

FeedBack

My Turn

In the midst of the Ted Haggard scandal, I have yet to hear one Christian leader say that this has caused him to deal with his own deepest struggles. It is as if Christian leaders are riding around on their own bicycles without helmets. When one falls and cracks his skull open, they all rush alongside him, get him to the hospital, comfort his family and take over his ministry responsibilities. But none of them goes out and buys helmets.

If any Christian man says to himself, "This could never happen to me," may he live happily ever after. Haggard's sin may not be your own, but every one of us is a small step away from destruction without the grace of God and the presence of honest and caring brothers.

The sad truth is that the only men who are accountable are the ones who want to be. Now, at least, Ted Haggard wants to be. Do you?

Gordon Dalbey
Santa Barbara, California

The Changing Face of Christian TV

I have always wanted to know how the founders of Daystar Television got their start in Christian media ("Wired to Reach the World" by Marcia Davis-Seale, November). It's amazing to see God work in the lives of two people who had a heart to do something for God.

It's good to know not all television programming is bad. The story of Marcus and Joni Lamb has inspired me, since I hope to one day own a small radio or television station. Thanks for sharing their story. I'm a media television host, and now I want to develop a business plan.

L. Robinson

Albany, New York

I'm an older person who has been so blessed by some of the Christian programming on television. I can remember the early days when there were no Christian stations and very little Christ-centered programming.

Back in those days spirituality was so dry. Thank God for pioneers such as Paul and Jan Crouch, who have given their blood, sweat and tears to get the gospel message out.

Dorothy Jordan

Ashland, Alabama

J. Lee Grady's editorial criticizing Christian television was condescending (Fire in My Bones, November). Many people would agree with his observations, but most of these people are part of the boomer generation. They are younger and from the United States—and they are a small group if you consider the worldwide impact of the Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN).

Even though I would like to see changes, I acknowledge that you get what you pay for. If older people are the ones paying for TBN, then their church culture will be reflected on that network.

I've been watching TBN for the last several years since the

Lord helped me deal with some of my perceptions. I can see how Paul Crouch Jr. and Matt Crouch are fighting huge giants in order to initiate change.

Have you ever watched newer TBN programs such as Travel the Road or those on JCTV? Have you ever seen some of the Praise the Lord programs featuring Matt and Laurie Crouch having a roundtable discussion with known, contemporary prophets and pastors? It is excellent programming.

Cynthia Landry
Houston, Texas

I have been reading Charisma for years, and I was shocked by J. Lee Grady's criticism of Christian television. He has used his position to divide the body of Christ. He made some insulting comments about Christian TV.

Many believers—including many who are under 75—not only watch but also are strengthened and edified by these programs. We are grateful you made favorable comments about Marcus and Joni Lamb of Daystar, but you owe the rest of the ministers on TV an apology.

Ron Beltz
Delta, Ohio

Lee Grady said what many of us have been thinking for a long time. Christian television in many ways has become a historical relic. It's out of touch with believers and unbelievers who desperately need an effective witness of Christ. This is extremely tragic because television is still perfectly positioned to reach into homes to bring the dose of hope that everyone yearns for.

Peter Schulze
Van, Texas

I share your indignation about the current state of Christian television. The huckstering of “Jesus junk” and constant appeals for money by those who propose abundant prosperity has lowered the integrity of broadcasters who are called to spread the gospel.

Vernon B. Mayhall
San Andreas, California

I too am appalled by the weirdness, greediness and worldliness of much of so-called Christian TV programming. The applause is phony and the sets look as if they are out of Las Vegas. And the preachers work audiences into a lather of emotion. Those are just a few of my least favorite things about Christian TV. Where did we go wrong in our theology?

Tim Schultz
Leetonia, Ohio

We are truly “lost in La-La Land,” as Grady suggests, when it comes to Christian TV. I just saw Donald Trump on one Christian talk show. He and the host were talking about the thing they seem to love the most: money and how to get it. I praise God that the people in my church have stopped giving to the schlockmeisters and instead have started giving to ministries through the church. We are seeing growth and changed lives.

Rev. Dan Jarvis
Lovell, Wyoming

As manager of one of the few remaining independent Christian television stations in the United States, I concur with much of what Lee Grady and Phil Cooke said about Christian TV (“The Future of Christian Television” by Phil Cooke, Ph.D.; November). However, I do tire of criticism that is absent of concrete ideas. Here’s one: We should broadcast a nightly,

half-hour sportscast.

Our staff reporters cover 50 local high schools and colleges. This platform allows us to periodically insert testimonies of athletes or stories that show what God is doing through young people. It's great community involvement, and it's unique not only to Christian TV but to secular TV as well.

Kevin Bowers, President

WTLW-TV

Lima, Ohio

I feel embarrassed when Christians are portrayed on TV as greedy, flamboyant and shallow. I have no desire to watch these programs. There's too much self-promotion and self-exaltation on the airwaves.

I hope the programmers and producers will get it. If they understood this, then we would see a difference in the future.

Sandy Bonzelaar

Holland, Michigan

I detest prosperity preaching whether it comes from the pulpit, on television, in a five-day seminar or from a neighborhood pastor. The preacher always says that the more you give to his or her ministry, the more your prayers will be answered.

I also hate it when the minister tells the people in the congregation how much to give. Prosperity preachers often spend their entire sermon on taking the offering.

Bill Valentine

Lakeland, Florida

The House-Church Debate Continues

Regarding your recent articles about house churches (“God Is Out of the Box” by Ken Walker, June), I’m a firm believer in what the Bible says. It warns us not to forsake the gathering together of the believers (see Heb. 10:25).

But I also realize that Jesus directed most of His ministry to a group of one to 120 people, and therefore we must also follow His example. And when King David was fighting his battles, God told him to do three different things, and all of them were successful.

Richard Boll
Atlanta, Georgia

I agree strongly that those who advocate only home churches are misinterpreting Acts 2:46, which says that early Christians met “house to house.” It says they also met in the temple to hear Peter, John and the rest of the apostles, and they also went house to house to break bread and to be held accountable.

In many ways, the church followed the so-called “Jethro model,” which had a strong leader such as Moses at the top with various levels of leadership beneath. They ended up with leaders of 10, just like in a house meeting. So everyone was accountable.

Bob Chang
Chula Vista, California

Who is this “spiritual authority” that home-churched people are trying to avoid? I’ve spent 15 years in foreign missions, including outreach in Muslim villages. I’ve seen evangelistic outreach sharply curtailed by cutting funds to support extravagant buildings. My tithes will no longer go to support huge salaries.

Donald Johnson
Holden, Massachusetts

I am a strong advocate of the church going outside the four walls to both be the church and do ministry, but not at the expense of gathering corporately for fellowship and worship. A major problem with China's house churches is that some leaders are untrained, and they teach unbiblical practices as a result. In many instances, they have hurt the cause of Christ more than they have helped it in China.

Allan Isaac
St. Christopher, Nevis