

Businessman Ray Davis Helps Ministries Broaden TV Exposure

Affiliated Media Group helps buy airtime on stations such as USA Network and the Discovery Channel

Ray Davis is passionate about giving media ministries exposure beyond the church walls.

Davis is founder and CEO of Affiliated Media Group (AMG), the largest full-service Christian advertising agency in the world. AMG is responsible for purchasing airtime for a who's who of ministers on Christian and mainstream TV networks. They include Joel Osteen, Bishop T.D. Jakes, Creflo Dollar, Paula White, Greg Laurie and David Jeremiah.

AMG lands airtime for these ministries on Black Entertainment Television, Independent Television Network (formerly PAX TV), ABC Family Channel, USA Network, Daystar, The Inspiration Network, Discovery Channel, Court TV and Fox Network. Those networks and other TV outlets reach more than 97 million households nationwide, as well as viewers in 64 countries.

"Our goal is to give our media ministries the greatest degree of exposure and visibility possible, while at the same time negotiating efficient rates and costs," Davis told Charisma. "We represent no one that we do not believe in, and make it a point of learning as much as we can about each of our clients, so that we can better assist them in achieving their media goals."

He sees AMG working hand in hand with the media ministries in

fulfilling the Great Commission. "I certainly believe that what Affiliated Media Group does is a ministry in every sense of the word," said Davis, 56, who started AMG in 1989. "We consider ourselves to be part or an extension of the ministries we represent and truly believe that our company has been called for such a time as this to help evangelize the world."

Van Dalton, one of the co-owners of the company, echoed Davis' sentiment. "We understand the pastors' mind, heart and the commission that has been given to them," said Dalton, 47. "We've seen people come to Christ through our ministry clients' programs. That's probably the most critical and passionate part of what we do. It's absolutely rewarding. It's why we love what we do."

Osteen, pastor of 30,000-strong Lakewood Church in Houston, said, "Affiliated Media has provided us the expertise and media strategy that has been essential in managing and growing our television outreach."

Jakes, pastor of the 28,000-member Potter's House in Dallas, echoed his sentiment. "Ray Davis and Affiliated Media believe in what we are doing to evangelize the world for Christ," Jakes told Charisma. "Their commitment of service and dedication to our goals continues to be the reason why we partner with their agency year after year after year."

Davis said AMG has access to airtime that no other agency has been able to gain. "For example, the USA Network had a no religion policy," said Davis, noting that AMG has 105 ministry and humanitarian group clients. "But we were able to break through the ice and get the first religious program on the USA Network in early 2005. That was Joel Osteen, and that opened

up additional airtime for our other clients.”

AMG, which has its headquarters in Jacksonville, Fla., and marketing, public relations and production offices in Dallas, Chicago, South Bend, Ind., and Oklahoma City, Okla., has nearly 70 employees.

Davis, who with his wife, Betsy, attends Southpoint Community Church, a charismatic congregation in Jacksonville, said despite breakthroughs on general market TV networks, media ministries face challenges, including “diminishing airtime opportunities.”

“There has been a move ... to try to get the Federal Communications Commission to forbid paid religion on the air,” Davis said. “The argument of these atheists is that religion offends some people. I do see this as a real threat. They’ve already taken prayer out of schools and the Ten Commandments out of the courtrooms.

“As the world changes and drifts further away from God, who says they can’t take paid religion off the television? I also see government interference and regulations hindering [Christian programs],” he continued. “We have to be very diligent and strategic in everything we do.”

Eric Tiansay