

# Why Some Pioneering Christian Media Ministries Survived

So in the wake of my last post on why so many pioneering **Christian media ministries** collapsed, why did some others survive? What did they have that others didn't? Did God just bless them more, or are there identifiable traits that we could focus on and learn for the future. I think the latter's true, and here's a few thoughts why some pioneering media ministries have not just survived, *but thrived*:

**1. They weren't afraid to change.** When Joyce Meyer called me into our first meeting, she had frankly hit a wall. Her fundraising, donor development, TV and mail response—all of it was pretty flat. It took some time, but I had to make her understand how critical it was to change, and that there was no going back. It took a few months of give and take, but when she finally “got it,” a light went on and she never looked back. About that time, her youngest son, Dan, came onboard as ministry COO and helped me take it to another level entirely. He took her to the **Hillsong** Conference in Australia, and when she saw that, she came back a changed woman. She let us make employee changes, redesign the TV department, lose the dress codes, make some structural changes in the organization, and in a very short time, things dramatically turned around. Now today, **Joyce Meyer** lives for change both personally and professionally, and her response from donors and her audience is incredible.

**2. The right way to pass the baton:** After TV evangelist **Jerry Falwell's** death, things looked pretty bleak for Liberty University. But with well-placed life insurance benefits to provide some breathing room, his two sons—Jerry Jr. and Jonathan—have turned that place around. Jonathan preaches at the flagship church, Thomas Road Baptist, and has dramatically grown that church, written books and is making a mark across

the country. Jerry Jr. is now chancellor of the university, and with his remarkable business sense he has built up donor development, held people accountable and presented a new vision for the future. Some thought they could never fill their dad's shoes, but they didn't even try. They stepped out in their own way and marched to their own drum. And now, Liberty University is the largest **Christian universities** in America.

**3. Fighting tooth and nail for the job doesn't work.** Joel Osteen actively refused leading Lakewood Church, but as his father lay dying, he finally relented and preached his first sermon as a favor to his dad. I remember the guys wiring up his dad's hospital bed so he could hear Joel's sermon live. Turned out—the first sermon Joel ever preached was the last sermon his father John Osteen ever heard. Even then we discussed shutting it down, but Joel felt a small voice saying to go on. We actually pulled the plug on the show on Friday, but he called me over the weekend and said, "I feel like God wants me to move on with it," so we went back on the air. The story since then is simply history.

So what is it? These were all traditional, **pioneering media ministries** who never got distracted, never got stuck and were always willing to change in order to engage a changing culture. While some successions were family members, they weren't obsessed about it, and in some cases, considered handing it off to someone better qualified. But these guys had it. They had the confidence to not copy their famous father, and step out into their new vision. *They were willing to prove themselves on their own turf if necessary first.*

After all, the world doesn't need a copy of someone else. It needs the original version of you.

Any other reasons you think these and other ministries transitioned well?