

TBN Launches in the United Kingdom

One of the most significant moments in the history of television broadcast is set for the new year across the United Kingdom. Trinity Broadcasting Network, the world's largest religious television broadcaster, announced that on Jan. 5, 2015 it will launch its newest network, TBN UK, on Freeview, the U.K.'s free-to-air digital terrestrial television service that reaches 95 percent of the television households across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

TBN Vice President Matthew Crouch said that the launch of TBN UK represents one of the most significant commitments in the history of the 42-year-old global faith-and-family television group, bringing 24-hour Christian programming to a combined total of approximately 26 million U.K. homes. "While TBN has been available in the U.K. through cable and satellite," he explained, "this will be the first time that over 65 million individuals across the British Isles will have access to a broad range of faith-and-family programming 24 hours a day."

Mr. Crouch said that the project began almost two years ago when his father, the late TBN founder Paul Crouch Sr., signed an initiative to establish a Christian network in the U.K. That move coincided with the construction of a major, state-of-the-art TBN London studio a stone's throw from famed Wembley Stadium. "As a pioneer in Christian broadcasting my father was responsible for taking faith television to hundreds of millions of people on every inhabited continent," said Mr. Crouch. "But this will be, by far, the biggest broadcast switch that TBN has ever thrown." In fact," he added, "the Launch of TBN UK on Freeview Channel 65 will represent one of the single largest increases of faith television coverage in history."

TBN UK's channel director, Leon Schoeman, noted that while England was once considered the most Christian nation on earth, "over the past decades this nation's faith and commitment to Christian principles has been severely eroded. Today a mere 6 percent of believers in the U.K. attend church regularly, and for all intents and purposes our culture could be called post-Christian."

Nonetheless, he added, there has been a dramatic resurgence of interest in the Christian faith among younger generations throughout the U.K., as churches like Holy Trinity Brompton, Hillsong London, and others have reached out to that demographic through contemporary music, cutting-edge technology and innovative worship services.

"As we have moved forward with planning and implementing the launch of TBN UK, clergy and Christian leaders throughout the U.K. have enthusiastically stepped forward to partner in this endeavor and help us ensure our content and programming model a well-rounded and balanced Christian lifestyle to our viewers," Mr. Schoeman explained.

He said that in addition to the international ministry programs, family-friendly movies, and shows for children and teens that have made TBN popular around the world, TBN UK will feature a broad range of dynamic music and ministry programming from congregations like Holy Trinity Brompton, London's Jesus House, Hope City Church in Manchester, Hillsong London, and many more.

Popular British evangelist and author J. John, who will also host a variety of TBN UK shows, said anticipation is high among pastors and Christian leaders as TBN launches across the U.K. "I thank the Lord that TBN is in London broadcasting to the entire United Kingdom and beyond," he said. "And I am so thrilled that God is using technology to make the message of Christianity accessible to the majority of people that don't go to church."

Pastor Colin Ruddock of Victory Outreach in Manchester said that “to know TBN UK is going to be broadcasting here is really exciting. This is going to change the whole way people see Christianity and what the gospel actually means. Having TBN here is one of the biggest, most powerful moves for reaching so many people at one time.”

TBN’s Matthew Crouch noted that Britain has a rich, centuries-long heritage of sharing the Christian faith with the rest of the world. “America, for one, owes its own tradition of faith in God in large part to the men and women who came from Britain to preach and teach the gospel,” he said. “TBN is humbled to be able to give back to this nation and people through the launch of this network. Our prayer is that our efforts will help to expand the great spiritual renewal that is already moving across the U.K.”