

Why Christian TV Is Growing Irrelevant

The morning of 9/11, I had a brainstorm. Watching the horror unfolding at the World Trade Center, I immediately sent a fax (remember faxes?) to every owner or manager of every Christian television station I knew. I begged them to interrupt their regularly scheduled programming and start reporting on the tragedy in New York.

Obviously, they didn't have the budget or manpower to compete with major news networks, but they could report on the spiritual perspective of what was happening, offer comfort or help people understand the religious issues behind it. Many took my advice and brought in experts on Islam, Bible scholars, college professors and local pastors, and one station even did a cellphone interview with a person who was actually being evacuated from one of the towers. The response was incredible, and I was hoping it would shake Christian TV stations out of the scheduled programming rut so that we could build media platforms that dealt with immediate issues Americans are facing.

But since then, for the most part, Christian TV has returned to its "regularly scheduled programming." Just these past few days and weeks, we've seen major events unfolding internationally in Syria, Pakistan and Kenya. Most of these events have direct religious implications, and most directly involve Christians. And yet when it comes to Christian TV—the Christian medium with arguably the largest audience—where is the reporting, interviews, commentary, insight or biblical perspective?

It's tough to find.

Christian television continues to grow more and more

irrelevant because we refuse to take the time or trouble to address issues that really matter—when they matter. If you work at a Christian station or network, think about it. I'm all for sermons, Bible teaching, interview shows and movies. But consider the power of live, immediate programming with experts who can help us understand these world events. Look around at the Christian universities in your area, at the pastors and ministry leaders who may be experts on the issue, or find other sources of information.

We get upset because secular journalists don't get the spiritual perspective of what's going on, and yet when it comes to TV, are we offering a better alternative?

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