretend children are not having to deal with these problems in real life, and what better forum to address those issues than a Christian one?

CBH Music

As with many ministries today, CBH is faced with the dilemma of music styles. Some stations have dropped CBH, labeling the programs too conservative, while others claim the ministry is too contemporary. Stations need to realize that as the musical mix of old and new songs is picked and as the backgrounds are recorded, the ministry makes certain the message is predominant.

The music of CBH, which ranges from traditional Sunday School songs to more contemporary songs, is produced in the ministry's studio with the help of children from age 5 to 15 in solos, duets, trios —



News & Notes is the bi-monthly newsletter of Children's Bible Hour.

Dear Uncle Charlie and Uncle John

Mail floods in after each radio broadcast. Believing that children need to know that someone cares about them, each letter *CBH* receives is carefully and prayerfully answered. The following is a response to a caring letter from *CBH* staff:

"Thank you so much for your note. You will never know how much I needed a letter like that from someone just today. Your letter came so quickly, and had thoughts that I really needed to think and pray about. I won't lie and say everything is great now. But I am getting along better with my sister now (with God's help).

"Sometimes she really gets to me, but God reminds me that [He] is working on my patience. Recently God showed me why I have such a bad relationship with my dad — I get angry at him for someone else.

"For example, when he yells at Mom, I get mad at him for Mom. I can feel my mom's pain inside her. It hurts me so bad and I become upset with Dad. But it was Mom's choice to marry Dad, and although she might regret it, there's nothing I can do about it.

"Another reason for the bad

relationship is that sometimes I wish I had a dad who would pray with me and I could ask about problems and tell him everything and [who] would be able to lead me in the right direction in following Christ.

"I want a dad who follows Christ so that I can look up to my dad. That's what happens when I'm not content with what God has given me.

"So, those are my two reasons. They are easy to solve on paper, but everyday life makes it so much harder. But God always brings me through and sustains me somehow. Some days with a Bible verse, sometimes with a letter like you sent me. Well, sorry this letter got so long, but I really needed to talk! Thanks so much for caring and listening."

Caring and listening; that's what kids are looking for today. Kids have problems these days and they need to know that someone will take the time to listen and to care. *CBH* wants to be there for them, whether it be by radio, by the products we produce, or by a helpful letter letting them know the ministry cares.

— "Uncle Charlie"
Vander Meer

and, of course, the choir.

Listeners soon identify with regular singers such as 5-year-old Rachel, 12-year-old Cherilyn, the duet of Melissa and Gabe, and teenage trio members Katy, Kristi, and Tammy.

CBH varies its format, sometimes using the choir for a quickie quiz from the Bible. A monthly feature called "Kid's Talk" gathers youngsters around the microphone to sound off on current topics such as getting along with siblings, what to do to earn money, and how to share Christ with a friend.

CBH Mission

CBH recently received a letter from a mother who wrote, "Some

children's programs on the air today give my children dessert. Your program gives them meat and potatoes." There is room for both the sweetness of entertainment and the solidity of teaching in religious children's radio today; religious radio needs programs that are beamed at children.

CBH is privileged to help fill this need and communicate the Gospel to children. Kids are perhaps the most exciting and creative broadcast audience. May the number of programs increase and the spread of the Gospel multiply!

Uncle Charlie Vander Meer is host of Children's Bible Hour in Grand Rapids, Mich.



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by Karen M. Hawkins

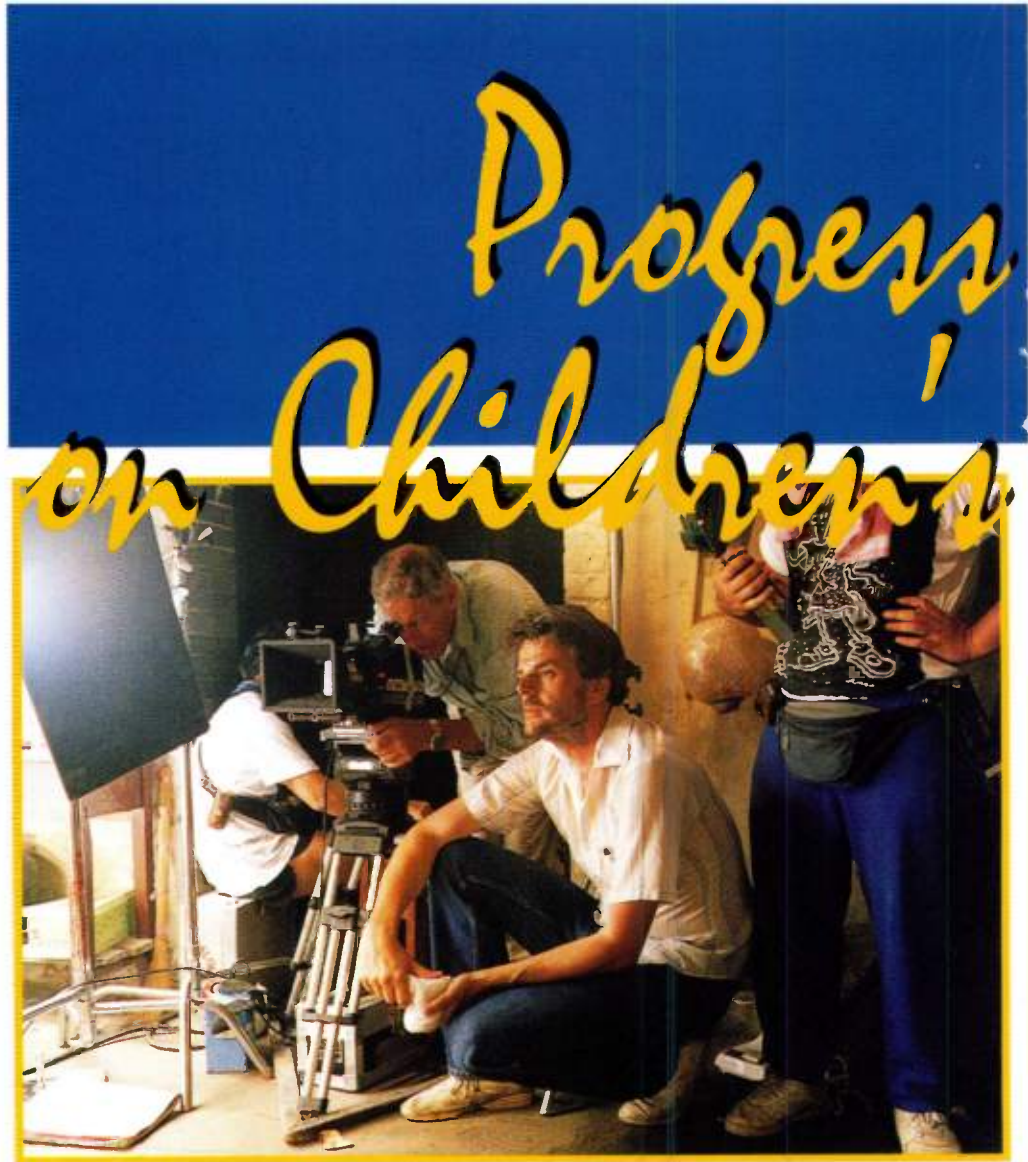
HOW IS CHILDREN'S religious television programming faring in America? Is it making the grade and meeting the needs of its audience? What can be done to increase its effectiveness?

Producers, creators, and thinkers Rob Loos and Bill Myers have found joint success in the children's

"[A children's project] needs far more emphasis because they're the ones who are impressionable, they're the ones we can teach, and they're the ones the secular media are after."

— Bill Myers

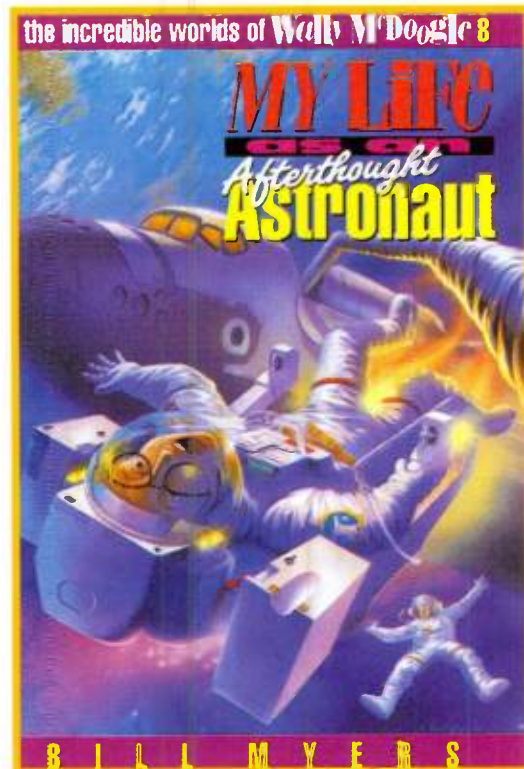
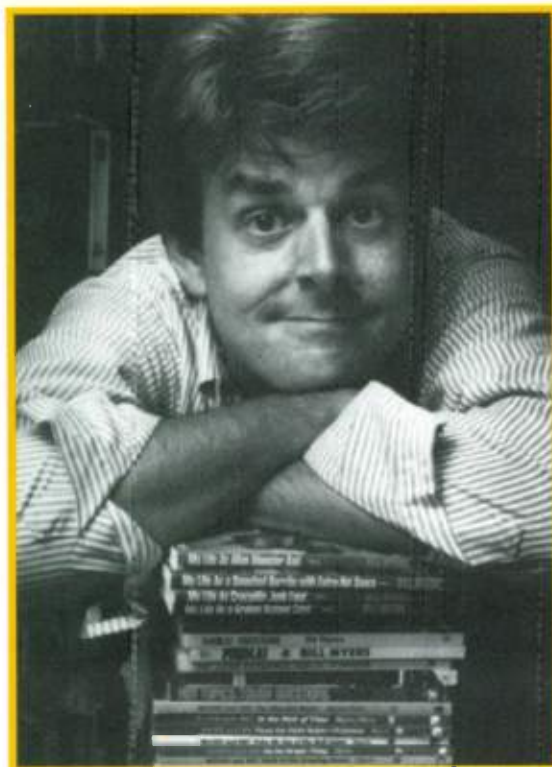
market with their groundbreaking *McGee and Me!* video series and singular successes with Loos' *Secret Adventures* video series and Myers' *The Incredible Worlds of Wally McDoogie* book series, *Forbidden Doors* book series, and new novel *Blood of Heaven*.



Above. "As an author and a filmmaker, if I had a choice between doing an adult project and a child project, I would choose the child project two-to-one over the adult project." — Bill Myers

Left. With three successful book series for children and adolescents and a forthcoming novel for adults, Bill Myers' writing credits stack up.

Right. "Afterthought Astronaut" is volume eight of the acclaimed 12-book series *The Incredible Worlds of Wally McDoogie* by Bill Myers.



Report Programming



These two men joined *Religious Broadcasting* at the Christian Booksellers of America annual convention in Denver last July to give a progress report on the state of children's programming.

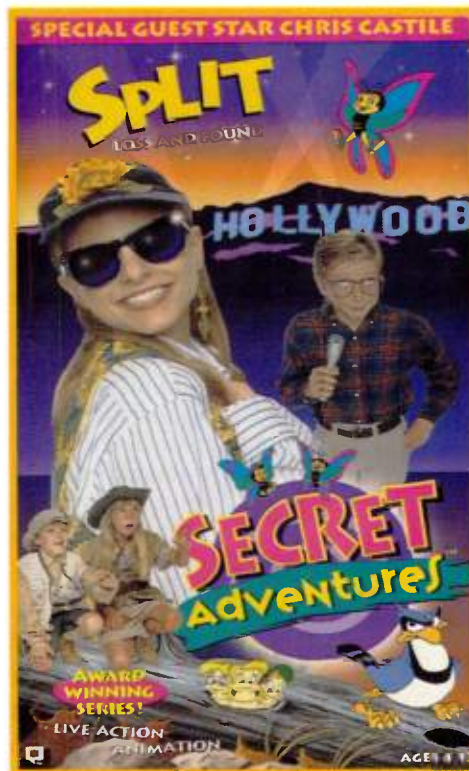
RB: Many people believe *McGee and Me!* set a standard for children's programming. What was your motivation for the program?

"I think the problem we face is when [a Christian theme] isn't true to the character — when it's shoved into a project just because it has to be there — or when there's an obligatory conversion scene."

— Rob Loos

Loos: My partner [George Taweel] and I work and live in the Hollywood community and have a strong sense of what we want to do quality-wise. [Until *McGee and Me!*] the marketplace wasn't really able to come up to that level — budgetarily.

Continued on page 32



Above. "I want to be able to say that there is no show anywhere as good as *Secret Adventures*: network, syndication, cable, and around the world." — Rob Loos

Left. Producer Rob Loos intends to continue his mission of mixing entertaining content with educational values, creating quality children's video products.

Right. "Split: Loss and Found" is volume seven of the expanding video series *Secret Adventures*, Rob Loos' celebrated mini-movies™ for children.

So McGee was really a God-send for us. The philosophy of that [project] was from the very beginning to try to do something quality and try to do something as a Hollywood production.

[For the first episode] our team [consisted] of writers Ken Johnson and Bill (Myers) and producers George and myself. This team, along with Steve Stiles from Focus on the Family and Dan Johnson from The Idea Agency committed very strongly to try to do something that would be equal to or better than anything on network television.

The commitment for McGee was one episode and by the time we finished off the first episode, we were funded to do two more. We slowly built up a series of 12.

It was a quality level that was equal to anything [secular] and that level allowed us to get ABC to put it on the air, to sell it to [non-domestic] television on the BBC, and [to air it] on 60 other markets. It opened doors that couldn't have been opened before by other Christian programming because the quality level wasn't there.

The Lord prepared [me and my partner] by having our careers and our successes before we got to this point. We could open doors and could really talk to people who primarily spent their time in the religious industry.

Myers: My personal motivation is the same as it's been since I committed my life to full-time service to the Lord: to use the media to either edify or evangelize. I know that sounds pious, but that's the absolute truth.

I had just come off directing a film for St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital in Memphis and as a result of my work on that project, I was recommended to Dan Johnson for *McGee and Me!*

My motivation was simply to present truth in an entertaining manner and to find that tricky balance between truth and entertainment so that there's a purpose to it. The entertainment is basically the sugar coating to get the medicine down.

RB: What's wrong with religious broadcasting's programming for children?

Myers: It's that tenuous balance between Gospel and commerce — it comes down to motivation again. Some people are more commerce orientated and other people are more ministry orientated.

There are pros and cons in both because if you have somebody who is too message orientated, they don't believe that you need entertainment — and vice versa. So it really depends on the producer.

I'm developing several other video series for various folks right now and I think our biggest struggle at the moment is financial. People make a big deal about *McGee and Me!* and its high production value. What they fail to remember is that over half that money was donated as a grant, so we could spend the \$500,000 per episode.

"My personal motivation is the same as it's been since I committed my life to full-time service to the Lord: to use the media to either edify or evangelize."

— Bill Myers

The way the pie is cut right now, it would be hard to justify making a profit by putting that type of production value in. So that's really where the frustration and the pull and tug is: trying to come up with production value with a small amount of dollars.

Loos: We try to do stuff that is real and contemporary and reaches kids where they are at. We went out and spent a day at a junior high before we did *Secret Adventures*, and we do a lot of continual talking with parents, educators, Sunday School teachers, and kids about what they're interested in seeing.

We believe that our program has to carry a sense of truth — if it's too "goody two-shoes" or not real enough, kids don't believe it and kids don't see it.

I would encourage religious broadcasters to do the best they can. We're all dealing with tough budgets. I think that's the real issue. I wish more money was being diverted into religious programming. We've been spoiled in that we've been given [enough of a] budget to do our programs well. I think part of the problem is that many people don't have enough resources to be able to do it as well as it should be [done].

I think that there's a sense that we see ourselves more as producers who are Christians rather than Christian producers. We feel a strong call by God to be the best we can be, to continually learn and push and stretch. I want to be able to say that there is no show anywhere as good as *Secret Adventures*: network, syndication, cable, and around the world. I'm not sure many people in religious broadcasting have that same fervor.

We want to really knock people's socks off. From the minute someone puts a *Secret Adventures* tape into the machine, I want them to know that it is different, that it is quality, and that somebody thought about everything that is in there.

RB: How can the typical religious television station create quality children's programs on limited budgets?

Loos: I think there is still a lot of stuff that can happen regionally in television. I didn't grow up in Hollywood; I grew up working at Channel 23, WAKR/Akron, Ohio, and I went to the Catholic television network for a while.

There are a lot of things you can do on a low-budget level if you are able to think outside the lines. Every station in the country has cameras, they do something with news somewhere along the line. A lot of stuff can be generated locally with talent you already have.

I remember the huge amount of local programming that was done [when I was growing up]: local kids' shows, local dance shows, local all sorts of stuff. That whole business has seemed to have gone away; everybody just signs on to the network.

I think that more than anybody else, religious broadcasters have a

great challenge to reach out to their local communities and do stuff that may not travel beyond their particular market area but that would be appropriate for folks where they are.

Myers: [Small stations could] pool together their resources, stop thinking in maverick or solo terms, and start thinking as a community and members of the body of Christ. That would help a lot.

As it is now, it's almost impossible to come up with a good video series that will pay for itself and be fair to the investors unless you have multiple markets: broadcast, cable, and home video. It's just the way the pie's cut up now.

RB: Let's move into adolescence. What grabs this audience? Is it a viable audience for religious broadcasting?

Myers: I think what grabs that audience is the same as what grabs them in books. I have three book series out: two are for children 8 to 12 and one is for teenagers. It's pret-

ty much the same tools. They're all enjoying a fair amount of success.

The children's series are *The Incredible Worlds of Wally McDoogie* and *Journeys to Fayrah*, and the teen supernatural thriller series is *Forbidden Doors*. I think the reason they're enjoying success is because I get

"A recent study said that a child between ages 2 to 11 in the United States watches television 23 hours and 11 minutes a week."

— Rob Loos

bored [quickly]. When I'm writing, whether it's books or video, I have in my mind a child sitting there with the remote control in his hand, ready to change channels at a moment's boredom.

I'm hosting a kids' video series

called *Fast Forward*. It's a non-fiction thing that goes to the youth groups of 15,000 churches every year and it's geared at teen problems in an MTV fast-cut sort of format.

I think we'd be hard pressed to come up with the right dramatic format for teens because teens are busy watching adult programs. They're fighting to grow up and fighting to get in. Adolescents start watching adult projects and adult films.

I don't think they're going to want to watch a show necessarily about their peers unless it's [*Beverly Hills*] 90210, which is not something I would endorse. So I think that market is very narrow, particularly in fiction.

There may be more openings in non-fiction because they want to deal with themselves, since teens tend to be self-centered individuals as they're exploring who they are.

RB: What role should children's programming play in a typical station schedule?

Continued on page 34



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PROGRESS REPORT . . .

Continued from page 33

Loos: A recent study said that a child between ages 2 to 11 in the United States watches television 23 hours and 11 minutes a week. That's more time than they do anything except sleep. If during one of their seven days they're going to watch 24 hours of programming, then we [must] provide something that's good and quality for them to watch — or do we just want to toss all these kids in to watch everything else?

I don't think any child in America is going to be watching religious programming 23 hours and 11 minutes every week. That's just not what they're going to do. But can't they watch some of that? Can't we do something that really appeals to them in some way?

If we're trying to raise kids up to be the next generation, then we have a huge responsibility. As a broadcaster I'm definitely trying to show a good role model in the things I'm doing. Drea Thomas [heroine of *Secret Adventures*] is not perfect, she makes mistakes, but she learns from her mistakes and goes forward.

Kids have said, "Hey, that was really neat! I learned this . . . I did this . . ." Parents tell me, "Fred decided that he wasn't going to lie to his teacher because he saw the way Drea handled it in this situation." I think [children] just need to be exposed to more and more of that.

If we accept the concept that television has become a babysitter for kids in many ways, then we must provide a good babysitter. For too long religious television has settled for a level of mediocrity that hasn't appealed to kids who are being jazzed up by Saturday morning television.

[Religious television hasn't been able to] compete with Nintendo or the latest Power Rangers movie. So we've got to find a way to do that and capture their imagination.

We try to do something that's equal to or better than [those competitors] and make it entertaining so that they get the entertainment first and the educational value comes through sort of subliminally.

Myers: I may have a little bias here because of my particular calling, but I think it's the same problem as with the church in general. The church's smallest amount of budget goes toward the kids, and what's so frustrating about that is the kids are the most teachable.

As an author and as a filmmaker, if I had a choice between doing an adult project and a child project, I would choose the child project two-to-one over the adult project. It needs far more emphasis because they're the ones who are impressionable, they're the ones we can teach, and they're the ones the secular media are after, whether it's spiritually intentional or unintentional. They're the fighting ground.

If I had my way, I'd convince every board member to dump most of their money into reaching kids. It's the least rewarding — they're just kids. But I think spiritually, it's the most eternal.

"[McGee and Me!] was a quality level that was equal to anything [secular] and that level allowed us to get ABC to put it on the air, to sell it to [non-domestic] television on the BBC, and [to air it] on 60 other markets."

— Rob Loos

RB: Do you see the secular market softening toward Christian themes?

Myers: No. I see the secular market softening toward moral themes and cultural Christianity, but when the tire meets the road and you're talking about a life that has to die to self and be born again in Christ, I see the same prejudice I've always seen.

I think there's an opening toward morality and Christian culture — if we can keep it historical, if we can keep it so that someone doesn't have to change her life, and if we can keep it so that someone doesn't have to repent and convert.

That's OK; there's certainly a place for morality. We're supposed to be salt and light. There's nothing wrong with being salt in a decaying world. But when it comes to being light and telling men and women that they have to die and come alive to Christ, that will never be popular. I don't think Paul could ever have sold his letters.

Loos: I don't think there's a huge negative attached to Christian themes if it's within the confines of who the character is. I think the problem is when something is viewed as propaganda rather than dramatic. I don't think there's any aversion.

When we broadcast *McGee and Me!* on ABC we definitely had to cut it down to length; it was a 30-minute video product. [The ABC edit] didn't have Nick Martin opening the Bible but I don't think people are offended by biblical truth.

I don't think people are offended when the grandfather in *Secret Adventures* says, "Truth stands the test of time, lies will soon be exposed." It's from Proverbs, it's truth, and it's within the context of the character. He was told this by his father who was told it by his father. It's within the concept of the character, it's true to that character.

I think the problem we face is when it isn't true to the character — when it's shoved into a project just because it has to be there — or when there's an obligatory conversion scene. I think that's really the problem. If *L.A. Law* can put on a born-again character and try to deal with that, anybody can!

RB: If you could address religious broadcasters, what would you say?

Loos: Well, I think basically what I said [three] years ago at NRB 93 in Los Angeles: try to do more quality projects, especially for kids. Kids are my heart; that's where I live and that's who I care about.

I want to see kids of the next generation fully understand all that the world has to offer. I see kids who are hopeful, who want to make a difference, and who are really good kids.

I don't see all the kids that I see on television sitcoms who are snob-

by or all the kids I see in feature films who are messed up and smoking cigarettes. I see good kids who are under-represented. I think there's a chance that if we're honest, if we're true to what God wants us to be as people, and if we are true to His vision, then we can share that truth with others and it won't be an embarrassment.

If Jesus was Who He said He was, why should we be embarrassed of that? Why should we always be soft pedalling and saying, "Oh, it's just a Christian product." It's a good product, that is what it is. We shouldn't be ashamed, we shouldn't feel like second-class citizens, and we shouldn't back off of that.

This is truth, this is what we believe. What makes Shirley MacLaine able to talk about what she talks about with such great authority and [what makes] people accept it? I think we need to get out and do what we believe in and be proud of it — do the best quality things so that we're not embarrassed of what we've done but proud of it.

I also think there could be more support between all types of Christian broadcasters and producers [to know] what other people are doing. Some of my friends, like Ken Wales (executive producer of *Christy*) and Martha Williams (producer of *Touched by an Angel*), do a lot of interviews where we talk about each other. I think the more we can support each other, the more helpful it is.

Myers: [I would tell religious broadcasters to] always check their motives. It's such an expensive medium and it's so easy to get caught up in the commerce to survive. And there is good justification for that.

I can have a committed show, but if it doesn't make money, it's not going to be aired. [I would tell broadcasters] to hold one another accountable, which is a sub-category of motive.

And [I would remind them that] next to the Holy Spirit, they have the most powerful force on earth for changing lives — and that's not to be taken lightly.

Karen M. Hawkins is editor of the 1996 Directory of Religious Media.

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AIRWAVE NEWS

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — The Morningstar Radio Network has added WDNO-FM/Salisbury, Md., to its "High Country" format and KTSY-FM/Boise, Idaho, to its "Today's Christian Music" format.

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — The Eternal Word Television Network (EWTN) added a global Catholic AM-FM radio service in March. This will complement EWTN's short-wave radio station, WEWN, which has been broadcasting worldwide for three years.

GEORGETOWN, Grand Cayman — The Seventh-day Adventist Church members have pledged more than \$80,000 to start a religious television station on Grand Cayman. The island's government has given its approval for the church to establish the VHF station, which will serve as a downlink site for the Three Angels Broadcasting Network, a satellite television programming network operated by Adventist members.

AWARDS

ROME, Ga. — WRQM-AM/Rome received a Silver Gavel Award from the State Bar of Georgia for its live, call-in talk show *Let's Talk!* The winning program, hosted by Jim Arp, featured Melanie Davis Stockwell from The Rutherford Institute's Atlanta office.

UNIVERSAL CITY, Calif. — Two female-driven vehicles featuring characters unflappable in their faith were awarded \$25,000 each as recipients of the first annual Templeton Prizes for Inspiring Movies and TV (which is administered by The Christian Film and Television Commission) during the fourth annual Movieguide Awards Dinner & Report to the Industry. Judges from the commission chose *Dead Man Walking* starring Oscar winner Susan Sarandon and "The Hunt" episode of the CBS series *Christy* starring Kellie Martin.

HUNTINGTON BEACH, Calif. — Warren Duffy, host of *Duffy & Co. Live*, received two silver Angel Awards from



Terry Duffy (left) poses with Excellence in Media president Mary Dorr after accepting husband Warren Duffy's Angel Awards.

Excellence in Media. A first-time winner, Duffy's awards were for his national talk show and his drive-time program on KKLA-FM/Los Angeles.

NEW YORK — Dr. William Bright, president and founder of Campus Crusade for Christ International, is the 1996 recipient of the Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion, valued at more than \$1 million

this year. Bright has indicated the money will be designated to educate pastors and laity to the spiritual benefits of fasting, prayer, and the fulfillment of the Great Commission. Begun in 1972 by Sir John Templeton, the Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion is awarded to a living person who has shown extraordinary originality in advancing humankind's understanding of God and/or spirituality.

INTERNET INFORMATION

ELKHART, Ind. — In March, Crown International, Inc., announced its new web site at <http://www.crownintl.com>. Current on-line information includes descriptions of Crown's professional audio products, a short historical background, and the most frequently asked questions and answers its technical support team receives.



The Crown site offers pictures, descriptions, and specifics on its products.

Movieguide's Top Ten Films for 1995

Family Films

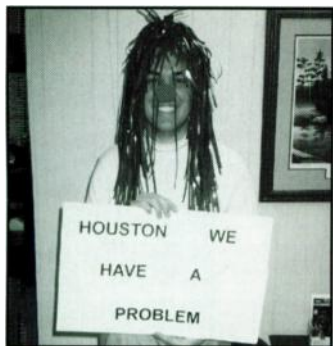
1. Toy Story (Disney)
2. Father of the Bride II (Disney/Touchstone)
3. First Knight (Columbia)
4. Babe* (Universal)
5. A Little Princess (Warner Bros.)
6. Persuasion (Sony)
7. Sense and Sensibility* (Columbia)
8. Two Bits (Miramax)
9. Tall Tale (Disney)
10. Balto (Universal)

Films for Mature Audiences

1. Braveheart** (Paramount)
2. Les Miserables (Warner Bros.)
3. Dead Man Walking (Gramercy)
4. A Month by the Lake (Miramax)
5. Apollo 13* (Universal)
6. Mr. Holland's Opus (Disney/Hollywood)
7. *Il Postino** (The Postman) (Miramax)
8. While You Were Sleeping (Disney/Hollywood)
9. Cry, the Beloved Country (Miramax)
10. Batman Forever (Warner Bros.)

Movieguide's top ten films were unveiled during the fourth annual Movieguide Awards Dinner & Report to the Industry at Universal City, Calif., on March 13. * Designates the film was nominated for a Best Picture Oscar. ** Indicates winner of Best Picture Oscar.

MUSIC NEWS



KNTL-FM/Oklahoma City program director Dave Riley has a "reel" bad hair day while taking his entry into The Newsboys "Take Me To Your Leader" contest. Riley won one of the two grand prizes.

was transmitted directly onto the Internet for simultaneous airing.

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — The Newsboys' live, world premiere concert and satellite network event, held February 20 at Space Center Houston, was deemed a smashing success by its promoters. The event celebrated the release of the group's new album, *Take Me To Your Leader*. The Newsboys performed a one-hour concert produced by On The Scene Productions, which was broadcast live via satellite to more than 100 retail outlets nationwide as well as to outlets in Canada and Europe. Additionally, the concert

director for Regal and youth/adult curriculum. Daly has served as editor of youth and adult curriculum.

AGOURA HILLS, Calif. — KQCV-AM-KNTL-FM/Oklahoma City general manager Robin Jones has been appointed to the board of directors for JAF Ministries, a non-profit ministry headed by Joni Eareckson Tada. Jones has been involved with JAF since 1991, including the first JAF Wheels for the World drive in Oklahoma City.

PHILADELPHIA, Pa. — Michael White has joined the Bible sales department of National Publishing Company. White comes to the company with over 20 years of sales experience, most recently with Cambridge University Press as a book and Bible special sales representative.

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Andy Melilli has been appointed as Insight for Living's director of international broadcasting. Melilli comes to Insight with more than 13 years' experience in business followed by eight years with Focus on the Family, where he pioneered that ministry's overseas outreach.



Andy Melilli

WILLMAR, Minn. — Jeffrey Bean is the new operations director for KBHZ-FM/Willmar. Bean was formerly manager of WAFG-FM/Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

PEOPLE

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — INSP-The Inspirational Network has announced several changes in its personnel: Dewey Crim as executive vice president, Tim Kassick as the new Mid-Atlantic Affiliate Relations office's affiliate director, and Ron Tapp as chief operating officer. Crim formerly worked as director of broadband video services for BellSouth. Kassick was previously regional director of the Family Channel's Rocky Mountain affiliate office. Prior to his appointment with INSP, Tapp was senior vice president for Jones International, Ltd. All changes are part of the network's major corporate reorganization.



Dewey Crim



Tim Kassick

VENTURA, Calif. — Gospel Light Publications announces the following promotions: Nola Grunden to production design manager, Kyle Duncan to associate publisher for the Regal Division, and Jean Daly to managing editor, youth and adult curriculum. Grunden has served as typesetting manager and production manager for Regal Books during her 15 years with Gospel Light. Duncan has been managing editor for Regal and editorial



Ron Tapp

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For advertising opportunities in *Religious Broadcasting*, contact Dick Reynolds, advertising manager, at (704) 393-0602.

Expanding Evangelism

“P reaching to the choir” is idiomatic for communicating a message to those who are already convinced. It’s one of the frequent criticisms of religious broadcasting. Of course, teaching, motivating, and discipling Christians is an important and valid ministry. Many Christian broadcasters are realistic in admitting that their main goal is not evangelism but the nurture of believers.

But has God given us these wonderful tools of television, radio, satellite, and the Internet only to speak to those already committed? Don’t we have a higher calling to use these powerful tools to share Christ with those who have never had a meaningful presentation of the Gospel with an opportunity to respond?

Face it: our impact on the non-Christian world is minimal. Names like James Dobson, Charles Swindoll, Steve Green, and Glad, so familiar to Christian media, are largely unknown in the marketplace. In addition, Christian broadcasters sometimes spend so much time and energy criticizing the unbelievers in the culture, or attacking other Christians, that we lose our proactive opportunity to impact and change lives.

Don’t think that missionary radio is limited to Asia or South America. The United States is the fifth largest mission field in the world. Mission America is coordinating the significant efforts by many ministry organizations to present the Gospel in a meaningful way to every American by the year 2000. Christian radio and television could be one of the meaningful vehicles to make this possible.

To do this, God’s people who are now aimed inward need to reach outward to the lost. And Christian media must move from an inward orientation to an outward vision. How do we do this?

• Not every Christian broadcaster should go into Christian radio or television. We need Christians in marketplace media as writers, pro-

ducers, executives, actors, announcers, reporters, and journalists. These “roaring lambs,” as Bob Briner has described them, can infiltrate the media with their own redemptive message and witness. Get rid of the self-imposed gap between “secular” and “religious” and find ways that ministry media and marketplace media can complement.

• Not all Christian programming should be on Christian stations. I applaud H.I.S. Ministries in Minneapolis-St. Paul for purchasing 200 spots on ten marketplace radio stations. Executive director Don Bierle says the ministry averaged eight calls each time the spots aired. The end result was 1800 calls and 35 decisions for Christ.

• Christian stations can take initiatives to present the Gospel and “put out the hook” on a regular basis. The SkyLight Network has produced a series of 90-second seeker spots voiced by Paul Cedar. Listeners are encouraged to call an 800-number for a free copy of *Pursuit*, a seeker-oriented magazine.

• NavPress has produced *Message of Hope*, an attractive and inexpensive booklet (available at cost for evangelical purposes), which contains excerpts of the Gospel designed to lead the seeker to a decision for Christ. Our stations have purchased these booklets and aired spots inviting listeners to call in for a free copy. We also encouraged listeners to write for a quantity of these booklets to give to their friends.

• Educate your listeners to think evangelism. WEEC-FM/Springfield, Ohio, mailed thousands of printed cards to listeners, identifying this commitment: “Jesus, I will do whatever it takes to bring (name) to heaven with me.”

• Because our stations play more Christmas music than marketplace stations, we acquire many new listeners during December. After dropping in a secular selection, such as “White Christmas” or “Winter Wonderland,” we then play a seeker



Wayne Pederson is executive director of the SkyLight Radio Network in Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minn. He is also on National Religious Broadcasters’ board of directors.

spot, specially designed to air at Christmas. Moody stations have developed this concept further by producing an attractive brochure to send to responses: John Maddox reported 5300 callers responded this year.

• The professionalism of today’s Christian music makes our sound attractive to the casual listener pushing the “search” button. We need to make sure our presentation and production is consistent, professional, attractive, and entertaining.

• We need to learn to speak to issues vital to the felt needs of the seeker. Christian stations tend to talk theology, politics, church life, and moral issues. Issues prominent to Americans are personal finances, family life, and health. These are topics which can be included in our hour-by-hour programming in short sidebars and human interest features, similar to *USA Today*.

And in addressing these issues, we can present the biblical perspective on modern concerns. Mary Whelchel’s *Christian Working Woman* and Larry Burkett’s *Money Minute* are excellent examples of this.

• Leadership should create a climate for evangelism by keeping ownership, boards, staff, and listeners aware of the mission and need.

• Train on-air personnel to explain the Gospel without using “Christianese.”

• Strive for excellence. Don’t let mediocrity, poor production, or lack of preparation be a stumbling block.

Continued on page 44



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A Call for Unity

On July 4th, 1776, just before the signing of the Declaration of Independence, Benjamin Franklin addressed his fellow patriots, saying "We must indeed all hang together, or most assuredly we shall all hang separately!" Today that simple phrase should be the wake-up call for the entire Christian television industry.

Never before has unity been more desperately needed in the field of Christian television. How must we, as Christian broadcasters, look to the secular world? Instead of working together to better our industry, we seem to be more interested in protecting our "turf," and keeping our "slice of the pie."

Recently, I had the unique opportunity to meet with Jim Bakker for an in-depth conversation. We spoke of current events, their relation to Christian television, and the need for unity.

During the course of that conversation, I bluntly asked Jim, "What if, when PTL was at its peak, I had been allowed to give you this warning: 'Jim, repent, turn from prosperity teaching, and embrace the pure Word of God?' What would you have done?"

Bakker's answer was just as blunt and honest: "I would have had you escorted out of my office!" Jim confirmed what I had already learned from my 16 years in the Christian television field — the old adage, "Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely," is absolutely true.

So how, in an industry of powerful personalities and scarred by scandals, do we begin to approach unity? From my perspective, I see three things that need to happen.

First, I believe there needs to be a personal and genuine revival among all Christian television personalities. I am not saying that my peers are not committed to Christ; I am saying we need to recommit ourselves to spreading the Gospel. We have to get our house in order and

we have to make Christ the head of that house. If we do not, then this powerful force for our Lord will be destroyed from within.

Second, we need to set our egos aside and begin to pray and support one another. Can we even conceive what would happen if we let go of our petty power struggles for the sake of Christ? Do we dare get down on our knees and tell our Lord we want ourselves to decrease and we want Him to be glorified and lifted up?

I strongly believe, if we want Christian television to make a difference in the next decade, we must humble ourselves, pray together, pool our resources, stop preaching to the choir, and move ahead.

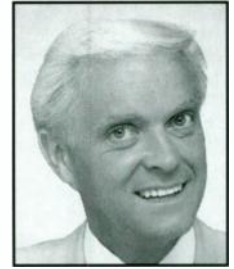
Third, we need to make a public show of unity and support for each other. I read recently about a number of churches in a southern town which decided to stop competing with each other.

One pastor determined that he would make a difference and visited other pastors in town. He invited them to pray together and thus the foundation for true unity was formed. As a result, all of the churches grew. The pastors even took turns filling each other's pulpits from time to time.

Could such a thing happen in Christian television? Think about it. What would happen if Pat Robertson would teach on John Hagee's program, or D. James Kennedy guest hosted *The 700 Club*. Far fetched? Maybe, but wouldn't it be a wonderful way to show a non-believing world that we, as Christians, can work together? That we might even (gasp!) like each other?

We have to ask ourselves where Christian television is going in the next decade. Not to be overly dramatic, but we are standing at a crossroads and the warning signs are in front of us.

Unless we as Christian television broadcasters begin to pray together — and join forces — I believe that



Herman Bailey, along with his wife, Sharron, is host of *Action Sixties*, a production of the Christian Television Network in Clearwater, Fla.

other powerful ministries will fall. This would send shockwaves all the way to our nation's capital and effect the spread of the Gospel in ways we would never think possible.

Far too many are already pushing to place government regulations on our industry. One more scandal could very well be all that it takes to push through unwanted and dangerous restrictions. If that happens to Christian television, how long before the local churches are affected as well? It is a sobering thought.

One important point I should make clear. A call for unity does not mean compromising the Word of God. The essentials, such as the infallibility of the Bible, the virgin birth, salvation through the shed blood of Jesus Christ, and other key doctrines, cannot be watered down — not even for the sake of unity.

Let's get together. There is great strength in numbers. Let's ask ourselves where we want our industry to go during the next 20 years, and then take the necessary steps to get there. Perhaps all it will take is for one person to step forward and take up the burden of leadership — one person to help us stand shoulder to shoulder.

Let's hang together, or, as Franklin warned, we shall all hang separately. ■

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Under Fire - An American Story.



Mary Ann Mobley

Former Miss America, her greatest boast in Hollywood is that they (she and husband Gary Collins) have had the same telephone number, the same house, and the same marriage for 28 years.



Peter Marshall

Author of the best-selling *The Light and the Glory*, he articulated the faith and spiritual legacy of America's Founding Fathers.



Art Linkletter

A best-selling author, *Kids Say The Darndest Things*, an Emmy and Grammy award-winning TV and radio personality, and a household name for more than sixty years.



Tom Landry

His stature in the coaching profession (Dallas Cowboys) remains unsurpassed. His name is synonymous with innovation, stability and excellence both on and off the playing field.



Donna Douglas

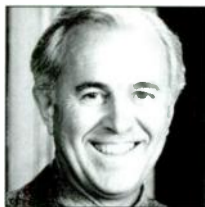
(*Elly May*)

"Elly May" is one of those few TV characters who will never be forgotten. Donna is a fine Christian lady who is at home sharing her faith with others.



Peggy Wehmeyer

America's only network reporter on religious issues (*World News Tonight With Peter Jennings*).



Gary Smalley

Seen on nationally televised program with Frank and Kathy Lee Gifford, he is a leading authority on the family.



Dave Johnson

The "Reebok Ad" man who won the decathlon bronze medal at the Barcelona Summer Olympic Games.



Pat Williams

Professionally, he has few peers as "super-manager" of the Orlando Magic. Privately, he shares his vision of life, love and hope with his wife and their 18 children.



Dr. Ralph E. Reed, Jr.

One of the most sought-after spokespersons in the nation. Dr. Reed is the brightest star on the conservative horizon. Author of *Politically Incorrect*, he serves as Executive Director of the Christian Coalition.



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Miss America 1995—Heather captured the heart of the nation with her beauty, talent and contagious love for life. A young lady of great faith and strong determination, she is a compelling role model for young Americans.



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As Chief Counsel for the American Center for Law and Justice, Jay Sekulow is one of the most articulate advocates of religious freedom—and he wins in the Supreme Court! Featured in the *New York Times*, and a frequent guest on *Nightline*, *Crossfire*, *The 700 Club* and *Good Morning America*, Jay makes a great case for standing strong and tall!

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One Letter: Worth a Thousand Words

Recently someone asked me why International Media Ministries (IMM) dedicates so much time and income to programs for children. IMM has produced a children's series in English, Chinese, German, French, and Russian.

For over two years, the IMM team has been working on *Power Stop*, a new children's series. This series is being produced in segments to facilitate language translation and inclusion of a local host. Segments not culturally adaptable can be dropped in favor of more local content.

The constant pressure from satellites, video cassettes, and foreign programs is creating a demand for programs with more local presence and cultural identity. The *Power Stop* series clearly meets these demands and as a result has been requested by 17 different language groups. Southern Asia, with over 1 billion people, is our first target. IMM's goal is to have the English version of *Power Stop* ready by July.

The IMM series *Boulevard des Enfants* (Children's Street) has been used effectively for the past eight years in French-speaking countries. The Belgian public school system approved the use of the video series and teacher/student manuals in its religion classes.

Last year, *Boulevard* videos and manuals were translated into Russian. Having these materials available in Russian has opened up a whole new area of the world for children's ministry. According to the New Life Network, eight national television

stations in Russia and Ukraine are broadcasting these programs.

In March, we received a fax from a South American missionary who is working in Russia. When he visited IMM several months ago, he received a set of the *Boulevard* tapes and manuals. He was now asking permission to make 100 copies of these programs and manuals. His Russian church plans to provide these materials to 100 workers who in turn will reach Russian-speaking children.

Because most countries do their own follow-up, responses sent back to IMM in Brussels, Belgium, are minimal. We realize broadcasting is seed-sowing and God's promise is that it will not come back void.

After months of hard work, we still have not finished the first series of *Power Stop* and in a weary moment I asked myself if children's programs were really worth all the time, money, and effort. Within a few days, a letter arrived at our Brussels office which wiped away all doubts regarding the worth of producing programs for children. This letter was worth a thousand words of encouragement.

Written for a young boy whose father is a diplomat in a Muslim country where there are no Christian churches for him to attend, his parents said they have used *Boulevard des Enfants* to teach him about Jesus and Christian music. This letter made every investment worthwhile!

Yes, we will keep producing programs for children. Each year, 100 million babies are born. News correspondents covering the wars in Af-

rica report that thousands of soldiers are 12- to 14-year-old children. Can we afford to wait until their minds have been filled with hate and rage before reaching out to them?

Political, economic, and technological developments make it possible for millions of people to receive the Gospel through radio and television. For example, India, long considered a poor nation, has over 250 million people with access to television and VCRs. Practically everyone has a radio there. These developments are not only making it possible for the people to have radio and television sets, but also are providing new opportunities to broadcast the Gospel.

Why do we produce programs for children? Someone said that the Gospel is only one generation away from extinction. With God's help, the IMM team is doing its part to win this generation of children to Christ. ¹



In 1981, David Lee founded International Media Ministries (IMM), the missionary outreach of the Division of Foreign Missions of the Assemblies of God. Headquartered in Brussels, Belgium, IMM produces approximately 180 television programs a year.

WASHINGTON WATCH

continued from page 8

television" (HDTV) program stream with movie-quality resolution; several programs streams of lower resolution "standard definition television" (SDTV) and various data services. But because an ATV signal cannot be transmitted on the same channel as a current television signal, broadcasters would need additional spectrum to give them — and their audiences

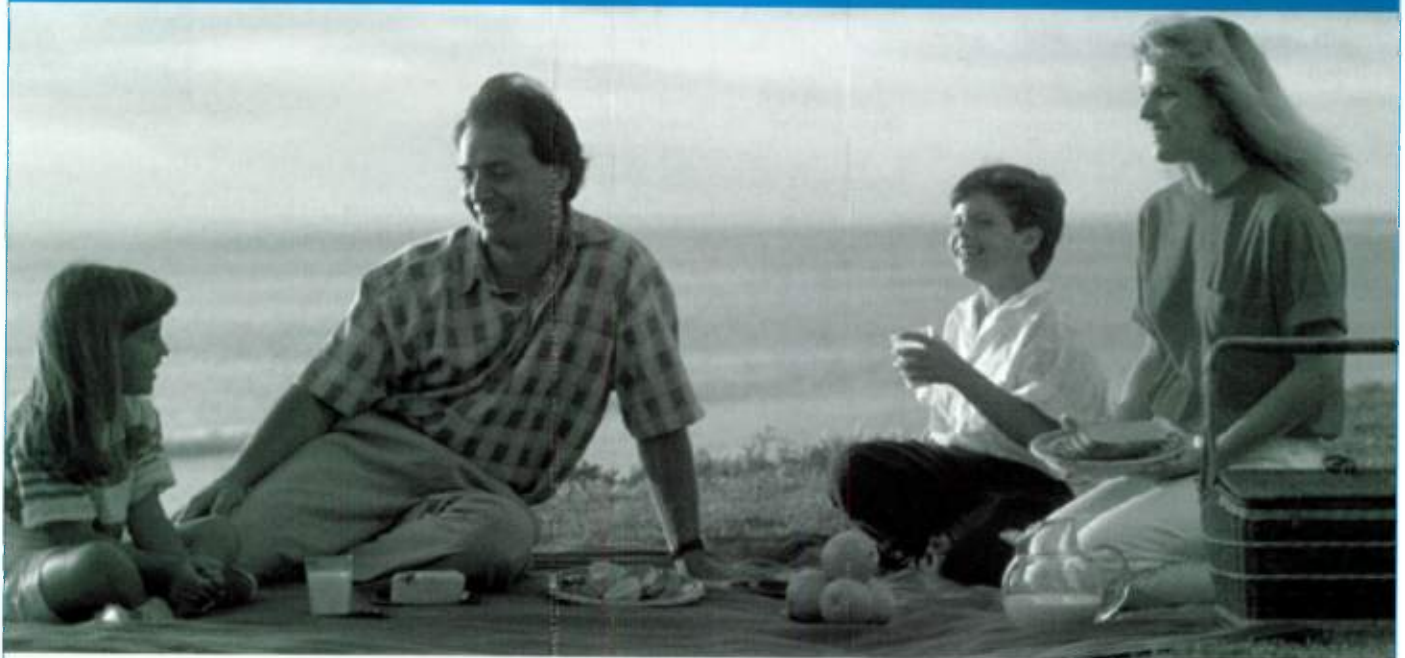
— a lengthy transition period to obtain digital equipment.

On its face, the Act permits the commission to go forward with its original ATV plan, which calls for the temporary "loan" of an additional channel to every full-service television station. The actual political picture is murkier, however. Congress has been highly interested in the revenue-raising potential of auctions since the government earned billions of dollars by auctioning spectrum for

the next generation of wireless telephone services, known as "Personal Communications Services" (PCS).

Several prominent lawmakers want to award ATV licenses through auctions, although the White House prefers to wait to hold competitive bidding on existing broadcast channels after the transition to digital television is complete. The FCC has promised to delay licensing of ATV stations until at least the end of 1996. ²

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Targeting Your Goals

If a person wakes in the morning and looks ahead at his day, saying "What shall I do today" or "Who should I see today?," he might as well climb back in bed until he has developed a plan for that day.

Sales like any other profession requires discipline, planning, goal-setting, and action. To be effective in accomplishing my work agenda, I carry a time planner system. I find it very helpful to plan my days in advance and to record my day's activities to reflect on and to help schedule my future activities.

In sales, goals make you more efficient. For example, say your goal for the month is to bill \$25,000 in advertising sales with last month's total being \$20,000. That would be a monthly increase of \$5000. Knowing from experience your average sale is approximately \$1000 per client, you would need five additional clients at \$1000 each to increase your monthly billing by \$5000 for a \$25,000 total.

By using a daily planner, you can keep your activity records of the number of prospecting calls, the number of appointments, the number of sales, and the total amount.

Suppose your goal is \$5000 a month increase in billing and your records indicate it takes you 50 phone or cold contacting calls to get 15 appointments. Your presentation and closing skills warrant you five sales at an average of \$1000 each. You have now achieved your goal of \$25,000.

Sounds simple, doesn't it? Well, it is! All it takes is the belief in goal-setting and the desire to start.

Knowing the destination, you're halfway there. If what you are currently doing is not working to your satisfaction, try this: "Make measurable progress in reasonable time or you must make some changes."

I propose these changes in goal-setting and planning your day, week, month, and year. The secret to getting ahead is getting started. Form the habit of daily goal-setting; we first form habits, then habits form us.

Zig Ziglar said, "You become successful the moment you start moving toward a worthwhile goal." Goals give you energy, direction, and efficiency. Obstacles are the things a person sees when he takes his eyes off his goals.

Another benefit from goal-setting is alleviation of frustration. Frustration occurs when you're not sure of what you're going to be doing next. Uncertainty, lack of direction, and lack of control causes frustration. When your daily actions are in concert with your highest priorities, you have a credible claim to inner peace which eliminates frustration.

When goal-setting, consider self-improvement goals for all areas of your life., including family, health, and exercise.

A poem I heard years ago helped me turn toward goal-setting: "Build a better you," said God and I an-



Joe Hartman is sales manager at WBYN-FM/Boyertown, Pa.

swered, 'How? For I am so small and fragile there's so little I can do.' But God in all His wisdom said, 'Just build a better you.' " I believe goal-setting is just another way being better stewards of our time and possessions.

By now, you are probably thinking I am one of those super-duper positive thinkers. I confess, I do prefer to think positively and be goal-oriented as opposed to what?

In closing, let me share this philosophy with you: I don't know what tomorrow holds, but I know Who holds tomorrow. So I approach it with confidence and thanksgiving.

The Bible assures me that my past has been forgiven and forgotten; that takes care of my past. Jesus says, "I have come that you might have life and have it more abundantly" [John 10:10]; that takes care of my present. John 3:16 assures me I will have everlasting life; that takes care of my future. With my past forgiven, my present secure, and my future irrevocably guaranteed, why shouldn't we as Christians be enthusiastically optimistic about life? ^{R.B.}

PRACTICAL PROGRAMMING

continued from page 38

If the world rejects the Gospel, let it not be because of our lack of professionalism.

- Partner with other broadcasters to create effective spots, dramas, documentaries, sitcoms, or special events that will reach the world. The "CoMission" model shows how to partner with other stations and ministries without concern about who gets the credit.

- Systematically rotate the presentation of the Gospel. Have your

listeners heard the Gospel today?

- Use technological innovations to place creative Gospel presentations on marketplace stations.

- For stations with a Web site, use the Internet to reach users with the Gospel and create a way for seekers to interact with your staff on-line.

- Don't let a political agenda cloud the issue. Many associate an evangelical with the "religious right" and reject our politics before listening to our Good News.

John Fischer recently told a group of Northwestern College students Christians need to change the way

we view those who don't know Christ: we need to think of them as lost, not as wrong. If we think someone is wrong, we try to set them straight, immediately putting the Christian in a superior posture and the unbeliever on the defense. But when someone is lost, we try to help them find the way.

May God help us who direct and produce Christian radio and television to use those powerful tools to mobilize our listeners to reach out to the lost by creatively and effectively programming a clear presentation of the Gospel. ^{R.B.}

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Telemarketing Versus Teledevelopment

We have all received that "seamless siding" call, or one like it for pest control, a "free trip" to the Bahamas, or a call from the local retired police officers association.

These calls all have one thing in common. They are usually made by high pressure, don't-take-no-for-an-answer, often deceptive, and usually obnoxious telemarketers, trying to sell you something you don't want or need. Unless you own a telemarketing company, you probably hate telemarketing!

Telemarketers seem to call at the most inconvenient moment (usually just as you are sitting down to dinner) and they won't give up until you've slammed the phone in their ear (placing your Christian witness in serious jeopardy.) Will anyone really admit to having bought something from one of these pests?

Why would anyone use telemarketing as a way of raising funds? Especially from donors they have carefully acquired and painstakingly cultivated? Great question! Here's another one.

Have you ever received any annoying junk mail in your mailbox? Maybe from that same seamless siding company? Sure you have. Has that stopped your ministry from using the mail as a method of communicating with your donors?

Ever been offended by a radio or television commercial? Of course you have. Has that stopped your ministry from using radio and television as a way of communicating your message?

Ever been disgusted by a newspaper article or an editorial? Certainly. Has your concern kept you from using the newspaper as a method for telling your story to potential donors?

It's not the *medium*, but the *method* that's the problem here. That's why I like to distinguish *telemarketing* from *teledevelopment*.

Let me illustrate the difference, keeping in mind the "seamless sid-

ing" call we discussed earlier. Your daughter-in-law has just had your first grandchild. You have been given the task of informing the rest of the family. Of course you will choose the telephone as your *method* of sharing your *message*. Why?

1. Because of its familiarity — the folks will know it really is you who is calling because they know you.

2. Because of its immediacy — you have a story to tell and you want and need to tell it now.

3. Because of its intimacy — your relatives can hear the excitement and enthusiasm in your voice.

These are also the key ingredients to a good *telefund-raising* call. Unlike the "seamless siding" telemarketing call, you won't be offending your listener. Why? For the same reasons listed above.

1. **Because of familiarity.** Your donors know your ministry. Believe it or not, they want to hear from you. People who have given to your ministry have invested in it. And who doesn't want to hear from our stockbroker how our "stock" is doing? Even if it's not so good news, especially if it's good.

And, even though you may not be able to speak personally to each individual donor, you can share your message through a representative. (Remember the example of the birth announcement.) Some of the more sophisticated teledevelopment companies are even able to play your taped message to the donor, creating a much more personal call.

2. **Because of immediacy.** How often do you have a "breaking" story to tell your constituency? What better way to announce relief efforts for a disaster if your ministry deals in humanitarian causes? Or perhaps you have a critical financial shortfall. As with our birth announcement, some stories just have to be told now. There is no faster way to let your donor know of an immediate need.

3. **Because of intimacy.** The telephone is the next best way to telling



Bill Mustard has been a broadcaster and fund raiser for over 24 years. He is currently director of sales and marketing for MDS Communications, a telefund-raising firm in Tempe, Ariz.

your story in person. And in a way, you are telling your story in person, just not face to face. The key to good fund raising is good communication. I have a friend, the CEO for a Christian humanitarian organization, who makes 50 personal calls each week to his top donors.

Whether you make the calls personally, use a communications specialist, or tape a message, the intimacy of a phone call will pay big dividends to your ministry in the long run.

So, don't make the mistake of equating telemarketing with teledevelopment. The medium of the telephone can be a very useful fundraising tool. Just make sure you use the right method. There is a difference! ^{RB}

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Jay Sekulow

Growing Today



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Randall Terry

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Lessons from Legos

I am delighted to make my inaugural submission to *Religious Broadcasting* in this special issue examining children's broadcasting. The story I have to tell is a paradox, when a pile of Legos proved more interesting than a piece of radio equipment.

To better appreciate this story, a bit of background: Good News Radio has long been distinguished for programming featuring the best-loved hymns and songs of early Christendom. That and a sprinkling of time-honored teaching programs has been the mainstay for our mature audience. Most seem to enjoy what is reverent and dignified — most of the time.

But that's not to say our listeners are stodgy. Quite the contrary. Many are self-proclaimed kids in grandma and grandpa skin. The appeal of our children's programming among senior listeners is testimony to that.

At the heart of our kids programming is a 30-minute daily feature called *Your Story Hour*. This classic program has offered Bible-based and character building stories to generations of young people.

Good News Radio has featured the program at 4 p.m. since I was a child. As a young listener and later as program director, I always enjoyed the story but was left hungry for something more.

Then last spring, when a couple of kids and their grandmother toured the station, the missing link was found!

Understand that giving tours, in my mind, is a mixed blessing. On one hand it's a great time to meet listeners, but on the other hand, frankly, I feel somewhat embarrassed about our automated station.

"Where's the disc jockey?" guests ask. I usually stammer through a few apologetic words and head for our "automation room." It's here where guests can see our computer automation equipment, my desk, and the Legos.

Typically, I try to talk up our most current or exciting piece of equipment. Last spring that was our CD jukebox. "See, isn't this cool? Just like in pizza parlors without all the lights and stuff."

But on this particular day, as sometimes happens, my guests were not impressed. State-of-the-art equipment? Who cares! The kids' attention had shifted to the huge mound of Legos littering my desk. Some had been assembled in the form of sophisticated rescue helicopters and other models were works in progress.

Just as *Your Story Hour* was winding down, so was the tour. I excused myself to fade out the program and then the kids and I sat together, assembled Legos, and sang.

Eureka! We needed children's music, right after the story.

What was a mere hiccup of time devoted to kids, has now grown into a full hour of kids' programming. The 30-minute story, followed by a half hour of kids' music. Grandparents like it, kids love it, and so do I!

Some programmers will tell you that from time to time they go "outside the envelope" of their format. Frankly, with kids music, we rip it open! The segment moves at a fast clip with snappy tunes telling of God's love for kids of all ages, shapes, sizes, and colors.

The segment is still evolving, but what started with a token amount of songs has grown, with listener demand, into a full, half-hour feature, complete with kids' music liners and sponsor identifications (crediting the local Christian music store which donates the music).

We have been blessed to have found a young freelance artist who is the regular "voice" for the segment. We freshen her copy constantly. For just a few dollars a month, these kids' music liners garner a wealth of goodwill for the station. Liners tease other station features kids like and offer words of humor and advice just for kids.



Dawn Hibbard is the program director at Good News Radio in Riverside, Calif.

Peek into a recent kid's liner copy file and see what I mean:

Kids Music / Announcer Copy

* Kids music goes great with milk and cookies! (SFX. SLURP, SLURP, CHOMP, CHOMP!)

* Hey kids, be sure to tune in tonight for Unshackled! It's great radio drama at eight on Good News Radio. Just remember "great" and "eight."

* Learn the A-B-Cs of God's love afternoons at 4:30. It's kids' music on Good News Radio!

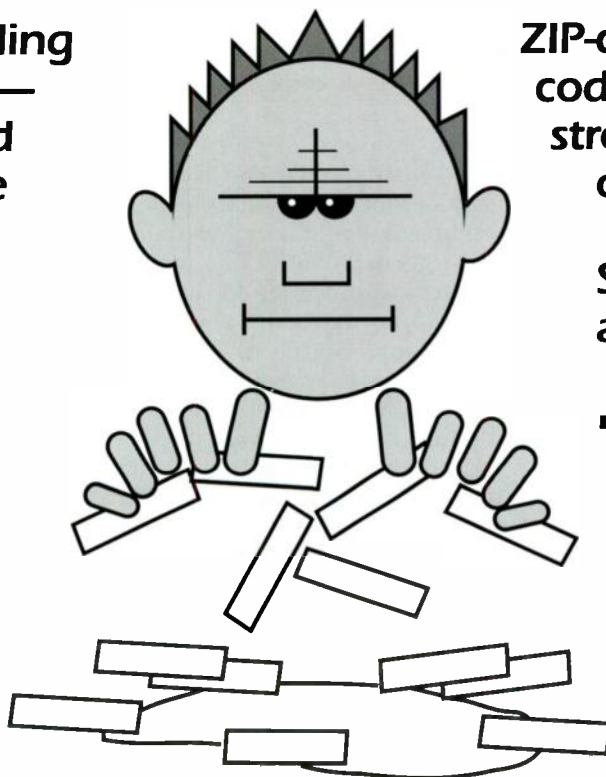
* Have you ever seen the guts of a radio station? (SFX. SLOSH, SLOSH, GURGLE.) Call us to set up a tour for your class, we'll show ya!

Simple little liners, sponsor IDs, and tons of music sure to make you break out in a smile! The missing link was found. And, it took kids to find it! Snap together some Legos and see what your station can build! [®]

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A Nation That Prays

Hoping to reel in the big one, the fisherman casts his line, only to have his hook sink into something so strong he can't bring it in. As he turns his reel, his boat moves slowly toward the place where his hook is caught firmly in the crevice of a rock. Prayer is like that. When we cast out our most sincere prayers, they take hold on the Rock; the Rock doesn't budge, but it changes our course of action as we draw nearer and nearer to Him.

The body of Christ in America today needs desperately to be casting our prayers to the Rock of our Salvation. Somewhere along the way, through two centuries of accumulating personal successes, immeasurable spiritual blessings, and incredible wealth, we have lost the sense of urgency for prayer.

The late Leonard Ravenhill, perceptive observer of our time, speaks a sobering truth for America: "The self-sufficient do not pray, the self-satisfied will not pray, the self-righteous cannot pray."

Sadly, we have become self-sufficient, boasting in our own abilities. We hold aloft our trophies, proclaiming, "Look what we have done!" We neglect the gracious Giver of all gifts.

We have become self-satisfied, prideful in our meaningless, material accomplishments. We rest, pampered and apathetic, in the arms of self-serving affluence. We forget the One who offers true satisfaction.

We have become self-righteous, basking lethargically in the sunlight streaming through our stained glass windows. We are arrogant, even about our faith. We ignore the Vine Who says, "Without Me you can do nothing." It is imperative we fail not to cast fervent prayers to the Rock.

In his 1863 Proclamation for a National Day of Fasting, Humiliation, and Prayer, President Abraham Lincoln said, "It behooves us, then to humble ourselves before the offended Power, to confess our national sins, and to pray for clemency and forgiveness."

In the context of the 1990s, Lincoln's words have the ring of prophecy — words spoken to his fellowmen in a time of internal war and personal tragedies, yet words which seem so very appropriate for us.

If we do not heed the warnings obvious in our critically ill culture, the illness could be terminal. Time and time again God has judged nations by the character of His people. When His people failed in their faith, their nations fell. We must cast our humble prayers to the Rock!

America's believers — broadcasters and brickmasons, preachers and plumbers, judges and janitors, editors and educators — must spend time on our faces before God Almighty, repenting of our personal sins as well as our national sins.

How to Pray

Considering the cultural and spiritual crises in our land, when the need is so overwhelming, how does one begin to pray? First, every man, woman, and child who claims the name of Christ should pray in earnest for a deepening personal relationship with the Savior. Daily personal confession and repentance is prerequisite for a life of faith. Then we should each pray for our families; pray God's power and protection over them and pray that each one will be Christ's light to the darkness.

Second, believers should pray for their workplaces or classrooms, wherever they spend their day away from home. And we who use words, spoken or written, as our tool in what we call ministry, must place our emphasis first on the Word. Pray for coworkers, classmates, teachers, supervisors, bosses, and subordinates. Pray for God to use you in your ministry of words to bring honor and glory to Jesus Christ.

Next, pray for the unsaved — family members, friends, acquaintances, coworkers, and others whom God puts on your heart. The DeMoss Foundation urges us, in *The Rebirth*



For 13 years, Randall Murphree has been editor of *American Family Association Journal*, a monthly magazine covering moral and social issues impacting the family.

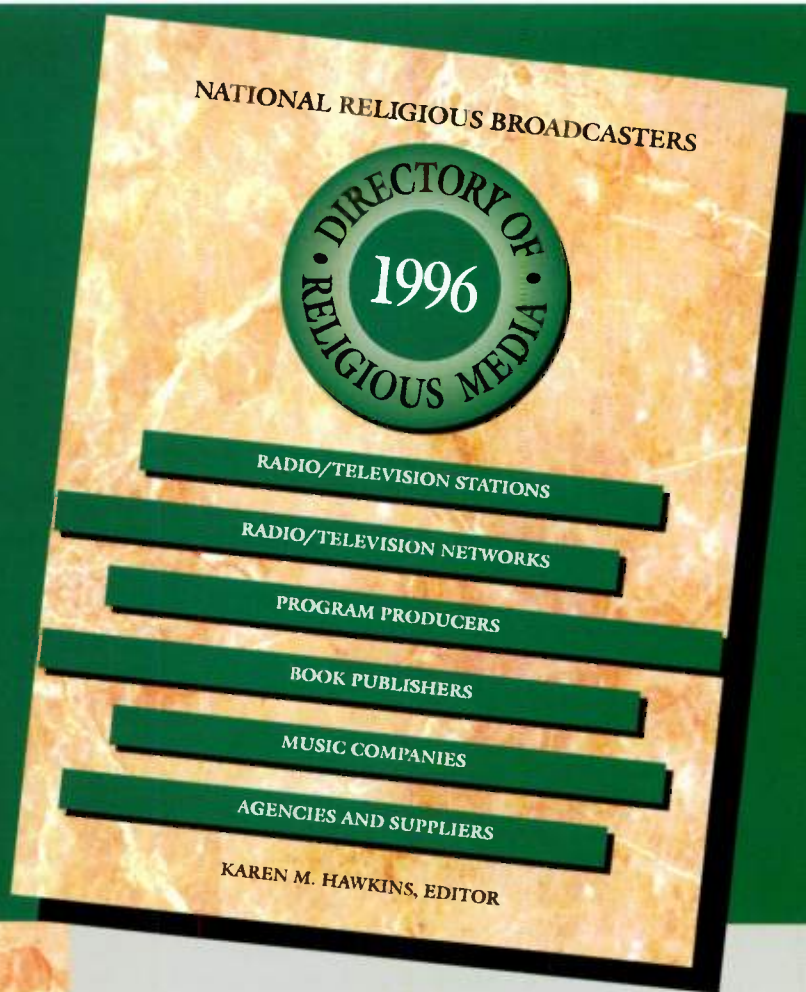
of *America*, to pray collectively "for the millions of people in our nation who are trapped by sin."

Then, pray for those in civil authority over you. Pray for your city and county officials, your governor and other state leaders. Pray for our president, your congressman and your senators. Pray for the judges and attorneys who direct traffic in our courtrooms. Pray collectively for all those in positions of national leadership. Pray that godly men and women will be elected and appointed to public office.

Finally, pray for leaders in the body of Christ across America and around the world. Begin with your pastor and other church staff members, elders, and deacons or board members of your church, your Sunday school teacher, and other volunteers who devote their time to lifting up Jesus Christ. Pray for your denominational leaders and executives. And finally, pray for leaders in the countless ministries and missions God has put in place to help spread the Gospel.

On the eve of this National Day of Prayer, commit your heart and life to prayer, our avenue of communication with a loving God. The great spiritual movements in history have usually been prompted by crises similar to what we now face; they have always been preceded and promulgated by prayer. It is critical that we be about casting our constant prayers to the Rock of our Salvation. ^R

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ISBN # 1-880040-05-0

RECORDING REVIEWS

BY DARLENE PETERSON

Global Warming (Europa)

various artists

mastered by Ken Love

Sparrow

The first episode of the television series *The Story of English* opens with soldiers of the former Soviet Union marching on patrol as underground Russian rock music — sung in English — plays. The point? To show how English is often the language of rock music created overseas. *Global Warming [Europa]*, a truly inspired title, gives us a sampler of Christian pop and rock music from five European countries: Norway, Holland, Sweden, Ireland, and England — all sung in English. With the vast size and creative energy of the United States, it's easy to forget Americans do not have the market on creativity.

Norway's **What About** is a six-piece pop/rock band which has received critical acclaim both in its home country and the United Kingdom. Catchy melodies and a fresh, upbeat sound with simple, yet largely scriptural lyrics characterize the three songs from this group. Outselling Steven Curtis Chapman, PRF, and Amy Grant in Holland is that country's **Ralph Van Manen Band**. Its radio-friendly, uplifting music has many in Europe taking increasing notice of this talented group of Christians.

Since the mid-1980s, **Edward Negussle** has been a prominent figure in Sweden's Christian record market with his gifted vocals and progressive pop stylings. Ireland's **Split Level** delivers an edgy rock sound that has been compared to U2, Simple Minds, and The Alarm. The lyrics of its three songs are direct and blunt, decrying social injustices, spiritual hypocrisy, and the loss of innocence.

The lyrics of England's **World Wide Message Tribe** would work well as hymns or simple, traditional praise songs but instead have been set to the "dance music" sound extremely popular in the United Kingdom. This makes for music that is fun, interesting, and joyful. Check out *Global Warming* to hear what our European brothers and sisters in Christ are thinking and performing.

Breakthrough

Larry Cangelosi

producer: Jean Prosper

executive producer: Larry Cangelosi

Lare Music Productions

Entering his third decade as a Christian musician, saxophonist Larry Cangelosi's performed professionally with Sarah Vaughn, Della Reese, Fred Waring, The Tommy Dorsey Orchestra, Whitley Phipps, Paul Mickelson, and the Heritage Singers. He is also "Uncle Larry," co-host of the international children's radio program *Your Story Hour*.

On this recording, Cangelosi plays a variety of contemporary and traditional songs of inspiration and praise. With great skill and expression, he performs on soprano, alto, tenor, and baritone saxophone, B-flat clarinet, C flute, and alto flute. Several female vocalists and Cangelosi sing the lyrics. Cangelosi's musicianship and the variety of worshipful, joyful, tender, and inspiring songs he's selected to perform make this a sunny, delightful record-

ing. Favorites include the upbeat title cut, sweet and tender "Child's Prayer," and uplifting "Happy Am I."

The Swing Sessions

Dave Boyer and the Ralph Carmichael Big Band
producer, arranger, and conductor: Ralph Carmichael
executive producers: Dale Mathews and Dean Diehl
Brentwood

If you love big band music, crooners like Frank Sinatra, and the Lord, this is the recording for you! In the upbeat, relaxing style of swing, Dave Boyer and Ralph Carmichael's Big Band bring us songs like "I'm So Glad Jesus Lifted Me," "Because He Lives," and "'Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus." Boyer's voice compares well with Sinatra's and the musicianship of the band rivals the best I've heard. Having seen Boyer perform live and heard his testimony, the songs he sings on this recording have special significance — he lived a worldly life in his pursuit of fame in secular music until his life started falling apart and he returned to the Lord.

Ambiance — Flute

producer: Keith Mason

executive producer: Ed Kee

Brentwood

I can't fail to mention this new addition to Brentwood's Ambiance series. The songs selected, arrangements, and performances on this recording live up to the series' title quite well, producing a relaxing, yet inspirational atmosphere. Songs featured include "In The Garden," "As the Deer," "Be Thou My Vision," and "Trust and Obey." The musicians in this series tend to be anonymous, but flutists Sam Levine and Wendy Postick deserve mention for their excellence on this recording.

A Capella Gershwin

A Capella Project III

Glad

producer:

Light Records

Glad faced a real challenge in translating George Gershwin's music to a capella vocal arrangements because he wrote it for symphonies and piano (particularly pieces like "Rhapsody in Blue" and "An American in Paris"). But the group succeeded, with harmonies and invention rich enough to do justice to the Gershwin genius. Glad has created a unique tribute in time for the centennial of lyricist Ira's birth (George was born two years later). All those who are unabashedly romantic will love this recording, which includes favorites "They All Laughed," "They Can't Take That Away From Me," and "Someone to Watch Over Me."

Simultaneously with *A Capella Gershwin*, Glad is releasing its *A Capella Project III*. Well-known hymns and inspiring original songs, all done in inventive contemporary styles, make this a strong new release in what has been a very popular series.

Darlene Peterson is the music reviewer for Religious Broadcasting.

THE BOOK SHELF

BY HARRY CONAY

Becoming Soul Mates

by Les & Leslie Parrott
Zondervan, 1995

The content of this weekly, devotional guide — nicely summarized by its subtitle “Captivating Spiritual Intimacy in the Early Years of Marriage” — is geared to young marrieds. Each of its insightful 52 sections contains a brief, introductory essay on “a marriage-relevant topic,” a passage of Scripture, personal insights from “devoted couples,” questions and considerations for self-assessment and application, and a concluding prayer. While all couples striving to successfully establish and maintain a God-honoring marriage should read it, as a tool for group study, this book would seem particularly beneficial.

Life. Any Questions?

by Greg Laurie
Word, 1995

In this small, handbook-sized volume, Greg Laurie confronts some big questions pertaining to emptiness, loneliness, fear, guilt, death, and forgiveness. He addresses the meaning of Jesus’ crucifixion and answers the questions: “Why Am I Here?” and “What Now?” Referring to the Bible as the “‘internet’ to eternity,” he urges us to “explore its contents together . . . [to] tackle the big issues of *Life*.” Laurie communicates these issues simply, directly, and concisely in this warmly written, unpretentious, user-friendly book which ultimately points to Jesus as the answer.

Building a Home in a Pull-Apart World

by Bill and Vonette Bright
New Life Publications, 1995

In this enthusiastic little book, the Brights offer us four “power principles for [maintaining] a happier marriage” in a stress-filled world. These four principles or steps cover a variety of marriage-and-family issues, leading up to preparation for retirement. Because each chapter concludes with suggestions and/or questions “For Reflection, Discussion, and Action,” this book is well-suited for small group study. Worth a look.

Where Was God at 9:02 a.m.?

by Robin Jones with Sandy Dengler
Thomas Nelson, 1995

This rack-sized paperback depicts the horrific bombing of the Alfred Murrah federal building in Oklahoma City, not in the sensationalized manner of secular news reportage, but from the perspective of God’s grace on both the survivors and those involved in rescue and recovery operations. “Our book title . . . is not a spiritual question. The biblical question is, ‘How can I discern Him there?’” the authors ask. (Robin Jones is general manager of KQCV-AM-KNTL-FM/Oklahoma City.)

In addition to examining how God intervened in the lives of these people, the final chapters address deeper questions briefly: Did God instigate the explosion? “Did He passively allow it? Did He lack the power to prevent it?” And, “Why did some live and others die?” If you are

uncertain how to answer these questions, or if you have ever wondered where God is in your everyday life, you must read this book.

Women Leaving the Workplace

by Larry Burkett
Moody Press, 1995

It is not uncommon to find books offering advice to women leaving home to enter the workforce, but this one takes the opposite stance and thereby fills a vital niche. After covering important personality-and-planning issues, Larry Burkett, shares his expertise in money-management by addressing a variety of financial concerns. Related matters (such as “Homeschooling” and “Reasons for Returning to Work”) are also treated and useful appendices (such as “Questions to Ask *Before* Quitting Your Job”) are attached. All Christian women contemplating such a move should read this comprehensive book.

What Every Mom Needs

by Elisa Morgan and Carol Kuykendall
Zondervan, 1995

In this volume, the authors identify nine basic needs of mothers. Each chapter, expounding a particular need, also contains “Building Blocks” (offering wonderful practical applications), suggestions for further reading, and a “Mothering Maxim” (such as “Mothering matters . . . because today makes a difference tomorrow”). Varied typography adds to the book’s allure. Crammed with sound advice, this warm and inviting book should be well-received by moms and MOPS, i.e., Mothers of Pre-school Children.

The Coming Revival

by Bill Bright
New Life Publications, 1995

Addressing “a growing awareness of the moral and spiritual decadence of our country,” Bill Bright felt convicted to “fast and pray for 40 days for a revival in America and the fulfillment of the Great Commission in obedience to our Lord’s command.” In this sincere and passionate book, Bright invites all Christians to consider fasting and praying, too, and he provides sound, comprehensive, spiritual, and practical guidelines (including health warnings) for doing so. This is an invitation worth considering.

Transforming America from the Inside Out

by Kay Cole James with David Kuo
Zondervan, 1995

Claiming that America is suffering from “cultural AIDS,” the authors tell us that “to transform America, we must be *changed* people,” and they remind us that the truths of holy Scripture “must be the mantra of our existence. They need to be preached from every pulpit, proclaimed by every believer, and lived by Christ’s people.” Thus, the emphasis of this little book is on individual Christian social activism. While not dissimilar in theme

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THE BOOK SHELF

continued from page 53

to last year's spate of culture-wars books, distinguishing this effort are Kay Cole James' unique Bush administration insights and her politically conservative, African-American perspective. This is a book to peruse.

It's Better to Believe

by Kenneth H. Cooper
Thomas Nelson, 1995

Written by the doctor who coined the term "aerobics," the main premise of this detailed health and exercise book is that "intrinsic belief . . . characterized by such qualities as profound spiritual commitment, a sense of having found the ultimate meaning of life, a devotion to heartfelt prayer, and a quest for a truly transformed life . . . has the capacity to spark major personal enrichment in every area of life — including dramatic improvements in physical health, emotional well-being, and levels of fitness."

But despite Kenneth Cooper's Christian background and scriptural allusions, his medical premise doesn't depend on the *object* of intrinsic belief — only *intrinsic belief* itself. Presumably, therefore intrinsic belief in Buddha or some generic New Age gods will produce the same positive health benefits as heartfelt belief in Jesus Christ. Thus, while the book may impart sound medical advice, Christian readers must exercise (no pun intended) theological discernment.

The Micah Mandate

by George Grant
Moody Press, 1995

Using Micah 6:8 ["He has showed you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?"] as the framework for his argument, George Grant urges "a substantive lifestyle balance where both faith and work are operative, where both holiness and service motivate, where both Word and deed dominate, [and] where the Gospel is proclaimed in both doctrine and in life." In addition to scriptural insights, Grant employs rich historical detail and anecdotal illustration to amplify such thoughts as, "we want the same salvation as in the Old Time Religion — but with half the hassle and a third less guilt." I thoroughly enjoyed this well-written and carefully organized tome and I think you will, too.

Returning to Your First Love

by Tony Evans
Moody Press, 1995

Tony Evans divides this wordy book into two parts: the first identifying "attitudes and actions that get us off track" from our love of God and the second offering suggestions for how to regain it. Some will undoubtedly disagree with Evans' premise that "a carnal Christian is a genuine Christian," and this will hinder their reception of the bulk of his message. But overall, Evans offers a well-argued, motivational pep-talk for Christians who feel estranged from the blessings of loving Jesus and living a God-honoring life.

The Power of Story

by Leighton Ford
NavPress, 1995

Unlike those who advocate fancy methodology and gimmickry to lead people to Christ, in this curious book Leighton Ford looks to one of mankind's oldest devices: storytelling. "While not denying other forms of 'rational evangelism,'" Ford feels "that *narrative evangelism is an evangelism for the times we live in* — a postmodern, anti-rational, deconstructed age." The formula is this: "Story produces a Vision, which then transforms Character, resulting in evangelism." Our stories are our personal testimonies. "When people encounter us, they will see the Story of God written upon our lives." He illustrates this by interweaving inspirational testimonies related by three recurring characters. How did they come to know Christ? Only if you read the story will you find out.

Rebel with a Cause

by Franklin Graham
Thomas Nelson, 1995

Franklin Graham, son of (and heir apparent to) Billy Graham, openly talks about his youthful rebelliousness, his coming to peace with God, and numerous adventures on his way to becoming president of Samaritan's Purse (a worldwide Christian relief and evangelical organization). Graham comes across as a real-life Holden Caulfield: restless, rebellious, in search of self-identity, and longing for adventure. Doing poorly at school, he smoked, drank, and was expelled from college.

He learned that "being the son of Billy Graham . . . was a two-edged sword." Although it had its advantages (one of which was meeting various U.S. presidents in the White House), the downside was that he was held to a higher standard. "I thought this was unfair, and to some extent I still do. But . . . with privilege comes responsibility." He thus depicts his growth from irresponsible youth to responsible adult.

The turning point takes place in a hotel room. "Something was missing in my life. I felt I was a Christian. I was the son of Billy Graham, I went to church, and I memorized Scripture. What more did it take? . . . That night instead of going to the bar for a couple of beers, I found myself alone in my room reading the Gospel of John. When I came to the third chapter, I read not just that Jesus told Nicodemus he had to be born again, but I also grasped that Franklin Graham had to be born again as well."

With regard to his association with Samaritan's Purse, Graham shares numerous, touching examples of that organization's efforts to help troubled people around the world, often amidst the shot-and-shell of hostile, military activity. Overall, this is an exciting, insightful, well-written, and thoroughly engrossing prodigal son saga you will not want to miss.

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

Reader Response to Internet, Book Discussion

I want to briefly continue touching on the subject of the Internet. More readers have contacted me on that topic than any other I have written.

Rick Whitmer writes to say broadcaster Ron Hutchcraft now has his own World Wide Web site at <http://www.hutchcraft.com>. It's an official part of the Gospel Communications Network (<http://gospelcom.net>). The site is designed to challenge and encourage Christians in their daily walks with Christ and spiritual seekers looking to find out more about Jesus. Hutchcraft provides practical answers to a variety of life issues, including loneliness, fear, parenting, sex, spiritual direction, and more.

According to marketing consultant Ron Hancy, WWGM-FM/Jackson, Tenn., a full-time southern gospel radio station, is online at <http://jackson.usit.net/goodnews>. The station's plans include putting audio cuts on the service along with graphics and text.

And station manager Gary Lesniewski says KVNE-FM-KGLY-FM/Tyler, Texas, is on the Net at <http://users.aol.com/kvne/kgly.htm>.

If you're considering extending your communication reach beyond the airwaves to include the telephone wires, you may want to contact these ministries to see how they did it. And, of course, be sure to repeatedly visit Christian publishers' Web sites, such as Zondervan at <http://www.zondervan.com> and Baker Book House at <http://www.bakerbooks.com>. If you subscribe to America OnLine, you'll also want to check out Christianity OnLine (Keyword CO) where Tyndale House Publishers, Word Publishing, and Zondervan maintain separate feature sites.

Book Discussions

Another previous column eliciting reader response was "Starting On-Air Book Discussion Groups," where I suggested stations regularly conduct conversations with members of their audience around a specific book and its theme. To facilitate this, program hosts should consider using discussion guides many publishers offer in conjunction with new books. For example, *Halftime* by Bob Buford has its own separate discussion guide. Other books might have discussion questions printed at the end of each chapter, such as *The Life and Death Dilemma* by Joni Eareckson Tada.

Theresa Spevacek Walsh of Tyndale takes the concept one step further. "On-air discussion groups lend themselves well to increasingly popular Christian fiction," she says. Tyndale has published fiction discussion guides to complement its novels *A Voice in the Wind* by Francine Rivers, *A Tale of Three Kings* by Gene Edwards, and *The Eleventh Hour* by Michael Phillips.

Each contains six sessions that raise serious questions based on the themes considered in the novels. The questions provoke discussion on issues such as a Christian's social and political responsibility, the role anger should

or shouldn't play in a Christian's life, and ways to respond appropriately to crisis. The sessions include selected questions from the novels, pertinent Scripture verses, and eight to ten discussion questions.

For example, from *A Voice in the Wind*, comes this excerpt: "How is it possible that you and I have two children so opposed to all we believe in, Phoebe? I've worked my entire life in order to give my children everything I never had at their age — wealth, education, position. And now I look at them and wonder if my life is simple vanity. They are selfish, without the least restraint upon their appetites. They haven't the smallest fiber of moral character."

"Don't judge them so harshly, Dedimus. It's neither your fault, nor mine, nor theirs. It's the world they live in."

The verse selected for discussion is "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it" [Proverbs 22:6]. And the discussion questions are: "Is it enough to be godly parents? Does that ensure your children will follow your example? What is the most important gift parents can give to their children?"

Using discussion guides provided by publishers, station hosts simply have to initiate the program. Have fun! ^{RB}



Jonathan Petersen is director of strategic marketing/corporate affairs for Zondervan Publishing House (<http://www.zondervan.com> or AOL Keyword "zon"). A former religion news editor of UPI Radio Network, he is a requested speaker on media practices. His e-mail address is jonathan.petersen@zph.com.



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CALENDAR CLOSE-UP

May 21-26

National Religious Broadcasters International Conference; Jerusalem. Information: (703) 330-7000.

June 2-3

DVD Briefing: Implications and Applications; The Red Lion Hotel, San Jose, Calif. Information: (800) 800-5474.

June 4-6

REPLItech International; San Jose Convention Center, San Jose, Calif. Information: (800) 800-5474.

June 6-9

Third Montreux International Radio Symposium and Technical Exhibition; Montreux Convention and Exhibition Centre, Montreux, Switzerland. Information: (41) 21 963-3220, fax (41) 21 963-8851.

June 15-17

American Booksellers Association Convention; Chicago. Information: (800) 9-BOOK-IT.

July 2-5

57th North American Christian Convention; Dallas. Information: (513) 598-NACC.

July 9-12

International Christian Visual Media Association Conference; Inn at the Park Hotel, Anaheim, Calif. Information: (303) 694-4286.

July 13-18

Christian Booksellers Association International Convention & Exposition; Anaheim Convention Center, Anaheim, Calif. Information: Judy Kohles, (719) 576-7880.

July 25-27

National Religious Broadcasters Southwestern Regional Convention; Dallas/Fort Worth Marriott Hotel, Dallas. Information: (318) 783-1560.

August 25-27

National Religious Broadcasters Western Regional

Convention; Westin South Coast Plaza, Costa Mesa, Calif. Information: Dennis Worden, (619) 444-8400, e-mail 74114,1655@compuserv.com.

September 4-6

National Religious Broadcasters Public Policy Conference; Capital Hilton, Washington, D.C. Information: (703) 330-7000.

September 11-14

National Religious Broadcasters Southeastern Regional Convention; Radisson Resort, Charlotte, N.C. Information: Dianne Williams, (423) 892-6814, ext. 200, e-mail 103177,3462@compuserv.com.

September 12-14

National Religious Broadcasters Midwestern Regional Convention; Maranatha Bible and Missionary Conference, Muskegon, Mich. Information: Scott Keegan, (616) 772-7300, e-mail 76226,3612@compuserv.com.

September 16-21

National Quartet Convention; Louisville, Ky. Information: Clark Beasley, (800) 846-8499.

September 22-25

Christian Stewardship Association Convention; Columbus, Ohio. Information: (414) 483-1945.

September 23-27

LITT-WORLD (international print media conference); Hoddeson, England. Information: Sharyl Sich, (708) 893-1141 (in Illinois).

October 1-3

VIDEO EXPO New York; Jacob K. Javits Convention Center, New York. Information: (800) 800-5474.

October 10-12

National Religious Broadcasters Eastern Regional Convention; Sandy Cove Bible Conference, North East, Md. Information: Steve Cross, (703) 534-2000.

If your organization is planning a major meeting, seminar, conference, or convention, which would be of interest to religious broadcasters or related professionals, *Religious Broadcasting* would like to include it in Calendar Close-up. Please send the information at least three months prior to event c/o:

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To Tell the Truth

My niece Taylor is an addict. Her condition requires hours of specialized caregiving — not everyone can treat her. The affliction has no known cure, though the six-year-old veteran of kindergarten may grow out of it. She's addicted to stories.

Taylor is not interested in the entertaining fantasy tales of Dr. Seuss or Beatrix Potter. She craves real life stories about people she knows. Curling up on my mother's lap, she voices the familiar request, "Tell me a story." "Nana" is the chief storyteller in the family. With a great memory for detail, she fills "Tay's" equally great need to know everything about everybody in her life.

Recent stories include tales of my brother's pet gerbil, great aunt Helen's run-in with Bernie the sheepdog, and my gear-wrenching first attempts to drive a stick shift. While most of the stories have an element (or two) of humor and a few of them are a little sad, they all have a common thread: truth.

Taylor's fascination with the truth is not at all uncommon in children and all too uncommon in adults. Certainly, children enjoy flights of fancy and games of make believe. But a child loves to learn, to expand, and to grow. With this in mind, what responsibilities have religious broadcasters — bearers of Truth — to this vast audience?

This issue explored those responsibilities. In "Forecasting a Sunny Future," the Children's Sunshine Network's light shone brightly. The network's staff programs a weekly variety to capture the attention and imagination of children while providing them with stranger-than-fiction news and the truth of Christ.

"Constructing a Successful Children's Series" provided important information on what it takes to go head-to-head with secular children's television, using two creative series as blueprints: *Clowning Around* and *Sunshine Factory*.

"Cheering for *Children's Bible Hour*" focused on Uncle Charlie Vander Meer's enthusiastic recollections of a lifetime of broadcasting to children and projections of the ministry's future.

And "Progress Report on Children's Programming" gave two professionals' opinions on children's broadcasting, pointing out what works — and what doesn't.

Could Jesus have been alluding to a child's quest for truth when He said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these," (Matthew 19:14)? He undoubtedly appreciated their attraction to Him and their recognition that He was (and is) Truth.

Truth is a precious possession. Truth stands the test of time. Truth is a necessity in relationships. Truth is a scarcity in a world of competition and lofty promises. But more importantly, truth is the path that leads children to Christ.

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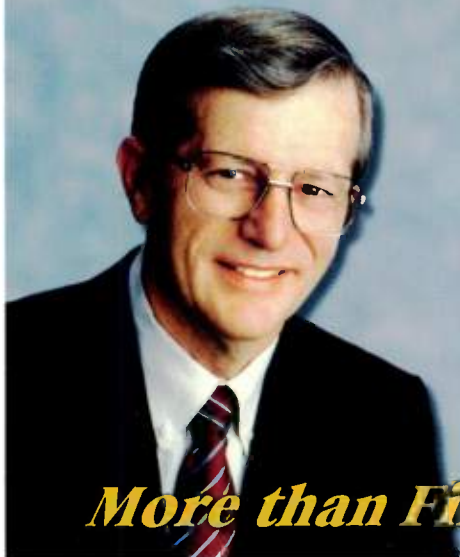
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