

Channel Surfing

SPOTLIGHT

Life Focus Breaks Into Secular Markets

News magazine on TBN also finds airtime on PBS.

The creators of a compelling new TV program are experiencing some success after the show's first season on Christian networks and dozens of PBS stations. "The last year and half has been an up-and-down adventure in watching God perform miracle after miracle," says Mona Hennein, president and chief executive of Life Focus.

Launched last year, Life Focus uses a news magazine format to report on topics ranging from gambling to MySpace to infidelity to child abuse (see). More than 100 million can tune in on networks such as Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN), PBS and Total Living Network.

"[Our] passion is to present a winsome Christian message in a storytelling format that breaks through some of the barriers people sometimes have to hearing God's message," says host Dan Meyer, senior pastor of the nondenominational Christ Church of Oak Brook, Ill.

Meyer donates his time to Life Focus at no charge because of its "incredible, impactful mission." Says the Yale graduate and theologian: "We tell great stories in which Christian values are lifted up through the testimony of people."

Hennein says that during her many years in broadcast journalism she has always wanted to produce real-life stories of faith. Now that she is doing it she challenges her peers to reach audiences through "the raw stories of faith."

Stories on Life Focus have included: "Cain's Redemption," a

peek into the lives of prisoners serving life sentences in Louisiana State Penitentiary; “90 Minutes in Heaven,” the recounting of Don Piper’s 90-minute death experience following a car accident; and “Snow Baby,” a look at embryo adoption through the eyes of an adoptive couple.

Hennein says “Snow Baby” presents a subtle pro-life message. “We’re trying to present Christianity to ordinary people,” she says. TBN was one of the first networks to embrace the show’s idea, according to Hennein. But she says Life Focus is different from many Christian programs. Everyone struggles through difficult times, she notes, and her goal is to provoke people to dialogue with God.

“This program examines the very real questions all of us face: God, are you there? Do you care? Do you see me in my struggles?” Hennein says. “The answers are, He is there; He does care; and He sees right through hearts.”

—SUZY A. RICHARDSON with PAUL STEVEN GHIRINGHELLI

Organizers of **Lou Engle’s prayer movement known as TheCall** are expecting hundreds of thousands to come to the nation’s capital this month for concerted prayer and fasting. “America is a nation in crisis,” says Engle, who decries the 50 million babies killed by abortion since 1973. “What is coming to America if God brings a day of reckoning?” GOD TV is planning live coverage of the 12-hour event from Washington’s National Mall, beginning at 10 a.m. on Saturday, Aug. 16. Engle’s last visit to the capital in 2000 for the TheCall D.C. attracted nearly 400,000 people. “Eight years later, the stakes are higher than ever,” Engle says. “But if we call upon God, He will be merciful to us.”

Historian William Federer’s Faith in History premiered exclusively on the Total Christian Television (TCT) network in

June. The program uses detailed and exhaustive research to make the claim that America is a nation established on biblical principles. "I simply take historical [fact and events] and don't edit out faith," Federer says. As a nationally known speaker and best-selling author, Federer is able to present his Christ-centered opinions hundreds of times a year through secular media interviews. His **American Minute** radio feature is broadcast daily nationwide. He says he sees a contradiction in modern-day America in that many cultural influences exhibit a tolerance for all people groups except Christians. "Ironically, it's the Christian faith that gave birth to tolerance," he says. "Jesus never forced anyone to believe in Him."