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**A SURVEY AND EVALUATION
OF RELIGIOUS BROADCASTING**

**A Thesis Presented to
The Faculty of Concordia Seminary
Department of Practical Theology**

**In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Bachelor of Divinity**

**by
A. Karl Boehmke
March 1946**

Approved by:

George C. Spick
Long J. Dick

Introduction

**"This Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached
in all the world for a witness unto all na-
tions, and then shall the end come."**

Matthew 24, 14

Radio has gone far to make possible the literal fulfillment of our Savior's prophecy. Radio girdles the globe, crossing ocean and mountain barrier with equal ease; it penetrates the densest jungle, searches out the lonliest prairie dwelling. Traveling at a speed of 186,000 miles per second, radio transmits the human voice instantaneously from one part of the earth to another. When the radio evangelist speaks from his studio, before a person in the same room has heard one syllable of his voice, radio has carried the word seven and one-half times around the world. Here is an instrument for Gospel dissemination unparalled in ancient or modern times.

The Church of Christ has learned to use this mighty messenger. Almost from radio's birth, far-sighted individuals within the Church have seized upon this development in communication as a means of telling men that Christ died to bring them Life. And the Holy Spirit, powerful as He is wise, has seen fit to use such earthly things as electrons and electrodes to carry the virtues of heaven to the souls of men. Today,

twenty-five years after the construction of the first radio station, the Gospel is given the electric voice of radio over thousands of individual stations as well as over mighty combinations of broadcasting outlets.

But the wonders of radio transmission by no means lie completely at the service of the Church. The history of radio in its first years of existence is more than a story of opportunities for Christ. It is a mixed story of great corporations, billion dollar investments, government regulation, lawsuits and high salaried talent. Radio, unlike the printing press, was not born a child of the Church or a servant of the Church, but rather as the child and servant of Industry. Radio was created for money's sake. The place that Religion has found for itself on the air is by comparison with commercial interests, meager.

The future may change this. Radio is still an infant. The startling developments of the past twenty-five years may be more than matched in years to come. In the year 1920 no one would have dared to predict for radio such a future as it has realized today. Today no one dares predict what the next quarter century will bring. We may be sure of one thing--there are many individuals and corporations waiting to seize the developments as soon as they arrive. If the Church is to find for Christ in this changing picture of radio broadcasting a place worthy of His Kingdom, then it too must be ready to seize every opportunity for the use of radio, even before it presents itself.

This paper will attempt:

I. To separate the historical thread of religious broadcasting out of the history of broadcasting in general.

II. To evaluate religious broadcasting as an aid to the Church.

III. To indicate trends which religious broadcasting may follow in the future.

I. The History of Religious Broadcasting

Early History of Radio

One day in 1907 the New York Herald-Tribune carried a report of a wireless operator having heard a human voice speaking over his earphones. The report was carried on a back page, for it was hardly likely such an incident could be true.¹

The few individuals who had kept abreast of wireless developments were more credulous. They knew that some of the world's best scientists had been experimenting with ether waves as far back of 1867. James Clark Maxwell, Thomas Edison, Heinrich Herz, Oliver Lodge, and others had collected much data on the phenomena of the radio wave and radio tube.² Guglielmo Marconi had harnessed the radio wave for telegraph use. With an experimental station in England, he had developed the wireless telegraph capable of sending messages across the Atlantic. By 1907 wireless had already become standard equipment on ocean going ships.³ So, it

1. Francis Chase, Jr., Sound and Fury, p. 1.

2. *ibid.*, p. 3.

3. *ibid.*, p. 4.

was no great surprize to those who knew, that Dr. Lee DeForest had actually transmitted the human voice over the ether waves.

'Those who knew' were for the most part telegraph and telephone interests. They themselves had been experimenting with radio, for they foresaw in it a new method of communication. Immediately they invested small fortunes into experiments, expecting to develop a vocal, point-to-point method of communication which might eventually supplant the telegraph. For nine years these telephone and telegraph companies built and improved transmitters and receivers. It was generally conceded that radio belonged in their realm--the field we today generally refer to as 'electronics,' a field which has only recently come into its own.

However, in 1916 and the years following, radio veered off in a radically different direction. David Sarnoff, a poor but ambitious immigrant, conceived the idea of a radio 'broadcast' -- that is, a signal sent not to one particular person, but to large numbers of individuals who would purchase "music-box" receivers for their homes.⁴ This idea was the germ of one of America's gigantic industries. It took three years for Mr. Sarnoff to convince anyone his idea might work; then in 1919, the Radio Corporation of America was formed (an ambitious name for those days but a billion dollar industry today). An experimental station was set up in Pittsburgh -- Station KDKA. A start was made in the manufacture of music-boxes for public purchase. A few people bought these novel receivers, but not many took them seriously.⁵

4. Francis Chase, Jr., op. cit., p. 5f.

5. ibid., p. 8.

The Harding election broadcast 'made' radio broadcasting. To the few hundred, or at most few thousand, listeners who put on their earphones on the evening of November 2, 1920 came reports of the Harding election results almost as soon as the ballots had been counted. Suddenly the nation became aware that here was more than a toy, broadcasting more than an experiment. Newspapers at once sensed a competitor, and began to apply to the Department of Commerce for broadcasting licenses. Department stores began sending in orders for receivers, then setting^{up} broadcasting stations, so those who would buy the receivers might have something to listen to.⁶

By the end of 1922 (two years time), over 600 radio stations were on the air, under a great variety of ownerships. These did not broadcast programs as we know them today, but simply tried to keep somekind of entertaining music or speech on the air as an inducement for listeners to buy receivers. The idea of advertising or propaganda over the air had not as yet been conceived. As late as 1924, Station WEAJ, New York, was appealing to listeners for contributions to aid the station in hiring good talent.⁷

By 1923, the public was developing a taste for programs, demanding good broadcasts and condemning bad ones. At the same time the idea was evolving that people could be induced via radio to buy products of one kind or another; whereupon radio advertising was born. It became evident at once that both programs and advertisements would have to be appealing

6. Francis Chase, Jr., op. cit., p 11f.

7. ibid., p. 10.

if people were going to listen to them. In 1924, the EverReady Battery Co. sent out over the newly organized WEAF Network (later the Red) the first program which resembled the radio program as we know it today, with announcer, talent and advertising. Radio personalities and programs soon thereafter became a part of the American scene. With this shift in transmission technique, the telephone and telegraph interests left the radio industry for a time, selling out their network to the R.C.A., in exchange for the assurance that their lines would be used for network transmission.⁸

But by this time chaos had struck the air. As early as 1923 there were over 1000 stations on the air (as compared to only 913 today⁹). Theoretically these were assigned to certain frequencies by the U.S. Department of Commerce, but actually they shifted about the dial at will. As a result, clear reception was a rarity; broadcasters were soon petitioning the government to step in and regulate the radio industry.¹⁰

Finally in 1927 the Congress acted to remedy the situation, setting up a Federal Radio Commission (FRC), with authority to license stations and regulate the air. By 1930 the air waves were fairly straightened out again, with fewer stations under stricter government regulation. In 1934 the Congress further strengthened governmental control of radio by replacing the FRC with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) , to police the air in accordance with these principles:

1. The air is public domain, and as such must be policed by the government.
2. Radio industry should be privately owned and operated.
3. Freedom of speech on the air should be preserved.

8. Francis Chase, Jr., op. cit., p. 24ff.

9. List of Broadcast Stations by State and City, by the Federal Communications Commission, January 1, 1943.

10. Francis Chase, Jr., op. cit., p. 44ff.

This mild form of government regulation is still in effect today. It differs from that in most foreign nations, where complete government control is largely the rule.¹¹

Beginnings of Religious Broadcasting

Into this moving picture of radio, religious broadcasting made an early entry. In those early days when stations were looking for talent and listeners alike, station KDKA, Pittsburgh, went on a daily schedule of broadcasting. But programs were scarce and nothing suitable for a Sunday evening could be found. Someone suggested a church service, but no one knew whether the churches would consent to such broadcasting, or whether church services would broadcast well. Permission was received from Calvary Episcopal Church of Pittsburgh, for the Sunday evening broadcast; carbon microphones were installed and telephone lines connected. On January 2, 1921, the first religious program went out over the air. There were probably just a handful of listeners, and the rector, Dr. E. J. Van Etten, prepared no special sermon, not knowing whether the novel experiment would work at all. But it did work, and soon a ripple of reaction spread among churchmen as news of the program spread. Some called it sacrilege, a desecration of the sanctuary; some saw only an interesting experiment; while still others sensed that somehow these microphones and batteries could be made to do big things for the cause of Christ.¹²

The broadcast was duplicated, both over KDKA and over many of the other stations which made their appearance in the years following 1921. Before advertising was known, program

11. Waldo Abbot, Handbook of Broadcasting, p. 296ff.

12. Francis Chase, Jr., op. cit., p. 15f.

schedules were unheard of. Stations were only too glad to fill their Sunday mornings or evenings with religious services, provided they could afford to run the special equipment to the churches.

Then in 1923 another type of religious broadcasting appeared on the scene. Dr. S. Parkes Cadman, dean of religious broadcasters, conceived what he chose to call "a radio ministry." To Dr. Cadman goes a great deal of credit for the early development of religious radio. He began to speak regularly from the studios of WEAJ, New York, at that time still operated by the A.T. & T. When the National Broadcasting Co. was organized in 1926, he began to broadcast weekly over the network, continuing as radio minister for many years.¹³

Thus, two standard types of religious programs found development early in the history of broadcasting: the church service originating in the church building; and, the devotional speaker broadcasting from the studio.

In the Lutheran Church, which in this respect is probably representative of Protestant churches in general, a realization of the value of religious broadcasting began to gain momentum during the middle 1920's. Writing in the February 1926 issue of the American Lutheran, a Lutheran clergyman observed:

"The radio has evidently come to stay. It is remarkable with what leaps and bounds it has grown into popular favor and use. What is the church doing to make use of this agency? What is our Lutheran Church doing to bring the eternal truths... into the homes to which radio has unlocked the door?"¹⁴

13. "The Word of God", a brochure by the Nat'l Broadcasting Co., p. 6.

14. W. F. Behnken, "The Radio, a Missionary Agency," The American Lutheran, IX, (February 1926), p.7.

It appears that at that time there were two Lutheran churches broadcasting regularly, from their churches, over local stations, once a month.

From this point forward, we trace the history of religious broadcasting along three different channels:

- A. The Religious Station.
- B. The Local Religious Broadcast over Commercial Stations.
- C. The Network Religious Broadcast.

These are never completely independent of each other; however, considering them separately helps to simplify an involved subject.

A. The Religious Station

By 'Religious Station' we refer to a broadcasting station owned and operated by a religious group, on a non-commercial basis. This was at one time the most extensive type of religious broadcasting; today it has shrunk to the least extensive of the three types.

In the wildcat days of radio's infancy, many a religious body, orthodox and heterodox alike, ded^{at}icated to make use of the wonderful new medium of communication. Enthusiasm, a few hundred dollars for a transmitter, and a modicum of technical knowledge were the only requirements. Before long, the Department of Commerce had issued licenses to groups such as: The People's Pulpit Association, Brooklyn; First Baptist Church, Knoxville; Lutheran Association, Ithaca; Unity School of Christianity, Kansas City; etc. ¹⁵ How many such groups took out licenses and actually put programs on the air

¹⁵ Federal Radio Commission, Radio Broadcasting Stations of the U.S., 1931, pp 1-29.

between 1921 and 1927, cannot be determined, since control of radio was still so lax that no official listings of stations in operation had been compiled to that time. When the FRC was set up in 1927, an official listing was compiled; it revealed fifty stations operated by religious groups.¹⁶ These stations were located in all sections of the country, generally in and around large cities.

From 1927 forward, for reasons to be discussed, these stations began to decline in numbers. The FRC official listing of 1931 showed only thirty-one such stations still in operation.¹⁷ The number continued to shrink during the following decade, so that as of today, only 13 such stations are still on the air.¹⁸

16. Department of Commerce, Radio Division, Commercial and Government Radio Stations of the U.S., 1927, pp. 72-86.

The FRC and FCC station listings have never classified stations under 'religious' or any other heading. T. J. Slowiec Secretary of the FCC, in a personal communication to the writer on February 8, 1944, states: "The Commission has no list of standard broadcast stations in the United States operated by religious groups." The above figures, therefore, as well as similar figures below, have been arrived at by culling the lists of general stations for the names of owners who appeared to be religious individuals or groups. The specific accuracy of these figures can, therefore, be questioned. However, for the sake of revealing trends and the approximate extent of this type of broadcasting, they should be sufficiently accurate.

Rev. Ray B. White, director of Station WAWZ, Zarephath, N.J., (a religious station) estimates there were 110 religious stations on the air in 1928. (Personal communication, February 22, 1944). However there seems to be no evidence that would place the figure above the 50 mark.

17. Federal Radio Commission, Radio Broadcasting Stations of the U.S., 1931. See table on following page for listing.

18. Federal Communications Commission, List of Radio Broadcast Stations by State and City, 1943, p. lff.

Religious Stations in the U.S., 1931

<u>Call Letters</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Kilocycles</u>	<u>Owner</u>
WBBL	Richmond, Va.	1210	Grace Covenant Presby. Ch.
WBBR	Brooklyn, NY.	1300	People's Pulpit Assn.
WCBD	Zion, Ill.	1080	Wilbur G. Voliva
WCHI	Chicago, Ill.	1490	People's Pulpit Assn.
WFBC	Knoxville, Tenn.	1200	First Baptist Church
WHAP	New York, N.Y.	1300	Defenders of Truth Soc.
WHBC	Canton, Ohio	1200	St. Johns Catholic Ch.
WIBG	Elkins Park, Pa.	930	St. Pauls Prot Epis Ch.
WLCI	Ithaca, N.Y.	1210	Lutheran Assn, Ith, NY.
WLWL	New York, N.Y.	1100	Miss. Soc. of St. Paul
WMBI	Chicago, Ill.	1080	Moody Bible Institute
WMPC	Lapeer, Mich.	1500	Lapeer Meth. Prot. Ch.
WNBX	Springfield, Vt.	1200	First Congreg. Ch.
WOQ	Kansas City, Mo.	1300	Unity School of Cnty.
WPCC	Chicago, Ill.	560	North Shore Church
WQAO	New York, N.Y.	1010	Calvary Baptist Ch.
WSSH	Boston, Mass.	1410	Tremont Temple Bapt. Ch.
KFGQ	Boone, Iowa	1310	Boone Bible College
KFSG	Los Angeles, Cal.	1120	Echo Pk. Evangel. Assn.
KFUO	Clayton, Mo.	550	Missouri Synod
KFWF	St. Louis, Mo.	1200	St. Louis Truth Center
KFXR	Oklahoma City, Ok.	1310	Exchange Av. Bapt. Ch.
KGET	Los Angeles, Cal.	1300	Trinity Meth.Ch. South
KGHI	Little Rock, Ark.	1200	First Bapt. Ch.
KGJF	Little Rock, Ark.	890	First Ch. of Nazarene
KPPC	Pasadena, Cal.	1210	Pasadena Presb. Ch.
KPOF	Denver, Col.	880	Filler of Fire
KRE	Berkeley, Cal.	1370	First Congreg. Ch.
KTBI	Los Angeles, Cal.	1300	Bible Inst. of L.A.
KTW	Seattle, Wash.	1210	First Presb. Ch.
KWLC	Decorah, Iowa	1270	Luther College

The following brief history of Station KFGZ, operated by the Emmanuel Missionary College of Berrien Springs, Michigan, (Seventh Day Adventist) is typical of many a religious station which disappeared from the air waves in the sixteen year period from 1927 to 1943:

In 1922, students at Emmanuel College, envisioning possibilities for religious broadcasting, began crude experiments in radio. A simple station was set up. Interest developed, and in 1923 a transmitter and license were procured and operation was begun under the letters KFGZ. Broadcasting continued to 1925. At that time the early attempts of the Dept. of Commerce at establishing broadcast standards led to the rebuilding of the station at a cost of \$18,000; new studios, transmitter and staff were included, with a power increase to 1400 watts. Various Seventh Day Adventist groups supported the station. The new FRC with its strict policy of regulation cut the power of KFGZ and put it on a shared time basis with another local station. Expenses continued at the same rate, despite the reduction in the station's effectiveness. After a time college authorities concluded that the value received from the station was no longer commensurate with the cost involved, and the license was allowed to expire.¹⁹

¹⁹ Reasons for the rapid decline of religious stations fall, generally, under two headings:

1) The inability to keep pace with improving standards. The years 1925 - 1940 saw almost unbelievable developments in radio. A toy of the '20s had become an industry of the '40s. Under the impetus of scientific research and industrial promotion, radio developed elaborate transmission techniques, involving expensive transmitters, antennae, studios, staffs. A station like KDKA, Pittsburgh, had grown from its little one-room studio and crude transmitter to a flourishing business entailing a whole suite of scientifically constructed studios, scores of announcers, performers, directors, a staff of trained technicians, a transmitter using 50,000 watts, and a complete business staff contracting with hundreds of sponsors

¹⁹ S. E. Frost, Education's Own Stations, p. 87ff.

for hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of service. And there were hundreds of other stations like KDKA. In this sea of improved and improving techniques, the religious stations tried to keep afloat. The coming of government regulation made things more difficult, for the FRC set up standards largely determined by the commercial interests. Since the broadcast spectrum was still overcrowded, certain stations had to go -- the ones that could not meet the pace. In thirty-seven instances, apparently, religious stations lacked either of two things: money; or, the ability to adapt themselves to the rapidly changing picture. Some religious groups could speak in terms of thousands of dollars, but shrank from hundreds of thousands. Some could conceive of a broadcast as a man reading a sermon or a soprano singing an anthem, but not as a rapidly shifting interplay of appealing music, drama, pungent speech, done by specially trained talent. So it was that licenses one by one were permitted to expire, were transferred to commercial interests, or were revoked by the licensing authorities.

Rev. Ray B. White, director of Station WAWZ, Zarephath, N.J., writing in this connection states:

"Most religious broadcasters failed to meet government requirements; they were careless; they did not take broadcasting seriously, therefore fell into disfavor both with the public and with the government.... It takes more initiative than most religious and educational people have to begin operating on a purely non-commercial basis. We ourselves succeeded only through much prayer and sacrifice." 20

2) The second major reason for the decline of religious stations has been the policy of the FRC and the FCC to discourage so-called "propaganda" stations. These commissions,

20. Ray B. White, in a Personal Communication to the writer, February 22, 1944.

faced with the task of weeding out a certain number of stations from the spectrum, chose to eliminate religious and educational stations the moment their standards began to sag, since, they felt, no one propaganda interest should have unfair advantage over others simply because it ^{had} found a place on the spectrum before it was filled. Said the FRC in a statement of policy issued in 1927:

"There is not room in the broadcast band for every school of thought, religious, political, social and economic.... If franchises are extended to some, it gives them unfair advantage over others, and results in corresponding cutting down of general public service stations.... If the question were now raised for the first time, the commission would not license any propaganda station.... Unfortunately, under the law in force prior to 1927, the Secretary of Commerce had no power to distinguish between kinds of applicants.... Certain enterprising organizations quick to see the possibilities of radio and anxious to present their creeds to the public, availed themselves of license privileges from the earlier days of broadcasting, and now have good records.... It does not seem just to deprive such stations of all right to operation, and the question must be solved on a comparative basis... The Commission will give preference to the general public service station, and assign less desirable positions to the propaganda stations to the extent that engineering principles permit...." 21

The fairness or unfairness of the FRC and FCC in following this principle lies outside the province of this paper. However, the application of the principle has been real. This principle, together with the rapidly advancing techniques of broadcasting, put a two-way squeeze on religious stations which nipped all but the hardiest.

Other less important factors cut some religious stations from the air. Witness the demise of Station WBCD, Zion City, Illinois. Wilbur Glenn Voliva, founder of Zion City, built

21. Louis G. Caldwell, former counsel for the FCC, quoted in Radio Censorship, vol. 12, no. 10, The Reference Shelf, H.B. Summers, comp.

this station in 1924 at a cost of \$124,000. Broadcasting programs only of a religious nature, it was one of the most widely heard stations in the country. On April 2, 1937 fire swept through the station and destroyed it. Funds for rebuilding were not immediately available, the license lapsed, and broadcasting has never been resumed.²²

Thirteen religious stations remain in operation today.²³ These have met the standards laid down by the government and have improved their facilities and service sufficiently to meet the competition of commercial interests. A brief historical sketch of Station KFUC. Clayton, Mo., owned by the Missouri Synod of the Lutheran Church, will illustrate the development of these:

The station was founded in December 1924, when a 500 watt transmitter was installed in the attic of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, at a cost of \$14,000, contributed by students of the seminary, the Lutheran Laymen's League and the Walther League. Programs were broadcast two hours a week. Dean John H. Fritz and Dr. Walter Maier constituted the first radio committee. In 1925 a fulltime director was called, the Rev. Herman Hohenstein. In 1926, the national church body assumed operation of the station. In 1927 the station was removed to the campus of new Concordia Seminary, Clayton, Mo., and rebuilt at a cost of \$50,000; a 1000 watt transmitter was installed. Broadcast time was increased to 30 hours a week on a shared time basis on the desirable 550 kc channel. Programs were improved. In 1940 the FCC assigned the station a less desirable frequency, but increased the time of operation to 90 hours a week. Soon thereafter the station erected a new antenna and rebuilt its studios, also installing a new transmitter with 5000 watt output. This entailed an expenditure of \$100,000. Plans for continued improvement at a cost of \$300,000 are now being executed.²⁴

22. Francis Chase, Jr., op. cit., p. 97ff.

23. Whether or not this figure is exact, again cannot be positively determined. Since the FCC could supply no listing of religious stations, a check was made of all stations in the U.S. and territories. Those suspected even remotely of being religious in nature were contacted by mail. The above figure is a result of this investigation.

24. "Twentieth Anniversary of Radio Station KFUC", an anniversary bulletin, p. 4.

RELIGIOUS GROUPS, 1945

[illegible]

25. Aimee S. McPherson, "God's Walkie Talkie", Fourquare Crusader, v. 16, (March 1944), p. 3ff.

26. W. S. Middlemass, passim in The Clarion, organ of Pasadena Presbyterian Church, v. 2, (January 16, 1943), p. 1ff.

27. Moody Bible Institute, "Moody Bible Institute's Radio Stations", a typewritten release, p. 1ff.

28. Liberty Street Gospel Church of Lapeer, "Twenty-five Years of Service", an anniversary bulletin, p. 1ff.

29. David Johnson, program manager WCAL, Personal communication, February 21, 1944.

30. H. H. Hohenstein, "The History of KFUD", Walther League Messenger, XXXV, (June 1927), 636ff. Also, "Our Radio Station KFUD", Lutheran Witness, Western District Supplement, LXI, (April 14, 1942).

31. "Pillar of Fire Movement", an informational brochure, p. 10ff.

32. *ibidem*, p. 22f.

33. Station WBBR, "Watchtower Program Sheet", (Feb. 20, 1944).

34. James M. Clift, Personal communication to writer, February 26, 1944.

35. Federal Communications Commission, List of Radio Broadcast Stations by State and City, 1943, p. 3.

36. *ibidem*, p. 30.

37. *ibidem*, p. 97.

From the foregoing compilation we note:

1. The religious stations are widely scattered throughout the country.
2. About half are operated by small church groups, half by large church groups.
3. Just three stations have desirable positions, schedules, and power: WMBI, KFUD and WCAL.
4. Five stations are greatly limited in effect, having 250w or less power output.
5. All are supported non-commercially by church groups.
6. Generally speaking, about half time is devoted to religious programs, half to non-religious.

We have dwelt in detail upon this type of religious broadcasting, because of its bright future. New developments, especially Frequency Modulation, may open up a whole new set of channels for religious stations. The past history and principles evolved to date will no doubt serve as a pattern for the future. It is important that the church understand these, so as to make maximum use of whatever opportunities present themselves.

B. The Local Religious Broadcast on Commercial Stations

Commercially, radio in America has assumed huge stature. The knee-pant infant of a quarter century ago has grown to a tremendous industry, involving millions of persons and billions of dollars in its manufacturing, broadcasting and transmitting enterprises.

The little group of listeners who heard the Harding election results through buzzing earphones has grown to a vast audience, comprising the bulk of the American people. David Sarnoff's music box had 44,000,000 great-grandchildren in 1940. In 1941, 50,000,000 radios were owned by the American

public.³⁸ By 1943, when production was being stopped by the war, 50,00,000 sets were already in use, -- one radio for every two persons in the country.³⁹

Advertising pays for American broadcasting. Soaps, automobiles, coffee, floor waxes, soups, magazines, etc., etc., bring to the air the comedians, orchestras and sportscasters so dear to the hearts of Americans. And they pay handsomely for the privilege. In 1936, with radio barely fifteen years old, broadcasting drew a gross advertising revenue of \$100,000,000.⁴⁰ Today that figure is many times as large.

Religion, with a 'spiritual product to sell,' has taken a place also in the commercial broadcasting picture, attempting to reach the public with its message. Here again, its position has been limited by certain factors inherent in the American broadcasting system.

In 1932, E. C. Cameron, a graduate at Union Theological Seminary, found 25 church bodies making use of radio, broadcasting over 83 stations in the U.S.⁴¹ A more complete survey by the Federal Council of Churches, in 1937, showed 40 church bodies broadcasting religious programs. At that time the leaders in the religious broadcast field were the following churches:

Baptist	Presbyterian	
Gospel sects	Lutheran	
Roman Catholic	Disciples	
Methodist	Christian Science	
Holiness groups	Watch Tower	42

(in the order listed).

38. Paul F. Peter, "The American Listener in 1940," Annals of American Academy of Political and Social Science, v 213, (January 1941), p. 1.

39. Lewis Avery, How to Buy Radio Time, p. 11f.

40. William Orton, "Radio and the Public Interest", Atlantic Monthly, v. 157, (March 1936), p. 352.

41. Federal Council of Churches, Broadcasting and the Public, p. 139. Some religious stations, no doubt included here.

42. ibidem, p. 129ff.

The same 1937 survey showed approximately five hours broadcast time per week devoted to religious programs by the average radio station.⁴³ A 1940 survey, cited by Waldo Abbot, revealed an average of five and one-half hours weekly devoted to religious programs by U.S. stations.⁴⁴ This would amount to slightly less than one hour per day per station for religious purposes of all kinds (Sunday schedules included).

Perhaps the most comprehensive survey in this connection is that of Mr. Everett C. Parker of Chicago Theological Seminary. In 1941, Mr. Parker studied the programs of the sixteen commercial stations in the Chicago area, to determine the extent of religious broadcasting. The following facts appearing in his compilations, may be representative of the American scene in general:

1. The sixteen commercial stations devoted 46 hours per week to religious broadcasting; this amounts to about 3 hours per week per station, or 2.9% of the total broadcast time.
2. Two-thirds of religious programs were concentrated on Sundays.
3. About one-third were locally sponsored programs, the remainder network programs.⁴⁵

A comparison of this survey with previous surveys shows a decline in the amount of time devoted to religious broadcasting. However, we must recognize that Chicago may not be representative of the nation as a whole; and, Mr. Parker's survey is undoubtedly more scientific than previous surveys. ~~The~~ The tendency of recent years does, nevertheless, seem to lean toward restricting religious broadcasts.

43. Fed. Council of Churches, Broadcasting and the Public, p 129ff.

44. Waldo Abbot, Handbook of Broadcasting, p.96.

45. Everett C. Parker, "Religion on the Air in Chicago", Chicago Theological Seminary Register, XXXII, (Jan '42), reprint.

In recent years, more religious groups have been trying harder to get on the air. At the same time, commercial stations have become less willing to accept religious broadcasts. The large stations in urban areas, especially those affiliated with networks, put stringent restrictions on religious programs. Smaller stations in both urban and rural areas (with smaller coverage, of course), accept religious programs more readily, by comparison; however, they too have restrictive policies. Hence, while the number of religious groups wishing to enter the broadcast field has become more extensive, the amount of time for which these groups may bargain has become more and more limited.

The reasons for desirable commercial stations limiting the time available to religious groups are, briefly:

a. Competition among religious groups for radio time works hardship on a station's goodwill. It is easier to restrict or exclude all groups than to give preference.

b. Commercial firms are anxious to buy all the time stations can offer at the present moment. It is more expedient to sell time to a commercial company which will offend no one, than to risk selling to a religious group which must be watched lest it offend someone.

c. Religious groups, generally, do not produce programs of as good quality as commercial concerns; this tends to injure the listening popularity of a station.

However, as previously shown, there is still a certain amount of air time available to those religious groups enterprising enough to secure it. These groups must be willing: to bargain for the time; to start small; and, to produce programs of sufficient quality to build good listening audiences.

Who pays for religious programs on commercial stations?

In the early days, religious groups were always guests of radio; programs were invariably carried on a sustaining basis. As the demand for time began to grow, however, many stations put religious broadcasts on a commercial basis. Other stations limited the amount of time for religious purposes but kept what remained on a sustaining basis.⁴⁶

Francis Chase estimates that in 1942, 25% of all religious broadcasts were paid for by church or commercial sponsors, 75% were sustaining.⁴⁷ Mr. Parker on the other hand, in his Chicago survey, found almost two-thirds of the religious programs on a commercial basis, one-third sustaining;⁴⁸ however, the biggest programs were on a sustaining basis. A recent survey of 113 stations/affiliated with the National Broadcasting Company (strict policy toward religion) showed 24 offering limited time on a sustaining basis and no commercial time; while 79 others offered some sustaining and some commercial time.⁴⁹

We venture these conclusions:

- a. Half of religious broadcasting on commercial stations today is on a sustaining basis, half on a paid basis.
- b. Stations affiliated with networks generally offer a limited amount of time on a sustaining basis. They may or may not offer additional limited time on a commercial basis.
- c. Smaller, unaffiliated stations usually sell larger amounts of time on a commercial basis. Sometimes they will also donate certain hours to cooperative religious groups.

46. Francis Chase, op. cit., p. 248.

47. ibidem.

48. Everett Parker, "Religion on the Air in Chicago".

49. Everett Parker, "Big Business in Religious Radio", Chicago Theological Seminary Register, XXXIV, (March 1944), galley sheet.

C. The Network Religious Program

The network is the colossus among the colossal. The network has a hand that knocks at fifty million doors, a voice that makes a hundred million Americans stop to listen. The networks control half the radio industry in this country. They handle far more than half of religious broadcasting in the nation. It is to the network, then, that we must look for the greatest part of the present-day religious broadcasting picture.

During the hectic radio days of 1923, American Telephone and Telegraph Co. performed an experiment. Telephone connections were established between stations WEAJ, New York, and WNAC, Boston; then a single program was fed into the line, in the hope it would be heard from both stations at once. It was. A radio network had been born. Expansion of the idea was at once begun. Within a year's time a transcontinental chain of about twenty-five stations had been established.⁵⁰

R.C.A., meanwhile, not to be outdone, started a network of its own. It was forced to use telegraph wires for relay, since the telephone company did not care to lease its wires to a competitor. However, by 1926, A.T. & T. realized that radio was heading for a broadcasting future, rather than a point-to-point communication future, so sold its network and leased its telephone wires to R.C.A. Whereupon, the R.C.A. became unquestionably dominant in the network field, with two networks (Red and Blue) and no competitors.⁵¹

⁵⁰. Federal Communications Commission, Report on Chain Broadcasting, p. 6ff.

⁵¹. *Ibidem*.

Network broadcasting proved immensely profitable. Revenue rolled into the NBC business office, as expansion continued. By 1938, NBC had gathered 154 stations into its chains, including half the powerful stations in the country. Ten of the nation's leading stations were owned outright by the company. In 1942, NBC's outlet total had risen to 221.⁵² (Though this has since been reduced by anti-trust action.)

In 1927, another chain was begun, under the name, United Independent Broadcasters, Inc. Lacking support, it lost money and faced collapse. In 1929, this chain was reorganized under the name, Columbia Broadcasting System, stepping into the network field as a serious competitor. The Wm. S. Paley family was, and still is, its controlling interest. Originally it had but 16 outlets; within ten years' time that number had risen to 113. By 1932, 121 stations were affiliated, with 8 stations owned outright. It too has proved to be a highly successful financial venture.⁵³

The Mutual Broadcasting System took shape along radically different lines. It started in 1934 as a cooperative effort among a number of stations, WOR, Newark, and WGN, Chicago, being the most important. Mutual does not own its stations, but is owned by them. It has no studios or engineering department, and does not originate programs (news excepted). Programs are produced, rather, by the various stations and sponsors, at a great saving of expense. Beginning a dozen years ago with just four stations, Mutual has jumped to 160 today, and now speaks of itself as the world's largest network.⁵⁴

52. F.C.C., Report on Chain Broadcasting, p. 15ff.

53. *ibidem*, p. 21ff.

54. *ibidem*, p. 26.

In 1942-43, action was taken by the FCC under the Sherman Anti-trust Act, against NBC. The company was forced to sell one of its networks, and so parted with the Blue. This step helped restore an element of competition to the network industry. The Blue Network, now independent, has undergone a number of minor changes, and is now known as the American Broadcasting Company. It still looks much like the old Blue, but is perhaps a bit more progressive in its policies.

These national networks have a solid grip on a great part of the radio industry. In 1938, networks did almost half of the total radio business in the U.S. -- \$46,000,000 out of a total of \$101,000,000. This did not count the revenue from stations owned directly by them.⁵⁵

Obviously, the networks can employ better-paid talent, produce better programs, and advertise more widely. As a result, the greater part of the American listening public is a network audience.

In addition to the large national hookups, there are a number of smaller networks organized on a Regional basis. These operate much the same as the larger chains, only on a limited scale. Many of them are directly affiliated with the national networks.⁵⁶ Radio Annual for 1943 listed 41 such Regional networks, ranging in size from 2 to 33 stations; about half had more than 5 stations, half less than 5. The five largest regional chains are:

Don Lee System	--	West Coast	--	33 stations
Pennsylvania Network	--	Pa. stations	--	25 stations
Yankee Network	--	New England	--	21 stations
North Central System	--	N. Central	--	19 stations
Texas State Network	--	Texas	--	16 stations

⁵⁷

55. F.O.C., Report on Chain Broadcasting, p. 3.

56. *ibidem*, p. 29ff.

57. The 1943 Radio Annual, p. 315ff.

Religious Policy of Networks

While network broadcasting offers the greatest possibilities to religious groups, the chains have been most cautious about opening their doors to religious programs. The result has been a limited amount of religious chain broadcasting, this, for the most part, rigidly controlled.

Coming late on the scene, and carrying great power and prestige, the networks were prepared to meet the question of religious broadcasting even before it arose. NBC, for example, at its very inception set up a Committee on Religious Activities; this committee immediately issued the following policy in regard to religious programs:

- a. NBC will serve only central agencies of great faiths, as for example, the Roman Catholics, the Protestants, and the Jews....
- b. The religious message should be non-sectarian and non-denominational in appeal.
- c. The religious message should be of widest appeal, presenting the broad claims of religion.
- d. The religious message should interpret religion at its best so it will bring the listener to realize his responsibility to the organized church and society.
- e. The national religious messages should only be broadcast by the recognized outstanding leaders of the several faiths.

NBC has followed this policy rigidly, selling no time, but bringing to the air the outstanding leaders of great church bodies, in sustaining programs. Dr. Max Jordan, NBC religious director, lists the following programs broadcast currently over NBC on a sustaining basis:

National Radio Pulpit -- Sunday mornings (Ralph Sockman)
 The Catholic Hour -- Sunday evenings (Fulton Sheen)
 Religion in the News -- Saturday evenings. 59
The Eternal Light -- Sunday a.m. - (Jewish Theol. Sem.)

58. N.B.C., The Word of God, an anniversary booklet, p. 5.

59. Max Jordan, in a personal communication to writer, March 7, 1944.

The American Broadcasting Company (formerly Blue) was originally a part of NBC. It has carried over NBC's policy of religious broadcasting, almost intact.⁶⁰ The following sustaining programs are carried regularly by the American:

Message of Israel -- Jewish -- Saturday p.m.
 Hour of Faith -- Catholic -- Sunday a.m.
 National Vespers -- Federal Council Chs -- Sunday p.m.
 Bible Messages -- American Council of Churches, and
 National Assn. of Evangelicals; also other groups,
 heretofore unrepresented. -- Mon. thru Fri., 15 min.
 61

CBS, at its start, set up a policy similar in effect to that of NBC and American; however it operates in a slightly different manner. Columbia sponsors the "Church of the Air" broadcast, with the stipulations that

"One half hour of Sunday time should be available impartially to all established religious faiths in America. Speakers should enjoy freedom of expression so long as their messages in no way attack the faith of others." 62

This program is carried on a sustaining basis. Some affiliated stations offer an additional half-hour "Church of the Air", originated locally. This plan apportions time to all groups on the basis of numerical strength, thus is more democratic than NBC's policy.

In addition, Elinor Inman, religious director of CBS, lists the following musical programs of a religious nature:

Wings over Jordan -- Sunday a.m. -- Negro choral
 Salt Lake Tabernacle Hour -- Sun. a.m. -- Organ and choral.
 Blue Jacket Choir -- Sunday a.m. -- Choral; to be
 discontinued shortly. 63

60. H.B. Summers, manager Public Service Division of A.B.C., in personal communication to writer, Feb. 25, 1944.

61. ibidem. Also telephone check with local outlet.

62. C.B.S., The Church of the Air, an anniversary booklet, p. 1.

63. Elinor Inman, religious director CBS, in personal communication to writer, Mar. 8, 1944. Also recent check with local CBS outlet.

CBS also broadcasts a commercial religious broadcast, "Light of the World", religious Old Testament drama, on a non-denominational basis; sponsored by the General Milling Company. This program has received more voluntary fan mail than any other daytime program for years.⁶⁴

Mutual, as previously shown, has grown up as an association of stations, with programs contributed from the studios of its member stations. A rigid control of religious broadcasting was impractical while the network was seeking to gain strength. As a result, the Sunday schedule of Mutual became fairly crowded with religious programs, broadcast on a commercial basis. This network was the one haven for radio evangelists. It must be noted that some of these programs helped to build up the network prestige.

Two religious broadcasts especially gained national recognition over Mutual. Coronet writing of these said,

"If you're inclined to wager that America's largest radio audiences tune in on Charlie McCarthy or Bob Hope, ignore your hunch and save your money.... A couple of preachers, operating on shoestring budgets, are giving them a run for their money.... They are Dr. Walter A. Maier of St. Louis, Mo.,... and Charles E. Fuller of Los Angeles, Cal.... Their broadcasts find outlets over some 400 stations...." ⁶⁵

However, as Mutual gained in strength, it too adopted more rigid controlling policies toward religious broadcasts. On September 1, 1944, new restrictions were placed in effect:

- a. Commercial religious broadcasts were limited to Sunday mornings before 1:00 p.m.

64. J. H. MacLachty, Education on the Air, p. 249.

65. W. F. McDermott, "America Goes Back to Church", Coronet, (May 1943), p. 3.

- b. Such programs were limited to one-half hour in length.
- c. Broadcasters were prohibited from sol~~i~~citing funds. 66

These restrictions have cut the number of programs on Mutual considerably, leaving the following commercial religious broadcasts, all on Sunday mornings:

Young People's Church of the Air -- Percy Crawford
 Voice of Prophecy
 Radio Bible Class
 Wesley Radio League
 Pilgrim Hour -- Charles E. Fuller
 Lutheran Hour -- Walter A. Maier 67

From the foregoing it will be seen, that the possibilities for gospel preaching via the networks are at the same time tremendous and restricted. The programs which do reach the air over the chains enjoy huge audiences and elicit great fan mail responses. Attention of the producers is concentrated on a few important programs; as a result these are of higher caliber, tend to build bigger audiences, which in turn make possible still better programs. Chain broadcasts are the most economical, at the same time the most effective, means of religious broadcasting. However, restrictions placed by the network companies severely limit the amount of religious broadcasting that can be done. Smaller religious bodies, especially those not connected with large federations, find it difficult to secure time on the network schedules. And when close observation is made, even the larger groups do not have many minutes before the networks' mighty microphones.

66. Harold M. Wagner, Asst. Program Director, Mutual, in personal communication to writer, March 8, 1944.
 67. Check with local Mutual outlet.

The networks are not in business to spread the Kingdom of God, but to make money. They feel they can make more money by selling grape nuts and shoe polish than by selling Christianity; hence the present policies. Their aims are, roughly:

- a. Get the greatest revenue.
- b. Keep the greatest number of groups happy.
- c. Keep the F.C.C. happy.
- d. Avoid controversies at all costs.

From the companies' point of view their policies have worked; hence we may expect a continuation of them, with perhaps even greater restriction by the Mutual chain.

For those churches wishing to make increased use of networks for propagandive purposes, the following courses of action are open:

1. The exertion of pressure upon the network companies.

In 1942, the National Association of Evangelicals was organized by doctrinally conservative groups to protest the monopolization of network time over NBC and CBS by the doctrinally liberal Federal Council of Churches.⁶⁸ Through the exertion of organized pressure they have succeeded in securing a limited amount of time over the ABC, and may have further successes; though perhaps not too much more headway will be made in this direction.

Pressure groups have also tried to push legislation through the Congress, compelling the networks to allow more time for conservative religious groups. Such action, if successful, would probably be more effective than dealing with the companies themselves. However, the present fluctuating state of broadcasting makes it doubtful whether such legislation can find considerable support.

⁶⁸. National Conference of Christians and Jews, Religious Broadcasting in Wartime, p. 7f.

2. The opening of competitive networks. Action by the F.C.C. in 1941, reopened the broadcast field (theoretically, at least) to competition among networks.⁶⁹ This gives religious groups the possibility of starting their own chains, or finding time on other chains that may be opened as new commercial ventures. The Associated Broadcasters Corporation (headquarters, Grand Rapids) was recently organized by religious groups as an attempt to find more available network time.⁷⁰

However, this line of action too has its drawbacks. Actually there is little, if any, competition among networks for station time-contracts. It appears that in no instance has any large station accepted programs from more than one network. Associated Broadcasters, for example, found all large stations completely covered. Then too, the financial risk involved in attempting to form a big-time network over small stations, is so great that no commercial interests have tried it so far.⁷¹

3. Promotion on Regional Networks. This is a more promising field. The policies of the smaller chains are not so rigid as those of the larger hookups. The Texas State Network, for example, comprising sixteen stations, carries three regular religious programs in addition to the Mutual religious releases.⁷² While not so effective as the larger chains, these smaller networks do have certain advantages:

- a. They couple the mass-psychology of the network with regional interest.
- b. They often serve as stepping stones to broadcasts of larger scope.

69. F.C.C., Report on Chain Broadcasting, p. 91.

70. "The New ABC", Newsweek, v. 16, (July 30, 1945), p. 71.

71. Eliot Roosevelt had elaborate plans set up for his Transcontinental Broadcasting System, but could not make a go of

72. Frances Griffith, Asst. Manager, Texas Network, in personal communication to writer, Feb. 24, 1944.

- c. Regional networks usually include stations with effective coverage.
- d. Regional networks will probably serve as a pattern for the future, in view of FM and television developments.

The expansion of the broadcast band under FM and television presents the possibility of actual competition returning to the network field for a short time. Those groups having sufficient experience and organizational strength to enter the field quickly, may find themselves in an enviable position comparable to that of the 'religious station' broadcasters back in the days of radio's infancy. The next twelve months may lay the groundwork of the new network pattern for the next decade.

Meeting Radio on a Group Basis

As radio has grown in stature, American church bodies have met it on increasingly large scale terms. Radio committees, workshops, departments, have more and more found their place on church organizational rosters.

The Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America was the first group to approach radio in an organized fashion. In 1923 a Department of National Religious Radio was set up "to promote the effective use of broadcasting in the field of religion." It has continued to the present, conducting research, publishing its findings, producing about eight regular programs as well as special broadcasts, and serving as liason between the networks and the majority of Protestant church bodies.⁷³

73. J. Alicote, 1943 Radio Annual, p. 918.

The following information, gathered at the Institute for Education by Radio, at Ohio State University in 1942, shows a number of church bodies at work in the religious broadcast field, on a church-wide basis:

- a. The Protestant Episcopal Church has its special Department of Radio.
- b. The Southern Baptist Convention has its Committee on Radio.
- c. The Christian Science Church has an extensive, coordinated plan of broadcasting on a local and regional basis.
- d. The Jewish Church has a National Radio Committee. ⁷⁴

Of course, others could be added to this list. The Lutheran Synods, for example, each have their own Radio Committees.

The Christian-Congregational Churches have been active in establishing radio-fellowships at the summer sessions of Northwestern University, to develop trained men for the field of religious broadcasting. ⁷⁵

Chicago Theological Seminary has entered the religious broadcast field with energy, awarding to Dr. Everett Parker a fellowship by which he has been able to devote himself to advanced study and prepare himself for leadership in the field of religious radio. ⁷⁶ Mr. Parker's studies are becoming increasingly valuable and well-known. The Seminary also produces three series of transcribed religious programs: Men of Power, The Church in Thy House, and The Faith We Live By; these are rented by the Seminary to local groups for broadcast. ⁷⁷

Wheaton College, Wheaton, Ill., produces a transcribed weekly religious program which it distributes to about sixty-five stations. ⁷⁸ Moody Bible Institute of Chicago

⁷⁴. J. MacLachy, op. cit., p. 246ff.

⁷⁵. "Local Pastor Will Study Radio Uses", Buffalo Evening News, (May 1, 1944).

⁷⁶. E. C. Parker, "Big Business in Religious Radio".

⁷⁷. "Electrical Transcriptions of Radio Programs", Chicago Theological Seminary Register, XXXLV, March 1944.

produces a similar program, Miracles and Melodies, which it distributes to almost 300 stations weekly.

The Roman Catholic Church, through its remarkable organizational genius, has found considerable success in religious broadcasting. The Catholic Hour, begun in 1930, is now broadcast weekly over about 100 NBC outlets.⁷⁹ The Hour of Faith, a similar program, is heard weekly over American. In addition, three transcribed programs are of national importance: The Ave Maria Hour, with 164 stations; the Boys' Town Program, with 264 stations; and, a children's program produced by Rev. R. Felix.⁸⁰ The great size of this church has made it relatively easy to secure time on both networks and local outlets.

A recent development in Catholic use of radio is a manual published by Rev. David A. Lord, Catholics, Meet the Mike. This is a catholic action workbook, intended to instruct the "thousands of Catholics who ache for a chance to stand before the mike and blend religion with entertainment, the great truths of the Catholic Church with the technique of the newest and probably the most influential of modern media." However, that the Catholic Church feels it has not made complete use of radio is revealed in one of Dr. Lord's statements,

"The combined radio activities of the various Protestant organizations and Jewish groups far outstrip those of the Catholics, the chief reasons for this being centralized bureaus which assemble materials to be broadcast and distribute the services to local units of the denominations." ⁸¹

78. Wheaton College, Bulletin.

79. "Tenth Anniversary of Catholic Radio Hour", Catholic World, v. 150, (March 1940), p. 748.

80. National Conference of Christians and Jews, op.cit., p.4.

81. Schroeder, op. cit., in the Foreward, by D. A. Lord.

Considering its size, the Seventh Day Adventist Church has perhaps accomplished the most in the field of religious broadcasting. This Church has set up the North American Radio Commission, with four objectives:

- a. To coordinate the existing broadcasts among its various churches.
- b. To offer advice to local groups.
- c. To stress the promotion of certain accepted programs.
- d. To institute new programs and coverage. 82

The approach of this group, representing as it does a minority group, is perhaps the most realistic of any radio committee. Its recent publication, Broadcasting the Advent Message, (Washington, Review and Herald, 1944) a bound book of considerable size, is a functional approach to the possibilities of broadcasting for the Seventh Day Adventist churches. Though the programs of this body may never achieve great significance, they will surely achieve the limit of success, if their plan is carried out as visualized.

From the foregoing gathering of data we may reasonably conclude:

- a. About half the religious bodies in the United States have entered the broadcast field seriously.
- b. The effectiveness of the work done depends upon two factors: (1) the size of the church body; (2) its missionary aggressiveness.
- c. Those churches with a central, unified approach to the entire question of religious broadcasting, have accomplished the most in this field.

82. North American Radio Commission, Broadcasting the Advent Message, p. 263ff.

International Religious Broadcasting

Religious broadcasting has also gone on a world-wide basis. This opens up an entire new field for study, and cannot be dwelt on at length here. We should note just a few facts for the sake of keeping the picture complete.

International radio as a broadcast medium is comparatively new. This for a number of reasons:

- a. Adequate shortwave techniques have been developed more recently.
- b. Other countries are far behind the United States in the distribution of receiver equipment.
- c. Language barriers have not encouraged the development of programs.
- d. The advertising motive has not yet entered the scene.

The comparative absence thus far of the profit motive, has left international broadcasting far more open to propaganda groups than the domestic field. In fact, propaganda has been the one great use made of shortwave broadcasting to the present.

During the recent war, the Axis sent out daily propaganda programs in ten different languages. Great Britain and America used twenty-five different languages, beaming their programs to specific nations at specific hours.⁸³

International religious broadcasting has appeared on a limited scale, following two general trends: (a) Shortwave festival programs, sponsored by the networks and released locally by the standard AM outlets.⁸⁴ (b) Denominational programs, broadcast from high-powered stations in strategic world locations. The Catholic, Lutheran and Pentecostal groups have been most active in this field.

⁸³. F. Chase, op. cit., p. 275.

⁸⁴. J. MacLachy, op. cit., p. 219.

Both these types of broadcast will probably be expanded in the days ahead. Still another type may see widespread use, i.e., the local religious broadcast in foreign countries over stations set up by outside church groups. This type of broadcasting may affect the whole mission picture of the future.

International broadcasting is still in comparative infancy. It constitutes a great, (perhaps the greatest), opportunity for religious broadcasting in the future. The field will belong to those broadcasters who will very shortly be prepared to take advantage of it.

Amateur Radio in Religion

We must also say a word about the amateur shortwave station. The "radio ham" is a vital part of the American radio scene; he is looked on with favor by both the F.C.C. and commercial interests, for from the ham have come many technical developments. He is also a customer for goods. Temporarily removed from the air during wartime, the ham will come back in the next years in greater numbers than ever.

Little use has thus far been made of amateur radio by religious groups. The Northern Baptist Convention has used shortwave to keep in touch with missionaries in the field;⁸⁵ whether by commercial or amateur stations, could not, however, be ascertained. No doubt the ham of the future will sit ready to use his equipment and talent in behalf of that church which can fit him into its mission program.

85/ J. MacLachy, op. cit., p. 46.

II. An Evaluation of Religious Broadcasting

Radio is a potent instrument for any type of propaganda. The following figures indicate to some extent, how vast an influence radio plays upon the lives of the American people:

- a. Nine out of every ten homes in the U.S. have radio sets.
- b. Four out of every ten homes in the U.S. have more than one set.
- c. Three out of every ten homes in the U.S. have automobile radios.
- d. 33% more homes have radios than have gas or electric stoves.
- e. 50% more homes have radios than have bathtubs or showers.
- f. More Americans own radios than own toothbrushes. ⁸⁶

These radios are used. The amount of time daily spent by Americans in listening to the radio is startling. A survey made in 1937 by CBS, showed the average radio set in use five hours and ten minutes per day. ⁸⁷ Other surveys have borne out these figures. A National Association of Broadcasters publication of 1944 reveals that 83% of urban families use their radios over five hours a day, and that 88% of rural families use theirs the same length of time. ⁸⁸ Equally revealing is the fact that the American child is exposed to the influence of radio far more than to the influence of the school. In most communities the child spends 990 hours per year in school; during the same period he is in front of the radio speaker for more than 1,400 hours. ⁸⁹

Thus the broadcaster finds in his hands a powerful tool for placing his message before the American people.

86. Lewis Avery, How to Buy Radio Time, p. 11ff.

87. H.B. Summers, Radio Censorship, p. 12.

88. Lewis Avery, op. cit., p 11.

89. H.B. Summers, op. cit., p. 12.

But it is not enough simply to recognize the general propagandive value of radio. We must ask more specifically, what are the particular advantages of broadcasting? what are its disadvantages? Just what can the Church expect a radio broadcast to accomplish?

First we look at some of the advantages which broadcasting offers in the presentation of any message:

- a. Radio offers an appeal to audiences far larger than can be assembled or reached through the press.
- b. Radio offers low per capita cost in reaching the listener.
- c. Radio offers opportunity for bringing highly skilled personages to every community, however remote.
- d. Radio stimulates perception through a variety of techniques not available to other modes of propaganda. 90

J. R. Angell, psychologist and former president of Yale, states,

"As compared with the printed page... radio with its transmission of the living human voice enjoys with most listeners a great psychological advantage.... The voice conveys a sense of sincerity and integrity,... makes an appeal that the printed page simply cannot equal in the case of most persons." 91

At the same time there are a number of limiting factors which seriously restrict the propagandive value of radio. These include:

- a. The lack of listening discipline on the part of the audience. A bathrobed man on couch with Sunday paper is hardly a fit subject for a serious message.
- b. There is a complete absence of all visual aids, save verbal imagery.
- c. There is an absence of circular phenomena, especially important to worship.
- d. There is little opportunity for the listener to analyze the presentation.
- e. Radio must speak to the average listener, thus limits its educational possibilities. 92

90. Hadley Cantril and Gordon Allport, The Psychology of Radio, p. 253.

91. J. R. Angell, "Radio and National Morale", American Journal of Sociology, XLVII. (Nov. 1941), p. 354.

92. Hadley Cantril and Gordon Allport, op. cit. p. 253.

So, while radio offers tremendous possibilities for influencing men, women and children, it is at the same time limited in what it can accomplish. Those who would effectively use this modern instrument in the service of the Church would do well to study not only its general advantages and disadvantages, but also its particular advantages and disadvantages in regard to the specific religious objectives in view.

Objectives of Religious Broadcasting

What are the objectives which a capable religious broadcaster may reasonably hope to achieve?

1. The building of goodwill. Perhaps the chief objective of religious broadcasting is the building of goodwill; for Christianity in general, and for the denomination in particular. Frank C. Goodman, Secretary of Radio for the Federal Council of Churches, calls this function "A popularizing of the Church and Religion."⁹³

Commercial advertising is built on the principle of goodwill, -- placing of products before the public so often and in such a favorable light that the customer will recognize the products on the shelves and buy. Radio programs are constructed so as to put the listener into a pleasant frame of mind, then drum the name of a product and perhaps a slogan into his consciousness. Ultimate success depends upon proper programming, proper audience and proper sales follow-up.

93. NBO, National Radio Pulpit, a bulletin, 1943.

In the religious field the same principles are valid. The public can be convinced religion is a thing of value, and can be conditioned for the approach of the Church. At the same time, the denomination can have its name and slogan impressed upon the mind of the public in such a favorable light that the follow-up missionary task of the church will be made easier. Here, the religious program must conform to the same procedure as the commercial program. It must be scientifically constructed and performed, so the audience becomes favorably disposed to the broadcaster; it must hammer home the name and slogan of the broadcaster; it must be directed at a specific audience; it must be integrated into a larger plan of action, so as to capitalize on whatever goodwill is established.

2. The securing of fan-mail. This is a more tangible objective. It endeavors to persuade the listener to write to the broadcaster, asking for some premium or piece of literature. The broadcaster then contacts the writer by mail, telephone or personal call. This objective is stressed in the manual of the Seventh Day Adventist Church, which advises, "No broadcaster will succeed without securing names and addresses;" then continues, "Give, give, give! Give literature, give books, give magazines, give Bibles."⁹⁴ A Roman Catholic radio publication similarly asserts, "The clergy and laymen... agree that it is not so much what you say over the microphone... but what you get into their hands to read."⁹⁵

94. North American Radio Commission, op. cit. p. 213ff.

95. Rumble, Radio Replies, p. vii.

Here again, success depends upon a well-integrated, overall plan of action on the part of the broadcaster. The program must be constructed so as to elicit the mail response; it must be sent to the proper audience at the proper hour. Names and addresses must be translated into calls and contacts before the job is finished.

3. The promotion of specific church events. The question as to whether or not religious broadcasting increases church attendance in general, is seldom asked after twenty-five years. We hear rather the question, can religious broadcasting increase attendance at a particular service or series of services, or at some other religious event? The answer is, Yes, provided the broadcast is specifically aimed at accomplishing this, and carried out in keeping with established principles of programming. A haphazard, poorly planned program, broadcast at the wrong time, will probably fail in its objective; whereas a well constructed plan of spot announcements and feature programs at strategic hours, will probably bring favorable returns in attendance.

4. Religious radio may have still other objectives, determined by local needs. Also, one program may well be aimed at a combination of objectives.

The important principle is, that the broadcaster clearly understand the advantages and disadvantages of radio in general; that he keep in mind the specific objectives of his program; that he design and execute the program so as to fit the particular need; and that he follow up the program with action appropriate to capitalize on the investment he has made in the listener's attention.

Relative Unpopularity of Religious Programs

How successful have religious programs been in achieving their objectives? If listener ratings be taken as a criterion, religious programs have not done too well in the past. Polls have consistently shown religious programs low in audience appeal.

In 1934, F. H. Lumley, compiling eight separate investigations, found religious programs approximately thirtieth in forty-two program choices for listener preference.⁹⁶

A more recent study by H. B. Summers of Kansas State University and F. L. Whan of the University of Wichita, (1939 to 1943) showed religious musical programs far down on the rating scale, and devotional programs second to the end, only farm talks showing a lower rating.

<u>Program</u>	<u>Rating</u>	
News	80.4	
Comédians	74.1	
Popular Music	47.0	
Drama	41.0	
Audience shows	40.0	
Variety shows	33.0	
Serials	23.0	
Band music	22.0	
----- Religious music	21.0	
Old time music	20.0	
Sports	18.0	
Market reports	18.0	
Classical music	16.0	
Talks	16.0	
----- Devotionals	11.0	
Farm talks	9.0	97

These surveys are uncomfortably revealing. Considering that the great audience appeal of the three or four network devotionals would tend to pull this rating up, it would appear that the effect of the ordinary devotional program from church

96. Hadley Cantril, op. cit., p. 91f.

97. Lewis Avery, op. cit., p. 24f.

or studio is almost nil! Programs not listened to, no matter how rea~~s~~onably produced, are money poorly spent and opportunity wasted.

The broadcast band is a place of competition, one station competing against the other for listeners. Programs, therefore, are constantly adapted and improved, in an attempt to lure listeners to another spot on the dial. William S. Paley of CBS states, "The content of programs is influenced by audience reaction."⁹⁸ H. L. McClinton speaks of "mergers in entertainment form, and streamlined techniques."⁹⁹ But while commercial broadcasters have thus consistently adapted their program styles, religious broadcasters have largely been content to use the same antiquated program techniques of ten or fifteen years ago, thus losing out on audiences.

Commercial interests spend large sums of money for talent that will win audiences. In 1940, for example, advertisers spent \$10,000,000 for talent, music and production.¹⁰⁰ Now CBS, in a campaign to insure audience coverage, announces a plan to build its own programs at large expense, then sell them to advertisers in total¹⁰¹ In contrast, religious broadcasters often spend little or nothing on talent and adequate program preparation, thus failing to gain and hold listeners. Objectives go by the board when the dial turns.

Radio Speaking is an art which calls for both native skill and specialized training. Commercial programs employ only speakers with the finest skill and training available.

98. W. S. Paley, "Broadcasting and American Society", Annals American Academy Political Social Science, v.213, (Jan 1941) p.65.

99. H. L. McClinton, "Radio and Entertainment Since 1935", ibidem, p. 26.

100. Francis Chase, op. cit., p. 178.

101. "Sponsor Take All", Newsweek, XXIII, (March 20, 1944), p. 94.

On the other hand, religious speakers have often featured speakers lacking in these qualifications. It is unusual to find a theologian who is also a good radio personality; yet we find many a theologian consuming time on religious programs. "The Listener" in Atlantic Monthly (December 1943) writes:

"To put it frankly, it is high time the preacher woke up to the fact that this new medium which takes his voice to the ends of the earth, carries as much technical obligation as does the act of transmission itself." 102

Everett Parker, in the conclusions to his Chicago survey, sums up his studies of religious programs as follows:

- a. They seem overloaded with talk.
- b. Many are of a low quality artistically; they lack dignity. 103
- c. Religious broadcasters have not taken advantage of the many successful program techniques devised for radio.
- d. Religious programs are seldom beamed at specific listener groups.
- e. Large numbers of religious broadcasters are not trained in the writing, producing and performing of radio programs.
- f. Local religious groups often fail to service their sustaining time with adequate promotion and program preparation.
- g. The content of religious programs often is not suited to the needs of the average listener. 104

We conclude then, that religious programs have largely failed to achieve their objectives, because religious broadcasters have not met the audience-competition of commercial programs, through the use of up to the minute broadcast techniques.

102. "The Preacher on the Air," v. 172, p. 123f.

103. E. C. Parker, "Religion on the Air, etc.", reprint.

104. E. C. Parker, "Big Business in Religious Radio".

The Improvement of Religious Programs

We may hope that the future will see a general improvement in religious programs. Such improvement will offer genuine dividends to those churches that take steps in that direction. Following are some of the principles of programming which good religious broadcasts tend to observe:

1. Each program is entertaining. The program has listener appeal, so as to gain and hold an audience. This is by no means out of keeping with the dignity of the religious message. Garry Allighan, a British radio critic, writes,

"You may object and say, if the religion of Jesus is not sufficiently attractive I am not going to add embroideries of entertainment.... But Jesus did not adopt that attitude. He adapted his method of approach to the type of person at whom he was directing his attack." 105

M. A. Schroeder, writing in behalf of catholic action radio, puts it this way,

"Any program must entertain. This does not mean the pleasure derived from something vicious or trivial. The pleasure as a whole-some joy, an experience which consoles, encourages, uplifts and purifies." 106

J.R. Angell of the National Broadcasting Company stresses the importance of this principle thus,

"Some programs are listened to because they are amusing, some because they are informing, some because they are restful and refreshing, and some because they are exciting and beautiful, as in the case of great musical renditions. Others attract attention because of the personalities appearing on them and because of interest in the issues they discuss or the causes they represent. But no program holds an audience that does not strongly appeal to some motive as I have mentioned...." 107

105. G. Allighan, "Preaching over the Radio," from the British Weekly, (Oct 6, 1938), in Religious Digest, (Jan 1939), p. 19.

106. M. J. Schroeder, op. cit., p. 15f.

107. J.R. Angell, op. cit., p. 357.

2. Music is emphasized, rather than talk. Listener ratings consistently give religious musical programs a higher score than religious speech programs. This is true of commercial programs also. The Ford Sunday Evening Hour, for example, packs a real propaganda punch into a mere five minute period out of a sixty minute musical program. Even the much despised 'plug-ugly' capitalizes on the listener's preference for music. The value of appealing religious music was amply demonstrated in the success of General Mills popular program, Hymns of All Churches.

3. Popular program styles are adapted to religious use. Such popular styles include: round table discussions, forums, quiz programs, and other audience participation broadcasts. All these types and others have merit from the propaganda point of view and are adaptable to religious purposes. Other similar types are in the process of development. The popular program is the one which captures the audience.

4. Drama is made to play a major role. Religion is largely drama; the Bible is drama; Christian daily living is drama. Radio is readily adaptable to drama, and is in the process of a great development of this form. Hence, religious radio finds great possibilities in the dramatic style broadcast.

Commercial programs, such as the Cavalcade of America, have made highly successful use of the drama technique for years. The 'radio playhouse' is assuming an ever greater role in the broadcast schedule. The influence of 'soap operas'¹⁰⁸ and 'kids shows' despite their relatively cheap cost of production, can hardly be overestimated. General Mills has shown the great

¹⁰⁸. Soap operas account for one-half of all the network time used in the United States.

possibilities of religious drama with its Light of Faith program.

Religious groups which have experimented with this technique have been notably successful; e.g., the Catholic Church with its Ave Maria Hour. Station KPPC, a religious station in Pasadena, California, has had good success. Moody Bible Institute has done well with this technique, even though its drama is not of the best quality.

Religious drama scripts are available in a limited number. The Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America offers some good scripts. The networks have some religious scripts in their files. A limited number of transcribed religious dramas are available. To be sure, the bulk of good religious drama for radio remains to be written.

5. Speakers are few in number and specially trained.

The demands of good radio speech are exacting. Large speech audiences are maintained only by taking good radio speakers, training them to be better, then featuring them. The Catholic Church has been wise in this respect in its training of Fulton Sheen; also the Lutheran Church in featuring Walter Maier. The same principle, in modified scale, can pay good dividends on the local daily or weekly religious broadcast.

6. Frequent use is made of transcriptions. The transcription is one method of achieving economy of production. Through a sufficient volume of reuse, a transcription brings a program of excellent quality to a large audience for the same cost as a number of mediocre programs can be brought to small audiences. In recent years transcriptions have lost much of

the aroma of illegitimacy they once possessed;¹⁰⁹ one station in 1940 successfully used transcriptions for 85% of its program time.¹¹⁰ The coming of FM will no doubt greatly enlarge the use of the transcription technique in religious radio.

7. Central church bodies offer aid in local religious programming. This again makes for both economy and better programs. It calls for a pooling of the best materials within a denomination, then making these materials available to any or every local group. Max Eastman in calling for more religious drama, speaks of "script writers, directors, players and musicians." Obviously not every local religious group can afford such an outlay of talent, but with a nationwide, concerted approach to the problem, the local group can present a program showing the effect of all these artists. No doubt the coming of FM will greatly facilitate the development of this unified approach to local religious programming.

109. Waldo Abbot, Handbook of Broadcasting, p. 244.

110. Kenneth Bartlett, "Trends in Radio Programs," Annals American Academy Political Social Science, v. 213, (January 1941), p. 19.

III. Possible Future Trends of Religious Broadcasting

It is a brave man who dares predict the future of radio. Wartime radio developments alone have been estimated in number variously between 150 and 500. Some of these, of course, are merely minor modifications, while others involve major changes in technique with far-reaching implications. Already three pre-war developments appear destined to change the broadcast picture as we know it today. These are: Facsimile, Television and Frequency Modulation.

Each one has great implications for religious radio.

Facsimile

Strictly speaking, Facsimile does not belong in this discussion, since it deals with printing, not sound. Facsimile is a method of reproducing printed material by means of radio. Words and pictures, fed into a radio transmitter, roll out of a radio receiver in exact duplicate. Magazine type can be transmitted at the rate of 480 words per minute, ten times as fast as the conventional telegraph or teletype. ¹¹¹ The cost of equipment is not prohibitive.

Facsimile has been in use for some time, on a point-to-point basis, Western Union transmitting messages in the customer's own handwriting from one city to another. However, this use has not been popularly received. Broadcast Facsimile has been much talked of and dreamed of: -- a receiver in every home; the newspaper rolling out of the

¹¹¹. Francis Chase, Jr., op. cit., p. 292.

radio three times a day. This may become reality some day; however indications are that it will come slowly if at all; the public is not enthusiastic about 'paper reception.'

The greatest significance of Facsimile lies probably in its use for library and administration purposes. T. A. Craven, former commissioner of the F.C.C. writes,

"Not only can maps, photographs, drawings, bank checks, and other business papers be transmitted in seconds rather than hours, but also letters, quotations from books, newspaper articles, and similar material will be sent by electricity." 112

The Church will probably make use of Facsimile in this connection -- the transmission of documents and informational materials, from specialized library sources. It is not too fantastic to venture, that the church which quickly and successfully combines theology, library and facsimile could become the dominant internal force in American church life.

Television

Television is the most glamorous of radio's children. She has flirted with the imagination of America, but she has not yet managed to reach for his pocketbook. Until she does that, she will not have come into her own. No one has made any money on television yet, nor is it likely they will for the next five years. The technician always waits for the banker.

Obviously, television holds alluring possibilities for the Church. David Sarnoff writes:

112. T. A. Craven, "Radio Frontiers," Annals American Academy Political and Social Science, v. 213, (Jan 1941), p.125ff.

"Religious broadcasting will rise to new spiritual levels, for with television large audiences can participate intimately in the services of the great cathedrals; they will not only hear the ministers and the music, but they will see the preacher face to face as he delivers his sermon, witness the responsiveness of the audience, and observe directly the solemn ceremonies at the altar." 113

Thus many of the disadvantages now listed against radio will be modified or done away with when the visual element is added.

However, by the same token, all the requirements of religious broadcasting will be intensified. The cost of this medium will be many times that of present day radio. RCA already has \$20,000,000 invested in experimental aspects.¹¹⁴ Programming will call for additional great investments. With larger investments, competition for audiences will be keener than ever. If the church is to enter this field successfully, it must be prepared to make large capital investments. Talents, now highly specialized under conventional radio, will be doubly specialized when the visual side is added. The church will have to take a deep breath, technically, financially, organizationally, before it strides into the television field. But the present is none too early to begin.

Frequency Modulation

This is the field that holds an immediate and bright future for religious broadcasting. Frequency Modulation has been on the air for a number of years, and will shortly

113. David Sarnoff, "Possible Social Effects of Television," Annals American Academy Political and Social Science, v 213, (January 1941), p. 152.

114. "Megacycle Battle," Newsweek, v 789, (Oct 14, 1944), p. 87f.

become a full-scale partner to the conventional Amplitude Modulation. Eventually it may even supercede. Operating on a principle long known to radio engineers but just recently appreciated, FM provides high-fidelity, static-free transmission and reception within approximately the limits of the horizon. It operates in the very high frequency band, thus opening up large numbers of new broadcast channels.¹¹⁵ Transmission is simpler and cheaper.

T. A. Craven goes so far as to predict, "Ultimately, FM broadcasting will be the principle means of transmitting entertainment and information by sound to the public."¹¹⁶

Several dozen FM stations are already in operation and hundreds of applications for licenses are on file with the F.C.C. The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago is the church pioneer in this field, having had its FM outlet, WDIM, in operation since 1943 on a provisional license.¹¹⁷ KFUC, St. Louis, (the Lutheran Church) is known to have applied for a number of licenses.

The great significance of FM to religious broadcasting lies in the great number of channels it will open. Herman S. Hettinger, special economic expert for the F.C.C. writes,

"Its ultimate effect... may be to modify the entire broadcasting structure -- the number and kinds of stations, the number and functions of networks, the types of radio service available, and possibly even the role of government in regulation.... Thousands of stations can be accommodated if there is social or economic need for them."¹¹⁸

115. Edwin H. Armstrong, "Frequency Modulation and its Future Uses," American Annals Political Science, v.213, p. 153.

116. T. A. Craven, "Radio Frontiers," p. 127.

117. "Moody Bible Institute's Radio Stations," a typewritten release, 1944.

118. H. S. Hettinger, "Organizing Radio's Discoveries for Use", American Annals Political Science, v.213, p. 177ff.

Thus, the Religious Station may again come into its own. It may be possible for a church group to blanket the country with its own network. New commercial networks will undoubtedly be born, thus making more air time available to church groups.

But even the FM band will not expand ad infinitum; there will be a limit. In fact, there are indications that the high-frequency band would already be used up, if all the applications at the present time were satisfied.¹¹⁹ If there is one lesson we may learn from the past, it is this, that there is always less room in radio than a person would think.

Furthermore, a large increase in the number of outlets will probably spread the listening audience thinner. This will again mean increased competition for listeners, calling for good programming and an eye to genuine objectives. Those churches that stand ready with a comprehensive plan to cover the combined and shifting fields of AM and FM, will likely be most successful in the religious broadcasting field of the immediate future.

¹¹⁹. "Dividing up the Air," Newsweek, v. 15, (Oct 9, 1944), p. 92.

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