

TV MINISTRIES USE OF AIR TIME, FALL 2004

Copyright 2005
Stephen Winzenburg
Professor of Communications
Grand View College, Des Moines

Highlights of the 2004 study of 26 ministries

- TV preachers spend an average 17% of their airtime in fund raising and promotion, compared to commercial TV using 28% in ads and promos
- half of the ministries used airtime to discuss politics, with the biggest issue being the proposed Congressional ban on gay marriage
- two-thirds of the ministries failed to provide requested audited financial statements and only seven ministries supplied enough information to make an informed donation

Individual program analysis follows study summary and charts.

STUDY SUMMARY:

The latest analysis of television ministries shows that TV preachers continue to devote a relatively small portion of their programs to fundraising, but half discuss politics on their programs and most fail to provide financial information to make an informed donation.

The survey found that televangelists averaged using 9% of their shows to ask for money, 8% to promote ministry offers (such as free booklets or phone help lines), 4% to discuss political events and 79% for spiritual segments, such as sermons, prayer and music. This is the eighth study that has been conducted since 1981 and this year random episodes of telecasts from 26 ministries were examined during the summer and fall of 2004.

It's a myth that most TV preachers spend the bulk of their airtime asking for money. Religious broadcasters use much less time in fund raising and promotion than commercial television devotes to advertising. The combined 17% of time spent in fund raising and promotion is lower than the 28% of network TV that is devoted to ads and promotional announcements.

Few changes have occurred in the averages over the past ten years. A direct comparison of the 15 ministries he has studied since the 1987 PTL scandal shows that fund raising peaked in 1988, as the ministries attempted to recover from a dramatic drop in viewers and donations. The commercial aspects began a slow decline in 1990 and have been consistent since 1996. Today the combined commercial categories remain at their lowest level since I began my research in 1980.

Four ministries stood out as using at least 95% of their program time for ministry: *Day of Discovery*, *Ever Increasing Faith* with Frederick Price, Billy Graham and *EWTN Live*. Charles Stanley's *In Touch* and Paul Crouch's *Praise the Lord* program also spent at least 90% of their time in ministry.

Seven ministries provided audited financial statements, of which the most complete came from Billy Graham, EWTN, and D. James Kennedy. Other audited statements came from Larry Jones' *Feed the Children*, Joyce Meyer, James Robison and Charles Stanley.

There were surprises in the study, such as the dramatic decline in financial requests from Jerry Falwell and Richard Roberts. The Lynchburg pastor dropped his *Old Time Gospel Hour* fund raising numbers from 22% to 1%, and the hour-long healing telecast from Oral Roberts University went from 27% fund raising four years ago to 7% in 2004. The decline can be partially attributed to those preachers having their own cable satellite networks, which allow them to shift their financial appeals to commercial slots outside the programs.

Some longtime television ministries continued on the air despite past problems. Jim Bakker was back with a daily hour from Branson, Missouri, and spent about half as much time in fund raising and promotion as he did 25 years ago. Robert Tilton returned to the air with a mixture of older episodes from the '90s and fresh shows featuring his singing wife Maria. And Jimmy Swaggart remained on the air with a small cable audience.

During the study period a number of news items were published relating to the ministries, including sexual allegations against TBN founder Paul Crouch, controversy over Jimmy Swaggart's remarks about homosexuality, Pat Robertson's claim that he warned President Bush that an Iraqi War would not be a short-term success, and Texas

pastor T. D. Jakes appearance on Oprah Winfrey's talk show to promote his controversial R-rated film about rape. Also, 86-year-old Oral Roberts came out of semi-retirement to reveal a "vision" God had given him regarding the end times. Roberts appeared on his son Richard's program as well as on Kenneth Copeland's daily show to explain the vision of "smoke and blood" over New York City, the United States and the world. Copeland speculated that it could be a bomb or meteorite, while Oral felt it was "one of the signs of the end times."

Other unusual messages included long-time conservative Falwell calling Christians that ban rock music or have a dress code "Taliban Baptists...because they're not speaking the language of the culture," Pastor Tommy Tenney's message to the TBN audience that "I was just chasing God. He's in Hollywood right now" and RBC's *Day of Discovery* hosts commenting that current violence in Israel may be from God ("Genocide or Judgment?").

Less than half of the ministries studied got involved in discussing the politics, such as the presidential election, the War in Iraq, the situation in Israel or the proposed amendment to ban gay marriage. Nine of the 26 programs discussed the 2004 election, with Falwell and Pat Robertson taking strong anti-John Kerry stances.

Most ministries that mentioned the election encouraged Christian voters to support moral, pro-life candidates. Some saw the election as a battle between Christianity and anti-God forces. But for the most part television preachers made sure that viewers knew they were just giving advice and not endorsing specific candidates.

However, Falwell said from the pulpit, "We're not supposed to endorse candidates. I as a private citizen sometimes say for whom I'm voting. And even then I say for the Bush of your choice...but our ministry endorses nobody." Jack Van Impe expressed concern about Kerry and his wife, saying "God only knows what will happen if he becomes the president." Robertson called the Democratic Convention "The biggest bunch of smoke screen I have ever seen" and said of Kerry's anti-Vietnam stance that "betraying your country and giving aid and comfort to the enemy in time of war is considered a crime. Somebody who wants to have the highest office in the land, that can't be swept under the rug."

Catholic priests on *EWTN Live* said “abortion is worse than terrorism” and “support for abortion disqualifies a candidate for public office.” Host Father Mitch Pacwa clarified the Catholic position that “if you vote for a pro-abortion candidate because you agree with him, that’s formally sinful.”

Probably the biggest single issue on religious programs over the last six months of 2004 was not the election but gay marriage. Preachers questioned court rulings and pushed for the passing of legislation that would define marriage as between a man and a woman. Ohio pastor Rod Parsley condemned the courts that allowed gay marriage, saying “You’re not going to run this nation from a court bench.” Pat Robertson went so far as saying, “I do not believe that a ruling of the Supreme Court should be considered the supreme law of the land,” and on another show said, “If the Court does rule to take ‘under God’ out of the Pledge there will be such an outcry they’ll demand their heads—which might be a good thing.” Jack Van Impe agreed, saying, “Let’s get rid of these corrupt judges.” Charles Stanley condemned the removal of the Ten Commandments from public places, saying “Ultimately the Supreme Court will have to answer to Almighty God.”

When the proposed marriage amendment failed, D. James Kennedy held the ACLU responsible for “supporting the push for same sex marriage.” On *EWTN* the priest said that no matter what the vote, “divine law is above human law” when it comes to marriage; Jewish writer Don Feder told James Robison that “we must oppose homosexual marriage...to see freedom survive”; and Falwell took it personally saying “We lost the vote” and asked viewers to go online to see the list of how the Senators voted, adding “‘No’ means...they probably need to be unemployed.”

Is America a “Christian nation”? It is according to Falwell (“We’re a Christian nation”) and Kennedy (“This is a Christian nation”) but Kennedy’s program warned that “The anti-God forces...are gearing up for the upcoming election. They are determined to hijack America.” *Praise the Lord* guest host Ted Haggard said “America has a covenant with God and we’ve strayed off our path.” Charles Stanley said that we are dual citizens of America and heaven, saying, “The founding fathers...knew that was the foundation truth of society.”

Rod Parsley called it a “bankrupt political system” and started his own Center for Moral Clarity, saying “I’m about to take a nation back or die trying” (which may have had an impact on swinging the Ohio vote away from John Kerry and giving Bush the victory). Hinn had hope for revival, saying “I believe God Almighty will visit this nation one more time” and Bishop T.D. Jakes promised that “Together we’re going to take the nation for Jesus.”

Some pointed to the unrest in the Middle East as a sign of the End Times. The hosts of *Tomorrow’s World* condemned the European Union, saying God “will use end time descendents of Asyria” in Germany to “punish...modern descendents of the ancient house of Israel,” which are Americans and British. Jack Van Impe said the European Union is “the revived Rome...the final world government” that was forewarned in Revelation and that “China will probably attack the U.S. of A. with missiles and hydrogen bombs before 2015.”

The Internet continued to be a growing aspect of most of the television ministries. All but one (Tilton) had web sites that would direct inquirers to various aspects of the ministry, including giving a donation. I wrote to each ministry and asked for an audited financial statement. Eight sent information in the mail that was typically two to four years old and two ministries had the information available on their web sites, resulting in a response rate of only 38%. Of those only seven were detailed enough to make an informed decision about donating to the ministry.

James Robison’s Life Outreach ministry sent the 2002 statement via the internet within hours of the request being made, showing \$40 million in contributions, \$17 million spent on television time and \$9 million spent on fundraising, though no specifics were given about salaries or board members. Joyce Meyer received \$81 million in 2003 contributions and spent \$25 million on TV time, with only general numbers given for salaries. Charles Stanley’s TV ministry received \$50 million in donations and spent \$34 million on their broadcast ministry.

Robert Schuller’s organization sent a four-year-old one-page summary “compiled from audited financial statements” that showed donations of \$67 million, with \$21 million spent on airtime but no specifics on salaries. Pie charts came from Paul Crouch’s TBN and RBC’s Day of Discovery. TBN’s numbers showed that it had an income of

\$172 million in 2001 but RBC's undated chart gave no specifics other than general percentages of income and expenditures.

The most complete and current information came from EWTN, the Catholic network founded by Mother Angelica, Billy Graham's organization, and D. James Kennedy's Coral Ridge Ministries. With \$27 million in contributions in 2003 and \$22 million spent on its television network, EWTN actually showed a negative cash flow, paying over \$6 million a year just for time on the satellite. Graham's wonderfully detailed statement showed that he received \$62 million in contributions and another \$20 million from annuities and trusts, while \$16 million was spent on radio and TV time. Coral Ridge had \$36 million in donations and spent \$15 million on TV time.

Almost every other ministry responded via email that they would be providing information but never did. Almost two-thirds (16 of the 26) failed to even partially fulfill the request for financial information and many of these claim to be members of the national financial accountability group. Christian ministries that ask for donations should be open with details about where the money is being spent.

Another concern is the lack of Scripture in the religious telecasts. Jimmy Swaggart's son Donnie pointed out in one sermon that most TV preachers "don't even use the Bible as a reference point," which the study found to be true for pretty much everyone, including Swaggart. While most ministers claim to point to the Bible as the final authority, in truth these preachers spend only a few seconds reading from Scripture. In most cases over 98% of the sermons focused on the televangelists' commentary and interpretation, with very little focus on the actual Word of God.

TV MINISTRIES USE OF AIR TIME, SUMMER/FALL 2004

Copyright 2005
by Stephen Winzenburg
Grand View College, Des Moines

TV MINISTRIES USE OF AIR TIME, SUMMER/FALL 2004

Copyright 2004
by Stephen Winzenburg
Grand View College, Des Moines

	<u>FUNDRAISING</u>	<u>PROMOTION</u>	<u>POLITICAL</u>	<u>SPIRITUAL</u>
Jim Bakker	10%	1%	0%	89 %
Kenneth Copeland	7	5	1	87
<i>Day of Discovery</i>	0	4	0	96
Creflo Dollar	5	11	0	84
<i>EWTN Live +</i>	1	4	0	95
Jerry Falwell	1	12	11	76
<i>Feed the Children +</i>	41	17	0	42
Billy Graham +	<1	5	0	95
Marilyn Hickey	7	24	0	69
Benny Hinn	11	7	0	82
T.D. Jakes	10	7	0	83
D. James Kennedy +	6	4	18	72
Joyce Meyer +	10	13	0	77
Rod Parsley	10	8	10	72
<i>Praise the Lord</i>	2	4	3	91
Frederick Price	4	1	0	95
Richard Roberts	7	10	0	83

James Robison +	17	12	3	68
Robert Schuller	11	3	<1	86
<i>700 Club</i>	11	9	31	49
Charles Stanley +	4	1	4	91
Jimmy Swaggart	15	2	<1	83
Robert Tilton	5	30	<1	65
<i>Tomorrow's World</i>	0	18	5	77
Jack Van Impe	17	2	15	66
Paula White	15	4	0	81
AVERAGE	<u>9</u> %	<u>8</u> %	<u>4</u> %	<u>79</u> %

+ denotes ministry that provided detailed audited financial statement

TV MINISTRIES YEAR-BY-YEAR AVERAGES

Comparisons of the 15 ministries included in every study

Copyright 2005
by Stephen Winzenburg
Grand View College, Des Moines

	<u>1988</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>1992</u>	<u>1996</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2004</u>
FUND RAISING & PROMOTION	27%	25%	22%	15%	15%	15%
POLITICAL	8%	8%	4%	3%	4%	4%
SPIRITUAL	65%	67%	74%	82%	81%	81%

COMMENTARY ON INDIVIDUAL MINISTRIES:

My content analysis into religious broadcasting started in 1980 at the University of Minnesota, when I began categorizing what Pat Robertson and Jim Bakker did with their television shows. Little did I know then that I had picked two men who would have major media attention in the late 1980s, resulting in dramatically increased interest in the subject of religious broadcasting.

For five years after the PTL scandal, from 1987 to 1992, there was a great amount of interest in how TV preachers had manipulated the audience into giving money and how they had attempted to use their broadcasts to impact elections. After what was called a “holy war,” there was a seismic shift in audiences where most ministries lost over ¾’s of their viewers. But eventually the front-page news stories about these ministries died down and viewership (along with contributions) stabilized.

Despite claims from others that these TV preachers would need to shut down, I had always been the only expert claiming that none of the major ministries would ever go off the air. I even predicted Jim Bakker would return to TV once he was out of prison. And my prophecies all proved true—every single ministry that I have studied over the past 25 years has remained on the air or temporarily left the air only to return later.

After a quarter century of watching these programs, this will probably be my final study for many years as I prepare to release a 2006 book on the subject. The interest in the subject of television ministries has dropped to the point that even Christian publications are no longer interested in reporting the results. Such a lack of interest is disturbing, since over a billion dollars annually is spent by these ministries, with much of that money comes directly from believers. It is one of the biggest Christian industries with little true accountability (self-policing organizations like the ECFA are well-meaning but no TV ministry is required to follow the group’s guidelines in order to stay on the air).

Because this is my last opportunity in a long time to reflect on these programs, there are more personal observations included in this analysis than in past studies. After watching TV preachers for 25 years, patterns have emerged and weaknesses have become obvious. Many of the ministries need some straight advice about their program format, theology and entertainment value.

The facts of how much airtime a ministry spends asking for money or preaching are measured and indisputable. What is open to discussion is the analysis of what occurs on the broadcast. I am very aware that the diverse Christian community has as many opinions about these shows as they do about scripture. But most Christians are uncomfortable criticizing “men of God” who head large television operations. Therefore any opinions I give are just asking for negative feedback. But at some point someone has to stand up and state the obvious—most of the television ministries are not doing a very good job doing the two most important things: entertaining and ministering.

Most TV preachers use the same tried-and-true format that worked 25 years ago but seems old-fashioned and out of place today. For a broadcast ministry to be truly inspirational in today's market it must entertain, and too many televangelists are just boring. On the other hand, most ministries promote themselves as bringing God's Word to the people at home—yet that also is not true. Most television preachers spend the bulk of the broadcast spouting their own opinions and lecturing people on a few narrow scripture verses. There is very little spiritual depth to most of the programs.

There are few ministries that stand out as being excellent examples of a modern use of the entertainment medium combined with a wide-ranging overview of spiritual topics. Some try but fail. Others never even try, just doing the same show week after week and wondering why they can't attract new viewers. What follows is personal commentary on what changes need to be made in the shows and how viewers should watch with skeptical eyes.

As asterisk denotes that one of a ministry's random episodes was dropped from survey results due to a "special" episode. For example, Kenneth Copeland's program with Oral Roberts used 59% of the show to discuss politics, yet no other Copeland episode used more than 3% in politics. Others that had an episode dropped include "EWTN Live" and Rod Parsley. Dropping a single non-typical episode helps to better represent the "average" show for the purposes of this research.

If you're looking for the shorthand version of who you can trust with your contributions, the list is brief: Billy Graham and Mother Angelica's EWTN provided the best information and spend almost no time asking for money. D. James Kennedy provided an excellent audited financial statement but uses much airtime talking politics. Ministries that provided good but somewhat incomplete financial information include Joyce Meyer, Charles Stanley, James Robison and *Feed the Children*. Totally unacceptable pie charts came from Robert Schuller, Paul Crouch's TBN and *Day of Discovery*. The rest failed to provide anything.

JIM BAKKER

Ministry	89%
Political	0%
Promotion	1%
Fundraising	10%

Financial Information Provided Upon Request: None.

Jim Bakker's return to daily television should have come as no surprise to his long-time followers. Bakker had not only survived potential career-ending splits from religious

network leaders Pat Robertson and Paul Crouch, but he had survived five years in prison and the embarrassment of losing his PTL ministry in a 1987 scandal. Bakker had told me in an exclusive prison interview that he had plans for a number of religious programs and networks once he was freed. But the one thing that stood in his way was the judge's order that he not ask for money while on probation. So for years he traveled to churches to preach his "forgiven" gospel while waiting for the chance to get back on the air, which he knew would require him to fundraise.

That opportunity came with "The New Jim Bakker Show," broadcast live since early 2003 from a restaurant studio in Branson, Missouri. The over-emotional Tammy Faye has been replaced by the down-home natural sweetness of Bakker's new wife Lori. The family atmosphere includes appearances by their adopted children and the show's casual nature includes frequent mistakes and camera errors. It all adds to the underdog picture that Bakker likes to paint of himself.

Most episodes start with an opening 15 to 25 minutes devoted to walking through the audience, talking with "average" people who have come to have lunch and revisit the once-popular minister. He struggles to make his way through the crowded tables and stick a microphone in the face of those who have little to say. This opening segment is too long and boring, in which Jim or Lori joke with soft-spoken travelers about what they like about Branson. Often a visitor will proclaim "I've been watching you ever since your PTL days," and Bakker attempts a blush as he thanks them for sticking with him.

Then the hosts move to the couches, where guests range from a smalltime pastor to a college professor to former Harlem Globetrotter Meadowlark Lemon to a professional singer appearing in Branson. Often a guest will be brought back three or four days in a row. What's surprising are the appearances of many long-forgotten '70s Christian celebrities who used to appear on Bakker's "PTL Club." They have not abandoned Bakker and he has given them a new national platform for their small ministries. This show is best at what made the "PTL Club" so watchable—entertainment. The house band is good and the musical guests are inspiring.

On the show Bakker almost daily proclaims his amazement that he is back on the air, saying, "God is the God of the second chance...God is the God of the comebacks." He has new catch phrases, such as "God turns messes into messages" and says his prison time "in the wilderness" was "living in the Bible five solid years."

Unfortunately, most of his rhetoric leads to the raising of money. When the show first aired Bakker spent no time fundraising, but once his fundraising restrictions were lifted and the show expanded to stations around the United States he began to have to ask for money to pay his TV bills. He resorts to statements similar to those he used while doing the "PTL Club" 25 year earlier, such as "Our ministry is going through life and death and we only have a few hours left" or "I'm fighting the worst battle of my life today" or "We need a miracle desperately...I need 1000 people to give \$100 to keep us alive."

He has come up with gimmicks like the “debtbusters club” and selling little crystal crosses for \$25. In one fundraising segment he was filmed outside on a hill of rocks, showing how he couldn’t move them himself. Then he later brought a pile of rocks into the studio and proved to people he needed their help to move them. He offers excuses such as “I’ve had a hard time raising money because of the past” or “I’ve been grieving so much over our problems I’ve been physically ill.” Instead of seeing himself as causing a problem, he sees the lack of viewer support as being the problem.

A request for an audited financial statement was responded to five days later with a four-sentence greeting saying “it means so much to Lori and me to hear from our friends....We want to be a blessing to you!” No mention is made of finances or how we can receive a statement. And the ministry never made any contact after that. So those contributing to Bakker have no idea where the money is going or how it is being spent.

Despite prison promises to change, Bakker has unfortunately returned to his old bad habits. His major flaw is that he builds a ministry on credit, then he expects viewers to bail him out. In one particularly embarrassing episode of the show, Bakker had a huge display board of all the cities in America where the show airs, with the amount needed to stay on the air in each city and the number of people who had contributed. In some cities he had only two contributors! This is a man who gets himself into deep debt under the guise of God calling him to expand the ministry, then he harasses viewers for not supporting him. Bakker has not learned his lesson even after years in prison.

Ironically, Bakker loves to complain about “arrogant, ego-centric” believers, yet he fails to see that almost every time he opens his mouth it’s to either proclaim a unique revelation God has given him or to coerce others into getting him out of the financial messes he gets himself into. While claiming to be Christ-centered, the program is really Bakker-centered. For his 65th birthday he spent 15 minutes reading from his book “I Was Wrong” (bragging of the surprise birthday party his fellow convicts gave him that included stolen food) before offering the book to viewers for a “birthday gift” contribution of \$65. He uses a type of false modesty to ask for money by proclaiming, “I didn’t think anybody’d watch Jim Bakker again” with a tear in his eye while bragging that a station owner told him Bakker’s show is the second-highest rated on the station. His words may reflect a bit more humility, but the attitude is still very self-serving.

What makes the show special is co-host Lori Bakker. She is bubbly without being a Christian caricature. She can help Jim through a variety of interview topics, ranging from serious Scripture study to pop music to sports and politics. Particularly touching is her story of having five abortions and being saved from a life of abuse. Lori points to herself and Jim as an “example of God’s restoration power.” If Jim is earning back the trust of the TV audiences it’s only because Lori is standing by his side—if she can believe in him, then the audience feels that they can, too.

KENNETH COPELAND

Ministry	87%
Political	1%*
Promotion	5%
Fundraising	7%

Financial Information Provided Upon Request: None.

This prosperity-gospel preacher continues to do what he has done for over 25 years: proclaim the ability of believers to have health, financial prosperity and happiness as long as they follow his somewhat narrow interpretation of scripture. Suffering is rarely mentioned and when it is Copeland says hardships are usually a sign that the believer is not following one of God's "kingdom principles" of "faith" (as explained by Copeland or his wife Gloria).

Copeland's "Believer's Voice of Victory" message is consistent: "Every sickness, every disease, every weakness and pain is under the curse. Christ has redeemed me from the curse. Therefore I have no sickness." This is appealing to those at home who are tired of hurting or going without. It's the "name it and claim it" gospel, where God has huge pockets bulging with gifts that He's just waiting for believers to ask for. But on repeated viewing it's obvious that this gospel is very narrow and skips much of the cross-bearing suffering that Christ told His followers they would have to bear if they truly believed.

Copeland has two shows: a daily Bible study in which he and often a guest are seated at a table in a cozy TV studio; and a weekly preaching program in which Kenneth or Gloria are shown proclaiming their gospel in front of a large crowd. The message is so consistent that there was virtually nothing in the 2004 study of his program that had not been heard in the 2000 or 1996 studies. About 99% of his ministry segments are Copeland's interpretation of what God says and he spends little actual time in the scripture.

What changes are the fundraising offers. Copeland doesn't spend time directly asking for money and his fundraising appeals are usually limited to his book or audio/video versions of his messages and selling his musical CD's (such as his Big Band album of which Copeland brags of God giving him a special anointing on the songs). Unlike many TV preachers, there are no direct appeals from Copeland for viewers to help save his ministry. It is refreshing that he doesn't shoulder the viewer with the responsibility of keeping his ministry on the air—he appears to actually preach the financial faith in God that he proclaims.

Though not a lot of time is spent asking for money, viewers need to be aware that this ministry did not respond to a request for audited financial information. Those who contribute have no idea how the money is being spent or who is making the financial decisions.

Copeland did get into discussing politics, singing “God Bless America” and proclaiming, “This is God’s government...it is ordained by Him.” He called the 2004 presidential race “The most important election year in the history of this nation” and without endorsing a candidate said that “if the laws of the land do not agree with the spiritual laws of God, they won’t work.” One guest specifically mentioned the debate over same-sex marriages and Copeland mocked those who “always vote for the party that stands for abortion.”

He said Christian voters have “a controlling block...to keep this government in the hands of God.” Copeland told viewers not to vote on economic issues: “Economics aren’t political...all economics are spiritual.” He also told followers to not get their election information from television but to “get your information from God.” And said, “I’m not going to tell you which way to vote,” but “it’s wrong to vote for someone knowing that that someone stands for things that God is totally against” like abortion.

The most unusual Copeland episode of 2004 featured a special appearance by Copeland mentor Oral Roberts. The heavily-hyped program featured Oral’s “vision” in which he saw “God’s spirit” over a New York City covered in smoke and blood. Roberts said it expanded to the United States and then the rest of the world. He claimed it be a “wake up call” to the church as “one of the signs of the end times.”

Copeland speculated that Oral’s vision could be a bomb or a meteorite, then added that he had his own “visitation of the Lord” in a vision on New Year’s Eve. He threatened God’s judgment on our nation, that “God can do more in judgement than He can in blessing.”

Roberts said in the middle of his vision he asked God about the 2004 presidential election. “He said one thing—He said it’s a spiritual battle.” Roberts contradicted Copeland’s previous statements saying, “America’s not a Christian nation. It has a lot of Christians in it.” But then went on to condemn Christians for “taking a form of theology” but not applying it to their daily lives.

At age 86, Roberts concluded, “It won’t be long until I’m called home and this may be my last message.” Longtime viewers will remember, of course, a similar statement made in 1987-88 that God would “call me home” if Roberts didn’t raise \$8 million to save his ministry. This time the vision was not used for direct fundraising but video and audio tapes of the vision were available for sale.

Overall, Copeland’s program is appealing to viewers who have charismatic/Pentecostal beliefs that emphasize God’s rewards on earth while looking for the soon second coming of Christ. Copeland’s hick accent and casual dress contradict his powerful sense of entitlement as one of the few to whom God has chosen to reveal His interpretation. Those average viewers looking for encouragement to help make it through tough times may find it in this “ordinary” man who oozes security, success and faith in a God who wants them to prosper. If only Copeland would spend less time proclaiming his personal interpretations and more time focusing on the entirety of the Word of God that he claims to believe in.

PAUL CROUCH'S "PRAISE THE LORD"

Ministry	91%
Political	3%
Promotion	4%
Fundraising	2%*

Financial Information Provided Upon Request: Vague pie chart with no specific numbers.

Trinity Broadcasting Network's flagship two-hour "Praise the Lord" program can be difficult to categorize. Over the past 30 years on the air, the show has gone from being a southern California talk show that was central to Paul and Jan Crouch's expanding ministry to a spiritual variety show featuring guest hosts from a variety of locations. With Trinity expanding to become the largest religious broadcaster in the world, the "Praise the Lord" program has taken on a more multi-cultural, often international, flavor.

One night viewers tune in to see a California pastor in Trinity's Miami studio interviewing popular Texas preacher T.D. Jakes about ministering to the black community. The next night the discussion is "the battle for marriage" with a musical guest from Jerry Falwell's Virginia church. Followers that tune in a different night see Paul and Jan's son Matt Crouch promoting his latest Biblical movie starring Peter O'Toole and Omar Sharif, including using clips of "Raiders of the Lost Ark" and "The Lord of the Rings."

Other popular TV ministers appear often, particularly those with fire-and-brimstone preaching styles like Benny Hinn, Paula White from Tampa or Ohio's Rod Parsley. During some weeks the regular show is preempted for a fundraising telethon, with Paul shouting at the devil along side an on-screen count of how many phone lines are open. On other nights, without warning, viewers who tune in during the normal "Praise the Lord" time slot discover that the show has been replaced by a movie or a John Tesh concert.

It is a frenetic, frustratingly haphazard program schedule that is as high-strung as founder Paul Crouch himself. As Crouch seems to work overtime to expand his ministry as quickly as possible, so his signature show reflects his attention-deficit style. The viewers are never sure what they will find when they tune in to see "Praise the Lord."

Not that variety makes the show bad. Sometimes it's fun to come across surprises like a repeat of an episode that was a birthday greeting to Billy Graham, in which Jan Crouch whispers a gushing report from the stands at a crusade in Fresno while Graham is preaching on the stage in the background. Or the somewhat self-serving 31st anniversary show filled with clips of other ministers (Oral Roberts, Robert Schuller, Creflo Dollar, Marilyn Hickey) that have made appearances on TBN. Jan's makeup-filled face introduced the tape of the famously plain Catholic nun who serves the poor, saying, "I've met kings and princes...and the only person I've wanted to meet is Mother Teresa."

The Crouch's have taken the talk show format and caffeinated it to the point that viewers don't know what to expect when tuning in each night. Some of the topics, guests and guest hosts are top-notch talent that are given a national stage. Others are well-meaning but somewhat dull small-time ministers who don't make for great television. Where are Paul and Jan? What happened to a focused mission for the program? The Crouches and the show's direction appear to have wandered.

"Praise the Lord" uses very little time to ask for money or promote its ministry. An announcer may say "We need your love gifts large or small," but other than the occasional weeklong telethons that preempt the regular show there are few direct requests for money on the regular program. Financial appeals are often made during commercials between shows but rarely on "Praise the Lord." It is amazing that on TBN a two-hour period can often go by without one mention made of money.

An email request for an audited financial statement was responded to by mail. Three days after the request was made, the ministry mailed a one-page color pie chart that provided absolutely no specific financial information other than stating the ministry spent \$172 million in 2001. The three-year-old chart said 40% of the budget was for "new stations and missions outreach," 10% for salaries, 9% (\$15 million?) for airtime and 22% for TV production.

It also states that Paul and Jan Crouch averaged making only \$38,000 total per year during the first 20 years of the ministry and now they receive "appropriate salary levels" that are set by a group that includes a retired judge, retired pastor and a CPA. Despite the fact that in 2000 they sent a letter explaining that the couple made over \$300,000 each, now no specifics are given and no mention is made of non-cash compensation.

The note with the pie chart said that every year TBN undergoes two audits "to ensure that your TBN is in complete compliance with established accounting practices and procedures," yet none of the information from the audits was included. TBN claims "our attorneys advise us that these reports should not be mailed," but that viewers are welcome to come to TBN to see how the money is spent. Advice, then, to those who want to contribute to TBN--you likewise should not trust the mail but tell Crouch that he is welcome to your money if he is willing to come to your door to pick it up! The claim that the audited financial statements can not be sent by mail is ludicrous (Graham, ETWN, Kennedy and many other use the mail and some post it freely on a web site). It may just be an excuse used to keep contributors from seeing how their money is being spent.

Politics does get mentioned on the program, typically by guests or guest hosts. One guest said, "Righteousness is very important. That means that a presidential candidate is a Christian is very important." A guest host said, "America has a covenant with God and we've strayed off our path," then asked Congress to pass the Federal Marriage Amendment that would ban gay marriages. Another guest encouraged prayer for the election because "God will turn our nation around."

But mostly the show offers a variety of solid ministry topics and testimonies that can be encouraging to viewers from a variety of Christian backgrounds. One was on “practical spirituality,” encouraging people to get away from “churchism.” Another talked about healings, while other segments focused on the international church. There seems to be a particular interest in reaching minority believers, with one black pastor saying, “God sent African-Americans to these shores to have a tremendous prophetic role in the destiny of our nation.” The program seems comfortable with people from a variety of faith and ethnic backgrounds sharing their experiences to encourage others in their Christianity.

So what’s missing is consistency. “Praise the Lord” needs to define its program clearly and then stick to a regular format and schedule. And if Paul and Jan Crouch aren’t going to continue to regularly host the show they started, then the series needs to name regular successors instead of just letting viewers tune in each night to take their chances with guest hosts of varying quality.

DAY OF DISCOVERY

Ministry	96%
Political	>1%
Promotion	4%
Fundraising	0%

Financial Information Provided Upon Request: Pie chart with no specific numbers.

One of the finest productions in Christian television is from RBC Ministries, which started in Michigan as Radio Bible Class. President Mart DeHaan often participates in the informative, documentary-type programs that include location footage mixed with discussions about Christians issues. Topics range from feature material, like the life story of Olympic runner Eric Liddell, to current events, such as the conflict in Israel.

One of the best features of the program is that virtually no time is spent asking for money. A small amount of time is set aside in each program to offer a free booklet or video, which will then get the viewer on a mailing list which offers more materials. But no TV time is devoted to asking for money.

Unfortunately, RBC Ministries is no longer one of the leaders in providing audited financial information to donors. In the 2000 study, RBC’s IRS paperwork was available on the ministry’s web site and provided incredibly detailed information, including DeHaan’s compensation. That material was not found on the web site during the 2004 study and a request for audited financial information was met with a response of a booklet with no information other than a history of the organization and a pie chart.

No specific numbers were given as to the ministry's budget. The pie chart showed 10% of the money was spent for administration and 6% for publishing, but the word "TV" is nowhere to be found. Almost 40% of the funds were spent on "Bible study"—is this what they are calling their broadcast ministry? Or 37% was used for "Devotions"—is that what they call their TV and radio shows?

It is very disappointing that this ministry that used to be financially accountable to contributors has dropped the ball and does not respond to a request for an audited statement, even though their brochure claims "RBC Ministries is committed to...disclosure of a current financial statement upon request." The request was made and the statement never came (a repeat of the 1996 study, after which RBC ministries claimed my not received a statement was an error by a clerical worker).

Probably the most controversial aspect of the "Day of Discovery" program was the August discussion of the conflict in the Middle East. In the program "Genocide of Judgment," DeHaan and a guest scholar report from the Holy Land and make some startling statements. They ask how believers in the Bible can criticize those currently using violence when "God approved Israel doing it." The expert says it was God's direction and not man's ambition that led to violence. DeHaan questions the conclusion but somewhat justifies the violence by saying, "You have to believe God sees things that we don't see."

The two further discussed the fact that Christians today focus on the gentle Jesus where scripture talks of a judgmental Jesus who will return on a white horse and slay the nations. Responding to the Biblical stories of violence that led to the deaths of innocent children, Mart concludes: "I can only find comfort in the thought that whatever Canaanite children were put to death would likely be spared a terrible existence and a worse judgment that if they would have lived out their lives in an immoral and violent culture."

This unusual theological statement is not only politically incorrect but is one that is never stated on other television ministries. The Christian community today paints a portrait of a God who is anti-violence and pro-peace, yet DeHaan is willing to risk his reputation as a ministry leader to point out that the Bible is filled with God's judgment. The problem comes in implying that since the God of the Bible accepted violence that today's violence in Israel is acceptable. The host never states that he agrees with that conclusion, but just raising it as legitimate sets "Day of Discovery" apart from other ministries that are unwilling to tackle sensitive subjects that are addressed in scripture.

CREFLO DOLLAR

Ministry	84%
Political	0%
Promotion	11%
Fundraising	5%

Financial Information Provided Upon Request: None.

The pastor of the World Changers Church in College Park, Georgia is one of the up-and-coming stars of television ministries. He claims he has an audience of one million in six countries and attracts viewers with his solid values delivered to a mostly black congregation.

He prances the stage with a voice that ranges from almost whispering to revival shouting. He uses dramatic effects, such as sitting on the steps to make a sensitive point. In typical charismatic language, Dollar condemns organized churches (“religion has all but destroyed our nation”), focuses on material goals (“pay your bills with this talk that I’m teaching this morning”) and even occasionally slips into speaking tongues.

Dollar’s sermons are among the best on religious television and he doesn’t hesitate to take unpopular stands. He doesn’t just slam sex outside marriage (“Don’t have sex with nobody you don’t have papers to have sex with”), but takes it a step farther by telling followers to control what media they watch and listen to. To those who may object, he says, “You know I’m lovin’ you right now.”

Too often, however, he slips into the prosperity gospel. Though he tells listeners not to follow the money, he concludes “Follow the Lord and the money and things will follow you....God wants to give you good things but it’s based on the love you have in your heart.” Namely, if you obey God you’ll prosper financially—which tacitly encourages following God for material reasons.

Dollar also depends on viewers to help him out of his financial overspending. He claimed he was \$2.2 million in debt due to buying TV time and begged for contributions “in order to keep this broadcast on the air.” Yet he’s starting a church in New York, holding a service in Madison Square Garden and planning a network of churches. So while he tells others to focus on God to achieve material goals, he appears to depend more on others to financially support his overspending.

A request for an audited financial statement received an immediate response that “You are very important to us. We have received your request, and it has been forwarded to the Marketing department. If necessary you will be contacted shortly.” No other response was ever received. Potential contributors beware: the ministry provided no financial information.

EWTN LIVE

Ministry	95%
Political	0%*
Promotion	4%
Fundraising	1%

Financial Information Provided Upon Request: Full financial records provided immediately.

EWTN founder Mother Angelica used to host a live weeknight show from her Alabama studios, but after she suffered a cerebral hemorrhage in 2001 guest hosts began taking over “Mother Angelica Live.” Eventually the series title was changed to “EWTN Live” and now airs a new episode once a week featuring host Father Mitch Pacwa. His gray beard, eyeglasses and collar make him one of the few television ministers who actually looks the part of the pastor.

As it has for years, the hour-long show tackles topics with Roman Catholic interest. Discussions range from the frivolous (a Bishop from Peru tells travelogue stories and sings accompanied by an out-of-tune guitar) to the political (a 45-minute condemnation of politicians that support abortion). In its quiet way the program is entertaining in a public-television style that avoids glitz and emphasizes intelligence. Pacwa is dry and long-winded but a calming, comforting presence.

Most of the guests are either ordained Catholic clergy or people who work for church organizations. There is a small studio audience and on most episodes callers from around the United States are allowed to ask questions of the guests. Responses are what some would consider “conservative” Catholicism, but mostly deal with official church stances and procedures.

The show rarely asks for money and will simply ask that you remember EWTN when paying your bills. Or, as Father Mitch says, “We are brought to you by you.” During breaks in the show promotional announcements air for web sites where the viewer can obtain more “catalogue” material.

EWTN has always been a leader in providing audited financial information to potential contributors. The request for information was met with an emailed response that same day stating that it was in the mail. Five days later a large packet arrived with the 2003 report that was 17 pages long.

The financial statement showed a tightly-run, low-income organization that received \$27 million in contributions in 2003 and took in \$4 million in catalogue sales. EWTN actually spent more than it received, devoting \$22 million to TV expenses and another \$11 million to related services. Though the ministry appears to be barely getting by month-to-month, it does have \$64 million in property and equipment. However, it is contracted to make annual satellite lease payments of \$68 million through 2021. It also has \$1.7 million in noninterest-bearing notes payable upon demand to Mother Angelica’s monastery and one of the directors.

So while the detailed financial statement provides an abundance of material for a potential contributor, it also reveals a ministry that often has a negative cash flow and is under contract for huge satellite costs for many years to come.

The only uncharacteristic aspect of the show came in late August when representatives from Priests for Life used the broadcast to endorse anti-abortion candidates. Incredibly blunt political statements were made, such as “Abortion is worse than terrorism” and “support for abortion disqualifies a candidate for public office.” Pacwa clarified the Church’s position that “if you vote for a pro-abortion candidate because you agree with him, that’s formally sinful.” The show stood firmly “against anyone from any party who supports abortion.” And it included the gay marriage issue by stating “divine law is above human law” when it comes to marriage.

While the blunt stances may be admirable in this age of political correctness, the ministry needs to be careful in its appearance of endorsing certain candidates in an election. They could lose their tax-deductible status for endorsing a candidate. It was obvious on this one episode (which was not counted in the final averages due to it not being a typical episode and the only one to mention politics) that the host and guests were not just encouraging people to vote (“the people listening to this right now on this program can easily sway the election”) but were telling people to only vote for anti-abortion candidates.

JERRY FALWELL

Ministry	76%
Political	11%
Promotion	12%
Fundraising	1%

Financial Information Provided Upon Request: None.

The longtime “Old Time Gospel Hour” host has gone from a syndicated minister who was one of the biggest on-air fundraisers to a cable channel owner who merely televises his church services. In previous studies Falwell’s services from his Lynchburg church were edited to include large amounts of time devoted to fundraising. Now that he has his own cable channel he televises his Sunday morning service with little appeals for money, and he can use other programs on his cable network to do more specific appeals for money.

One thing Falwell has not held back on are his political views. The founder of the Moral Majority continues to use the pulpit to endorse Republican candidates. His explanation? “We’re not supposed to endorse candidates. I, as a private citizen, sometimes say for whom I’m voting. And even then I say ‘for the Bush of your choice’...but our ministry endorses nobody.”

He claims objectivity by stating from the pulpit, “We have no loyalty to a party” and “I can’t even find the word Republican in the Bible. We vote Christian.” But then all he does is praise conservative candidates. For the Federal Marriage Amendment he even put

the Virginia Senators' phone numbers up on the screen and told followers to call. When Republicans in Congress failed to pass the act that would ban gay marriage, Falwell told the congregation "We lost the marriage vote" and of the liberal Congressmen he said "They probably need to be unemployed." He says, "Democratic leaders have decided to develop a secular and pagan party" and prays that Democrats "will see the light eventually." Far from being objective, he calls Republicans "we" and calls Democrats "they."

"This is a Christian nation," proclaimed Falwell as he used a war theme throughout many sermons. He supported the Iraq war, comparing it to the American Revolution that he called a "just war." He supported Israel in the Middle East conflict. He even used a tacky "cowboy and Muslims" joke. Then he condemned the ACLU for being "at war against the church" and proclaiming there is a "cultural war over America's future."

However, Falwell has made one major change in his stance on Christianity and culture. This man who used to be opposed to Christian rock music and required his college students to dress up to go to class now says "there is no Christian music" or dress codes. He now calls ministries that take such stances "Taliban Baptists...because they're not speaking the language of the culture." This is a major shift for Falwell, probably influenced by his son Jonathan and his teen grandchildren. The Liberty University students sitting in the audience now wear informal clothing while singing and swaying to the modern praise and worship music.

Falwell's pomposity remains intact. During one political discussion he bragged of being asked to be on secular network talk shows, saying it only takes one of him to successfully debate three or four liberals. He continues to brag about his college, claiming 17,000 students though only "about half" are actually on campus (a recent ad for Liberty states it has "nearly 8,000 resident students as well as several thousand students in its distance-learning program"—that doesn't equal 17,000). And he even suggested that if Republicans compromise on moral issues he may start a third party and may be able to run for president of the United States: "I don't know if I could win or not."

No, he could not win. And a man of his position should understand that much of what he says is a turn-off to most citizens, both unbelievers and believers. As a famous '90s opinion poll shows, Falwell ranks with Hitler among the most hated men in history. He continues to play the political game, using his pulpit for slyly-worded and inappropriate endorsements. So while Falwell has improved his program by dropping much of the fundraising, he continues to mix religion and politics in a way that is unacceptable to most in today's society.

Though he spends little time asking for money, Falwell's ministry was asked to provide an audited financial statement and no response was received. Contributors beware that although Falwell likes to call himself "accountable," he did not provide financial information and how contributions are spent by his organization is unknown.

FEED THE CHILDREN

Ministry	42%
Political	0%
Promotion	17%
Fundraising	41%

Financial Information Provided Upon Request: Full audited statement available on web site.

The “Feed the Children” television program is basically a telethon to raise money to help transport donated food to the needy. This is a ministry and though it doesn’t “preach” they way most other ministries do, Larry Jones runs a Christian organization. The emphasis her is on the social gospel, as opposed to meeting the spiritual needs of the poor.

As in past research surveys, the show spends over the half the airtime actually asking for help. The program is on some cable channels seven days a week, usually early in the morning, and could be mistaken for an infomercial. Segments are rather short, with a two-minute summary of what the ministry is doing in Kenya followed by a one-minute explanation of needs and a two-minute appeal for funds. Then another ministry segment starts the entire cycle all over again. Larry Jones and his wife Frances are woven in and out of these segments to make the final appeal for money.

The ministry has been criticized for not making it clear that donations are not actually going to “feed” the children. Much of the donors’ money is actually is actually used to pay the expensive TV time that the ministry buys. The money donated does not buy food but pays for the transportation costs and “administrative expenses” involved in getting the donated food to people. Jones now explains that this is surplus food and he needs money to get the food to the children. He states that a donation of \$14 will “send 100 pounds of food to children in need.” Or the \$8 a month adopt-a-child program no longer lets you adopt a specific child but will send you pictures and stories of children “like those you are helping.” So where the actual money is going is anyone’s guess, though Jones does do a good job providing audited financial statements on his web site.

Click on his web site to discover his 2003 audited financial statement and his IRS form 990. Money donations totaled \$80 million while the “in kind” food donations were estimated to be worth \$460 million. The statement says \$333 million of this goes to “program services” and \$158 to “education.” Another \$25 million is spent on TV time and \$2.8 million goes to salaries.

While the open records are refreshingly easy to view, only \$5 million goes to the disaster relief that so many of the show’s episodes focus on. And it’s difficult to know where much of the rest of the money goes. Though a lengthy explanation of the organization is included in the audited financial report, there are few specifics as to how much of the money actually gets to the children.

“Feed the Children” also loves to involve celebrities in its charity work. The Oak Ridge Boys are regularly featured and in one episode the group held a concert in a church to raise money for the organization. Though one of the group members said “Gospel music goes hand-in-hand with what you do Larry,” the Oak Ridge Boys stretched it a bit when they justified singing secular seductive hit “Elvira” (about a man “on fire” for the title character) as “making people feel good.”

Tennis star Serena Williams was shown working with a “Feed the Children” relief truck in south Florida and the late Dale Earnhardt’s wife Theresa was shown working with the ministry. Jermaine Jackson is shown at a ministry site in Kenya and the program is still running an old Garth Brooks workplace campaign promotion that it was using four years ago.

The ministry’s purpose is noble. How it carries out that mission is up for debate since his financial statement is vague. Much of the money that people think they are giving to “feed” the children does not actually go to pay for food. When one of the Jones’ says “You can actually save the life of a child...by sending that \$9 a month” there is no proof given. The program is just a constant repetition of shots of starving children being held by the healthy-looking Jones with requests for money. Though the organization may be a ministry, the program itself is nothing more than a telethon, and one that simplifies complex social issues while failing to provide detailed explanations of where the money is exactly being spent.

BILLY GRAHAM

Ministry	97%
Political	0%
Promotion	3%
Fundraising	0%

Financial Information Provided Upon Request: Full audited statement provided immediately with details of board members making financial decisions.

As the great preacher nears the end of his active ministry, many religious cable networks are airing weekly “Billy Graham Classics.” These are essentially reruns of Graham’s great crusades from 20 years ago. They have been edited slightly and the address at the end of the program now gives the current Charlotte ministry location (although Graham still verbally says the old Minneapolis address). But the shows hold up well—his sermons are timeless and even his references to current world conflict seems even more appropriate now than ever.

Graham’s organization continues to air occasional specials, with a late fall 2004 presentation of his Kansas City Crusade. These specials retain much of the format the

ministry has been using for decades but includes clips of son Franklin Graham sheepishly asking for money. A January 2005 telecast featured a message from Franklin.

A request for audited financial information was responded to immediately with a magnificent 42-page booklet that gave an overview of the ministry. It was the only organization that provided specifics about the 2003 board of directors, followed by a pie chart, leading to an 11-page audited financial statement. Graham received \$62 million in contributions and another \$20 million from annuities and trusts. \$16 million was spent on radio and TV time while \$12 million went to the vague category “Communications—other.” The ministry spent \$13 million in fundraising and administrative costs. It cost the organization an additional \$8.5 million to relocate from Minneapolis to Charlotte but it has \$130 million in net assets.

The statement also details the unusual relationship between the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and Samaritan’s Purse, headed by Graham’s son Franklin. It says a “joint services agreement” was entered into during 2003 that shares expenses. That year BGEA gave Samaritan’s Purse \$1.7 million and was reimbursed \$650,000 from Franklin’s group.

Other than not stating the specific salaries of the Grahams, this report is by far the best of any offered by television ministries. Others would do well to imitate the accountability practices of the Graham organization.

MARILYN HICKEY

Ministry	69%
Political	0%
Promotion	24%
Fundraising	7%

Financial Information Provided Upon Request: None.

One of the few female TV preachers, Marilyn Hickey is a longtime Denver minister who focuses on traditional charismatic doctrine. Her preaching emphasizes miracles, end time prophecy and healing prayer. Hickey says the purpose of the program is “to bring light into your life.”

Hickey’s ministry has grown to include World Bible College and much airtime is used to promote the college or its intern ministry program. She also heavily promotes the ministry prayer phone line, asking “Do you need a miracle?,” then encouraging viewers to call. Hickey’s fundraising appeals include incentives such as a \$70 “new millennium prophecy” tape package, a \$149 afghan featuring God’s names, and a ministry trip to Italy.

Daughter Sarah Bowling (who attended Oral Roberts University) is usually included on the daily telecast (often doing the show without mom) and Marilyn's elderly husband Wally will occasionally be brought on to share his unusual gift of prophecy in which he rhymes. Otherwise there is little on this program to draw the attention of viewers. The program's visual production quality is often poor, ranging from Hickey's sermon in a dark sanctuary to her addressing the camera on an overlit set. Her theology has little meat and mostly emotional milk. She uses a few typical prosperity gospel scriptures but does little else with her Bible. Namely, there's nothing noteworthy on the broadcast to attract an audience other than seeing a woman who wants to help charismatic followers "unlock your potential."

Though a request was made for an audited financial statement, no response was ever received. Potential contributors should beware that this ministry asks for money but does not provide information needed to make an informed contribution.

BENNY HINN

Ministry	82%
Political	0%
Promotion	7%
Fundraising	11%

Financial Information Provided Upon Request: None.

The controversial healing evangelist uses a variety of formats for his daily half-hour program "This is Your Day." It ranges from clips of his healing crusades to interviewing guests on location to praying with a studio audience. Through it all he continually preaches that God has given him a unique healing power.

Hinn is best known for the video clips of audience members at his arena crusades struggling to make their way to the evangelist before he blows on them and they fall back "slain in the spirit." He daily claims that he has cured people of major physical problems such as deafness and cancer, and is often shown raising handicapped people from their wheelchairs so that they can run across the stage. These healings are not independently verified but it makes for incredible television. And, yes, he does hold up his hand to the television screen inviting people at home to be healed by his power.

The program originates from around the world. One studio show was taped in Toronto. A healing crusade was shown from Australia. His interview with preachers from the Bahamas took place outdoors at the luxurious Atlantis Resort. Most of his studio shows tend to take place in California, where he admits his wife did not want to move but he convinced her that California "is where the next revival is."

He firmly states that God is going to change America. “I believe God Almighty will visit this nation one more time.” He is patriotic without being political and says, “We’re here to pray for America.”

His fundraising appeals range from a \$25 CD or book to a \$3,000 tour of the Holy Land. He coerces money from “covenant partners” by saying “ If you support God’s work every month He will bless you.” Lettering on the screen constantly promotes upcoming crusades or Hinn materials. “When you sow that seed expect a miracle from God,” says the host.

The Hinn organization failed to respond to a request for an audited financial statement. However, the emailed request resulted in regular emails from the organization promoting upcoming crusades. Potential contributors should be aware that Hinn does not provide financial accountability to donors.

Though Hinn has been caught in theological misstatements in the past, nothing viewed during this survey period was out of the ordinary. Probably the most shocking aspect of the program is Hinn’s continued use during the opening credits of Hinn shaking hands with Pope John Paul II. It’s doubtful that the Pope knew this shot would be used as an endorsement to this unconventional minister who refuses to open up his financial books or his healing records.

T.D. JAKES

Ministry	83%
Political	0%
Promotion	7%
Fundraising	10%

Financial Information Provided Upon Request: No response other than placing the person requesting information on a mailing list to ask for money.

Not the traditional telegenic broadcast minister, this big-boned Texas pastor is also a best-selling author and women’s conference leader. Jakes hosts “The Potter’s Touch,” a daily half-hour program named after his Dallas church that mixes preaching segments from his church with studio discussions that often feature his wife Serita.

While “Bishop” Jakes may not look made for television, with squinty eyes and a slight lisp, his self-assured voice comforts the mostly black congregation with words regarding relationships and morality. He encourages men to show more emotions by sharing their feelings and illustrates with a story where his son asked him about the greatest sex he ever had. Jakes preaches the “power of agreement,” a type of prosperity gospel that encourages the lower class to “talk back to the devil” and pull themselves out of poverty.

Jakes dramatically prances around the stage using no visible notes except for scripture read from a computer screen on the podium, shaking and dancing as sweat pours off his bald head. His sermons are mostly emotional appeals and contain little substance. Segments that are hosted by his wife focus on practical parenting tips or issues of interest to women, such as “Losing Myself, Standing by Him.”

In the fall of 2004 Jakes appeared on TBN’s “Praise the Lord” and on Oprah Winfrey’s talk show to promote his R-rated movie that dealt with abuse of women. He not only received Oprah’s blessing on the project but was given money by the talk show host to help finance the film. Winfrey would be the type of viewer who would appreciate Jakes’ emotional appeals and positive-thinking approach to Christianity that doesn’t deal with heavy theology.

The show’s fundraising segments revolve around offers of Jakes materials, such as his latest book or “victory” tape series (“God Never Meant for You to Lose”). The preacher says “Together we’re going to take the nation for Jesus.” And with Oprah’s help he may just overcome his lack of broadcast skills to reach those looking for his comforting message.

An emailed request for audited financial information brought an immediate “general reply” that assured “it is read and forwarded to the appropriate department.” It then included information on ordering products. About a month later a form letter was sent in the mail welcoming “new friends” to the ministry. It asked for financial support, included a commitment card to return, and an invitation for membership in “Aaron’s Army,” where contributors give \$20 a month. Absolutely no financial information was ever provided and the request for it was ignored.

D. JAMES KENNEDY

Ministry	72%
Political	18%
Promotion	4%
Fundraising	6%

Financial Information Provided Upon Request: Full audited statements provided immediately.

The Presbyterian pastor from Ft. Lauderdale spent a large amount of airtime in the fall of 2004 talking about politics. Kennedy appears to feel he has a God-given mandate to return America to its Biblical roots. Topics included “What If American Was a Christian Nation Again?” and dealt with controversial issues ranging from gay marriage to the presidential election to the failure of public education.

Kennedy's major promotion was called "Reclaiming America," in which he wanted support from a grass roots group of one million followers to create a Washington, D.C. Christian think tank and lobbying office. He told viewers, "We have largely been cut off from our Christian roots because of liberal courts or run-away media" and called for Christians to return to the "cultural mandate" of influencing society and government.

Saying that religious freedom "according to our fathers was the most important liberty," Kennedy condemned groups that attempted to separate church from state. He called out the American Civil Liberties Union by name on a number of episodes, especially for "supporting the push for same-sex marriage," and vowed to do a quarterly televised report on the organization.

The problem is that for years Kennedy has mixed politics with spirituality and goes off topic in his sermons. One sermon was entitled "Follow the Lord," but in the middle he began discussing the philosophy of Karl Marx and then equated American public education with Hitler in Nazi Germany! How Marx and Hitler tied into the subject of following the Lord was never stated. Too many "sermons" were actually political diatribes attempting to get believers to become more active in changing society and contained little non-political spirituality.

It is no surprise, then, that Kennedy used his program to get people to vote. He said, "This is a Christian nation" and yet called Christians "blind sheep herded by secularists." "The anti-God forces," Kennedy said, "are gearing up for the upcoming election. They are determined to hijack America." So he asked followers to "restore it to the godly foundation on which it was built."

To help he offered a free bumper sticker that read "I Pray, I Vote. Do You?" He offered a free booklet. Then he asked for a gift to help him through the "summer slump." "Give the most generous gift you can," Kennedy told viewers as he looked into the camera, to which the announcer added that they needed the money "to stay on the air." Offers for contributions included books like "What's Wrong With Same Sex Marriage?"

A request for an audited financial statement was returned quickly with an eight-page explanation of the ministry's finances. In 2003 Kennedy took in \$36 million in contributions and spent \$15 million on buying TV time. Almost \$7 million went to the vague category of "Cultural Mandate Activities," while \$9 million went to media support services and almost \$5 million to fundraising and administration. The report claims Kennedy received no compensation from the TV ministry and is paid for his role as pastor of the church.

One interesting aspect is that the media ministry "leases" facilities from the church even though both are Kennedy operations. This could be a way for some of the TV contributions to be legally used to pay for church broadcast facility expenses. The only concern with the statement is that ministry board members are not named and specific salary breakdowns are not made. Otherwise it is an excellent summary of how the money is being spent.

Kennedy is a man overcome by his own intelligence and philosophy. He has become a type of political prophet, calling out warnings in the wilderness. He uses his show to coerce Christians into social influence yet he never really deals with the root problems of Christian malaise. The spiritual founders of our country were quite vague in their doctrine and the Protestant fathers Kennedy loves to quote are much to blame for America's current overemphasis on personal freedom. Most evangelicals seem quite comfortable living in the current free society and Kennedy's rational arguments from the pulpit will not budge believers who don't perceive the problem as being that big. So though this minister has spent twenty years attempting to change the world through his television program, he appears to be having minimal success.

JOYCE MEYER

Ministry	77%
Political	0%
Promotion	13%
Fundraising	10%

Financial Information Provided Upon Request: Full statements provided immediately.

Another rare female ministry leader, Meyer is a St. Louis-area prosperity gospel preacher who claims God's anointing but comes across as a nagging, crabby mother. Not wanting to be another fake who "says we're fine when we're falling apart," Meyer admits to having a "rough" exterior. Many are attracted to her serious demeanor and sarcasm.

Meyer does more "teaching" than "preaching," advocating "balance" and "submission" while complaining about extremist believers with a "spirit of rebellion." However, Meyer herself is an example of the rebel Christian who doesn't want to do what others tell her. She excuses her negative attitude by claiming childhood abuse from those who said they loved her and claims that she has had to work hard to submit to her husband.

Ironically, Meyer proclaims that her first name means "joyful spirit," yet she comes across as just the opposite. She is almost always negative and critical in her approach to telling others how to live. Her topics play on the fears of anxious believers and overemphasize the influence of the devil. Her appeal may be primarily to women who enjoy being harassed or made to feel guilty, but her demeaning methods could actually add more stress to the viewer who is attempting to live a life of faith.

Programs usually are edited versions of meetings she has held in arenas around the country. Fundraising offers are for her books and tapes, such as "Straight Talk on Stress" or "Keep Walking When the Devil is Stalking." She also charges \$55 for a women's conference.

The request for an audited financial statement was responded to in four days with direction to the web site's electronic version of the 2002 and 2003 reports. The most recent numbers showed contributions that amounted to an amazing \$81 million, with another \$7 million coming from conferences and materials sold. \$25 million was spent on TV time and \$33 million went to "missions and outreach," with another \$8.5 million devoted to conferences. Fundraising and administrative costs were a very high \$17 million.

Interestingly, Meyer's ministry had a negative cash flow in 2003, spending \$3.6 million more than it took in. But she didn't need to be too concerned because at the end of the year she still had \$20 million cash in the bank and another \$45 million in property. Her assets after liabilities was a whopping \$63.5 million!

Meyer has one of the most detailed financial statements available for a television ministry. Other than the omission of board members' names and a vague "salaries" category of \$1.4 million that doesn't state Meyer's compensation, contributors have a pretty good idea where the money is going in general. If they look closely enough they will also see that this ministry does not really need to raise more money at this time.

ROD PARSLEY

Ministry	72%
Political	10%
Promotion	8%*
Fundraising	10%

Financial Information Provided Upon Request: None.

A white Ohio pastor with a mostly black congregation, Parsley starts quietly and then adopts the cadence of a revivalist who screams and prances around the sanctuary. He screams, he prophesies, he goes hoarse, he wipes his sweat-drenched forehead, he points a wagging finger at the viewer at home, he drops to the floor in exhaustion and shouts at the devil as he attempts to have an impact on America by returning to the methods of the fire-and-brimstone preachers of old.

Parsley's unconventional 2004 campaign to influence America was titled "Born to Raze Hell." Hundreds in his congregation wore black t-shirts proclaiming the theme. It was flashed in lights on the interior walls of the church, the crowd waved signs with the message and he repeatedly asked the congregation to scream "hell" to each other. With an old-fashioned revival organ playing behind him, Parsley wanted Christians to "be heard in '04" and change the country.

"Today America around us is...revolting in its morals." Parsley talks about an "onslaught of evil" in the country that is caused by "demon spirits" but that "nobody else

is brave enough to say it.” In response he set up a voter registration Sunday and started his Center for Moral Clarity, claiming to get 150,000 followers across the country involved.

Parsley’s main focus was on gay marriage. He blamed the inability to pass a Constitutional amendment outlawing gay marriage on “a bankrupt political system,” saying “we’re going to vote such nonsense right out of office.” Slamming those who call it a civil rights issue, Parsley condemns judges saying “you’re not going to run this nation from a court bench you weren’t even elected to.” Bashing the ACLU, he flashes their budget on the screen and calls them “anti-Bible.”

He also was strongly anti-abortion, saying Planned Parenthood promotes the murder of babies and stating “Conception is the beginning of life and not one second later.” He knows his views are extremist but says, “I came to make trouble. I didn’t come to make friends... I’m about to take a nation back or die trying.”

He is also heavily involved in the social gospel, working with food relief in Africa and “looking for somebody in politics to put an end to one out of six of our children going to be hungry every night.”

All of this costs money, and he asks viewers for one million dollars to launch his Center for Moral Clarity. For \$50 a viewer can become a “charter member” and receive a video gift. He also founded World Harvest Bible College and spent 90% of one show (which was removed from the study average due to its non-typical material) doing an infomercial for the school.

Though a request was made for an audited financial statement, no response was made by the Parsley ministry. Donors should beware when making a contribution to an organization that does not provide detailed information on how the money is being spent.

Parsley is almost a caricature of the old-time revival preacher who threatens people with hell. On television he comes across as too “hot” or wild for the medium and repeated listening to his preaching style reveals a distinctive forced pattern that could be considered fake.

He is either one of the most courageous men in televised ministry or a very good actor trying to build another small religious kingdom. Because he is relatively new to the national scene, we will just have to wait and see who Rod Parsley really is. But there is no doubt that in a 2004 presidential election that got down to a slim margin in the state of Ohio, Parsley’s influence in bringing Christians out to vote may have given George Bush the victory. It also gave the preacher another success story in his attempt at having national influence.

FRED PRICE

Ministry	95%
Political	0%
Promotion	1%
Fundraising	4%

Financial Information Provided Upon Request: None.

The Los Angeles inner-city ministry of African-American pastor Fred Price is a family affair. His daughters are president, vice president and executive administrator, and Price's son now occasionally preaches in the large round church. Price even refers to the gentle guidance from his wife of almost 50 years who sits in the front row of the congregation while he paces around the circular sanctuary.

While some may find the family involvement touching, it raises major concerns about the objective use of donations. Having family members in every major ministry position allows for the directing of the funds to inappropriate personal use. That's not to say that Price has been charged with misuse of funds—it's just to point out that those who want to contribute to "Ever Increasing Faith" need to be aware that, unlike most other ministries, those making the decisions as to how the money is spent are Price and his kids. Which is to say that the family is probably receiving higher financial benefits than they would if they were not working for themselves.

Price is another prosperity gospel preacher from the "word of faith" movement who in the past has spent many sermon topics on the issue of Christians being required to tithe to the church. And he has had no qualms about asking viewers at home to send him 10% of their income if they consider his telecast their church home. But the good news is that during the 2004 survey period little mention was made of money. His sermon topics were focused more on the family and attracted a large number of young congregants.

One of the reasons may be that son Fred Price Jr. was given the pulpit to preach his "hip hop gospel." Unfortunately, Jr. has not been given his father's gift of speaking as he stumbled through televised sermons that lasted 54 minutes each! Jr. often put his foot in his mouth by making inappropriate doctrinal statements. During one sermon he said Jesus "died spiritually" and not just physically, took one of the fictional parables of Jesus as a literally true story and that the church is "not...the bride of Christ," though he admitted he had no scriptural evidence for his positions. The next month Jr. returned to the pulpit saying he needed to do some "clarifying" after receiving so many emails pointing out his errors in theology.

This is the same young man who admitted from the pulpit that he was raised in a pastor's home that allowed him to watch trashy videos on cable channels MTV or BET and that he was allowed to listen to secular rap music. He claimed his parents raised him "free," not telling him what he couldn't watch or listen to. Maybe that is one of the reasons his

ideas are not mainstream and he is having a difficult time getting his theology straight or inspiring a church audience.

So Price Sr. is allowing Price Jr. to set up a “Hip Hop Church,” which they call “revolutionary.” Both father and son showed up for services dressed in oversized bejeweled gang outfits, claiming “hip hop reaches the entire world.” They must not be aware of the fact that hip hop is actually only listened to by a single-digit percentage of the population who are mostly young adults that aren’t the major contributors to a television ministry.

If only the son had the gifts of the father. Price Sr. is charming and self-effacing. He often talks about his wild younger years when he slept around, ran from Got, then got saved his first year of marriage. In a sermon on how fathers should take care of the financial needs of the family, Price tells of how he was lazy when he was first married and made his wife bring in most of the income. Namely, he seems to spend a lot of time telling people not to live the way he used to live.

As to finances, he refers back to the family again. He told viewers that he has six checking accounts and his wife has one. The reason? “I got stuck by the IRS many years ago” and had to pay \$60,000 or go to jail. Now he divides his money into special accounts and calls April 15 “judgment day.” His fundraising requests range from \$6 to \$50 for his books, CD’s or sermon tapes.

The request for an audited financial statement was met with silence, so potential donors have no way of knowing how the ministry’s money is being spent. And the fact that family members populate the top administrative positions should be of concern to those who give money, since the potential for misuse of funds is greater in an organization where the financial decisions are kept from outsiders.

Most revealing about Price and his ministry philosophy was when he said that the Bible is a “book of principles” to apply to life but not to specifically look to for guidance in what to do. “That’s what you should learn from being in a family,” said the aging pastor. The question is what did his children learn from a father who allowed total freedom and preached that financial prosperity is a sign of faithfulness. Viewers should consider Price’s own standard of measure when deciding whether to watch or support his program.

RICHARD ROBERTS

Ministry	83%
Political	0%
Promotion	10%
Fundraising	7%

Financial Information Provided Upon Request: None.

Oral Roberts is no longer actively participating in the television ministry, so longtime sidekick son Richard has now become the permanent television face for the organization. Now that the Roberts ministry has its own religious cable network, it has scaled back its syndicated outreach. In 1980 Oral was the highest rated television evangelist with over 4 million viewers on a couple hundred commercial TV stations. Today Richard attracts a few thousand viewers through a weekly 5:30 a.m. "Place for Miracles" show on ABC Family channel and an hour-long weeknight show on his own religious cable network.

While Oral was a great healer and preacher, Richard is a better entertainer. He has one of the best singing voices in Christian television and continues to sing on his daily "Something Good Tonight" broadcast. Where Oral had his bespectacled wife sitting quietly next to him to help him with Bible verses, Richard has utilized second wife Lindsay to do much of the speaking for the televised ministry. During the research survey period Lindsay was shown on almost every episode preaching to conferences, women's groups and students, while Richard did the taped studio segments that included prayer or asking for money.

Though Richard looks a bit uncomfortable being forced to take a back seat to his gregarious wife, he has probably figured out that Lindsay is the emotional energy that keeps viewers tuned in. She is a wonderfully down-to-earth speaker who is needed to poke fun at the starchy attitude of the Roberts family. Since Oral and Richard have always acted like royalty in the charismatic movement, Lindsay has worked at adding the commoners touch to her observations and illustrations.

For example, while preaching in a Tulsa church with her husband sitting in the front row of the audience, Lindsay made fun of Richard spraying his hair with so much hair spray that it stinks. She even calls him "Rick," a commoner name which is never used on the air by Richard or his parents. While the crowd laughs, Richard's face gets red, and Lindsay adds, "I'm so gonna get it when I get home."

Yet such moments are exactly what the Roberts family has needed to bring a breath of fresh air to their cocky spiritual attitudes. With a father who feels he has been given special healing gifts and prophecies from God and a son who claims he has had those same unique gifts passed along to him, there is nothing more refreshing than seeing slightly frumpy Lindsay stick it to them while gaining the audience's trust and bringing them to tears.

She even admitted from the pulpit that she feels like throwing up when getting ready to preach. For sermon illustrations she flashes advertisements on the screen. The only thing that got old was a sermon gimmick Lindsay uses in coming down to the audience and asking someone to pick a real \$20 from a fake, then giving the person the money. It was clever the first time. But it got old when she was shown doing it in half of the episodes viewed as she spoke to different groups around the country.

As for theology, nothing much has changed over the years. Richard claims that just as Jesus healed 2000 years ago, "That same anointing is here on me right now." He reads

“answers to prayers,” which are people who say Richard’s televised prayers healed them. In one case a person claimed a “prayer cloth” given to her by Richard healed her washing machine!

The ministry still holds an annual charismatic conference that attracts the other major “faith” preachers like Kenneth Copland, Joyce Meyer and Creflo Dollar. During one replay of an unusual conference talk by sour-faced Meyer, Richard Roberts went into a seven-minute laughing fit. She eventually had him get up and pray for the depressed but he refused to talk and just kept laughing, eventually doing “spiritual charades” and laying hands on people to heal them.

There’s discussion of “Satan’s traps” in popular culture, speaking in tongues and Richard getting a “word of knowledge about a right hip being healed” in a viewer at home. There is almost no use of scripture and Richard tells people to take what he says “by faith,” even praying over submitted pictures of viewers’ family members for “household salvation.”

And they still focus on the “end times,” with Oral sharing his special “vision from God” with both Kenneth Copland’s show and son Richard’s show. Oral emphasized that we are in the “end of days,” in which God is getting ready to call believers to heaven but that terrible destruction will also occur (see discussion of the vision under Kenneth Copland).

Through it all there is little attempt to ask for money. In years past this ministry was one of the largest users of airtime for fundraising, but in 2004 the requests for money were \$10 offers of books or tapes. So it appears that the Roberts ministry has taken a turn in the right direction by focusing on their own religious cable network and allowing Lindsay Roberts to have a central role in the televised ministry. Her sermon on “Be the message—don’t just preach it” seems to be something that the ministry is taking to heart.

A request for an audited financial statement received an immediate automated response that “We received your request through our E-mail. If you have requested materials, please know that you should be receiving them in the next few weeks. If you sent prayer requests, those will be forwarded to Oral and Richard Roberts for prayer.”

No other response was ever received, so potential contributors need to be aware that the Roberts ministry does not provide a financial statement. Whether Oral and Richard ever actually receive the prayer requests is unknown.

JAMES ROBISON

Ministry	68%
Political	3%
Promotion	12%
Fundraising	17%

Financial Information Provided Upon Request: Immediate electronic response with audited report.

With a thick southern accent and mousy wife by his side, James Robison has always been an overpowering figure on the television screen. He is both laid back and forceful. He comes across as both stubborn and kindly. And his “Life Today” daily half-hour program has that same mixture of ministry and self-promotion.

Robison, who had once traveled the country fighting politics and culture before stumbling due to sexual troubles, now is the picture of stability with his wife Betty seated next to him on the couch. The talk show format allows the Robisons to interview guests ranging from missionaries to authors to celebrities like Kathie Lee Gifford. The show almost always starts with a 17-minute interview/discussion segment followed by a lengthy appeal for funds for Robison’s foreign missions work.

This is where the show fails. There are two distinct segments to each program that rarely have anything to do with each other. After the author of “Deadly Emotions” tells of how George Burns lived a long life while smoking and drinking, at the 17 minute point the discussion stops and footage is shown of dying children in Africa for whom Robison asks viewers to send up to \$3,600 to “share a cup of water.” Robison claims to be working to help the poor in 19 countries and regularly uses a large amount of airtime asking for viewers to help. His last segment has nothing to do with the first and the show is fairly evenly divided: 2/3 interview, 1/3 fundraising and promotion.

Most of the guests deal with psychological topics that involve emotional healing, with an emphasis on women’s needs. Rarely does the discussion get theological. Even guest Paula White, who has her own television ministry that is included in this study, avoided discussing scripture and focused on her tragic childhood while promoting her autobiography: when she was five her wealthy dad and alcoholic mother physically fought over her ending with her dad hitting her mom and then killing himself. She said she was later sexually abused and had an eating disorder before becoming a Christian.

That edge-of-your-seat emotional discussion was interrupted to show Robison building homes in Nicaragua, asking viewers to build 200 homes at \$2,500 each. White was so moved that she contributed \$2,500, which was the only time the first and last segment of the program tied together during this survey period.

Other fundraising segments during 2004 included a \$90 video series called “Living the Dream,” a porcelain statue that would be sent for a gift of \$144, and copies of the guests’ books. Though an offer is made with almost every request for a donation, James says, “We’re suggesting a gift because we don’t sell products” or “Don’t think about the return...just release the love.” The host knows, though, that most gifts only come when a product is offered at a specific price.

The request for audited financial information was met with an amazingly immediate response. The very day the request was emailed to the organization, an email response came that included a detailed ten-page audited statement. The 2002 report showed contributions of \$40 million with TV airtime expenses of \$17 million. A whopping \$11 million went to fundraising and administrative costs. No board members were listed and no individual salary information was provided. Donors may be concerned that only about \$12 million went to actual missions projects, meaning less than 1/3 of what viewers contribute actually goes to missions outreach.

The problem is that Robison spends too much of his airtime promoting his ministry or asking for money and does so in a disjointed segment in the last third of the program. Better use of his airtime would be to do a straight half-hour talk show with breaks every eight minutes for “commercials” that promote his ministry, similar to what Pat Robertson does with the “700 Club.” That would reduce the amount of time spent asking for money while making better use of the half hour and still allow him to promote his worthy causes.

ROBERT SCHULLER

Ministry	86%
Political	<1%
Promotion	3%
Fundraising	11%

Financial Information Provided Upon Request: Four-year-old, one-page summary that provided little information.

After over 30 years on the air, Robert Schuller Sr. is aging and takes an inactive role in most of the episodes of his famous “Hour of Power” weekly television program, which he calls “America’s Television Church.” Son Robert Schuller Jr. has essentially taken over as star of the show and despite creating some scandal years ago with a second marriage, viewers seem to have accepted the son copying the father’s positive thinking approach to spirituality.

The program is unchanged from past research studies. The giant Crystal Cathedral is still used as the backdrop for beautiful choral music, guest singers, interviews with celebrity authors and the weekly upbeat sermon. Schuller Sr. is now usually only seen to read the scripture verses or do the fundraising appeals, though he will often also conduct the interviews. It is all very well produced and comforting to the mostly older viewers at home.

The requests for money are the same as they have been for years. He offers precious trinkets, such as the \$99 hummingbird egg, the \$60 angel ornaments, a \$240 fountain or the \$60 four-piece mug set with Ken Duncan photographs. He also promoted the online purchase of “The Passion of the Christ,” his upcoming women’s conference featuring Dr.

Laura Schlessinger, his Church Leadership Institute, the famous Glory of Christmas spectacular and his soon-to-be released book. Usually the requests for funds were in separate segments but occasionally a short request for money came in the middle of Schuller Jr.'s sermon.

The request for an audited financial statement from the Schuller organization was responded to in three days with an email that included an attachment with a one-page "Consolidated Statement of Activities" for the year 2000! The four-year-old statement simply showed that the TV ministry took in \$67 million in contributions and spent \$21 million on TV time, with another \$17 million going to "ministry activities" and \$12 million to "general and administrative" expenses. That was it—a few simple lines that were not helpful in getting an adequate financial picture of the organization.

Even more disturbing was the use of the email response to attempt to ask for money. "Mary"'s electronic letter spent more time explaining how I could donate than giving me the information I requested. The Schuller organization does not provide financial accountability to potential contributors and turns a request for information into a fundraising appeal.

There were also a number of patriotic moments in his programs, such as the gigantic ceiling-to-floor flag unfurled on Independence Day with children in the audience waving smaller flags or the singing of "God Bless America." The program got downright political as the presidential election drew near, with Schuller saying, "I urge all of you to go out and vote...I never tell you how to vote. You're smart. I don't need to tell you...Pray when you go in there in that secret place God will use you." He even added a prayer, "Help us to love the people that didn't vote the same way we did."

Schuller Sr. seems braggadocios when he says "This ministry is unique...it is a televised church service...it is also one of the least capitalized ministries in the world." Certainly there are many other televised church services, particularly the similarly formatted "Coral Ridge Hour" from D. James Kennedy or the church telecast from Charles Stanley on "In Touch." And other TV preachers have not spent money building as many ornate edifices as those owned by Schuller's organization.

Some of the guests are fascinating. ABC science reporter Michael Guillen was a guest preacher on the subject of adoption. Olympic softball pitcher Jenny Finch gave her Christian testimony. The producer of the movies Braveheart and Pearl Harbor talked about morality in media. The actor who starred in "The Passion of the Christ" told inside stories of how Mel Gibson tricked him into playing the role by claiming it was a surfing movie. And a female officer who served in the Iraq war spoke to the congregation.

What is not so special is the sermon from Schuller Jr., who claims to have had a terrifying fear of speaking to people until he went to seminary. His attempt at copying his father's unique delivery style makes Jr. come across as a dry, pompous fake. He acts the role of the spoiled rich child who didn't grow up with his father's ministry struggles.

The words he uses have the same alliteration as did his father's but Jr. has none of the emotion invested in living what he proclaims to others.

So as long as Sr. is a part of the on-air ministry, Jr. will suffer by comparison. Certainly there are others who are better qualified than Jr. to carry on the Schuller ministry but none have the name recognition which is important when it comes to fundraising. Unless the smug son gets some real-life character quickly, he will remain a caricature of his father and see a decline in the ministry once his father has left the air.

“THE 700 CLUB” WITH PAT ROBERTSON

Ministry	49%
Political	31%
Promotion	9%
Fundraising	11%

Financial Information Provided Upon Request: Promotional booklet with no financial information.

Next to “60 Minutes” anchor Mike Wallace, Senator’s son Pat Robertson is the longest-running host of a national talk show on the air today. Longer than Oprah. Even longer than Regis. Robertson started his “700 Club” in the 1970’s with the help of Jim Bakker, then took it national almost 30 years ago when he started his Christian Broadcasting Network, built with the donations of viewers. Eventually he turned his religious network into “The Family Channel,” but has always kept “The 700 Club” on the air, even while he was off campaigning for the presidency in the 1980s. The show has contractually stayed in the same time slot through the multi-million dollar sale of the cable network to FOX, which later sold it to ABC. Robertson made tens of millions of dollars off the sale (not offering to return any of the money to the contributors who had built the network) and remains in the hosting chair, pontificating daily on politics and culture.

“The 700 Club” begins with a lengthy segment they call “news,” in which short reports are aired about current political events followed by Robertson’s commentary after every story. He has tried to claim that what he does is not political but “news,” yet his conservative Christian opinions are stronger than those stated by Rush Limbaugh or Bill O’Reilly. He spends over 15 minutes in each show pushing his political viewpoint, setting himself as judge over Supreme Court Justices, presidential candidates and lawmakers. He then goes further by condemning the media, church leaders and even Republicans who don’t see things his way.

After the opening fourth of the show is done with politics, the rest of the program is a mixture of pre-taped field segments, in-studio interviews and commercials. The remote packages usually involve someone who was changed by watching Pat prophesying on “The 700 Club,” the interviews involve guests who are there to support Robertson’s

viewpoints, and the commercials are a mixture of financial appeals for the ministry and outside sponsors who are paying to have their spots included in this religious program.

While the production values are generally good, the show is targeted to the very narrow group of believers who want to watch a totally biased telecast. Despite Pat claiming on one show that “Here on CBN we will try to present the news fairly,” there is no objectivity here—viewers know when they tune in that they are getting the worldview of Robertson and those he employs. His co-hosts are “yes” people who look scared of disagreeing with the boss, the “news” reporters look like they have been told to report stories to meet the host’s preconceived conclusions, and even Robertson’s sheepish son Gordon looks like he is living in fear when he occasionally takes over for dad.

Politics is the central focus of the program. During the presidential campaign, Robertson slammed Kerry almost daily with statements like, “Betraying your country and giving aid and comfort to the enemy in time of war is considered a crime. And I think that somebody who wants to have the highest office in the land, that can’t be swept under the rug.” The host is blunt with his stances. On one show he called the Democratic Convention “The biggest bunch of smoke screen I have ever seen.” On another Robertson said, “I do not believe that a ruling of the Supreme Court should be considered the supreme law of the land.”

Who is supreme? Robertson would respond that God is, but what gets communicated is that it’s God as interpreted by Pat Robertson. Episodes averaged only one or two scripture verses per hour, meaning God’s word got a few seconds on each show while Robertson’s viewpoint took up 50 minutes. He gave his prophetic interpretation on the fighting in Israel. He explained “Biblical principles” for financial success. He claims the courts and Congress are going against God. He criticizes the food pyramid and devotes a weekly segment to weight loss, promoting his health newsletter without explaining what qualifications he has to comment on the subject. And he shows testimonies of people who have been healed through his prayers. This is truly a Pat-centered ministry.

There are days when there is almost nothing “spiritual” on this “religious” program. What has been classified as ministry for this report (because it doesn’t fit in the other three categories) may actually have been a discussion on health or tips on finances or parenting advice. While these are worthy segments, this “religious” broadcast actually ends up using much less than half of its airtime doing anything directly spiritual.

The show’s fundraising appeals offer Pat’s latest books on financial prosperity or on the disastrous Supreme Court. Poor children are shown helped by his “Operation Blessing.” Announcers ask for \$20 to \$10,000 from viewers to become “members” of “clubs.”

A request for audited financial information resulted in a booklet being sent three weeks later entitled “Can A TV Show Change a Life?” and featured a star-studded cover, including Kathie Lee Gifford and fellow evangelist Charles Stanley. It was merely a request for money, claiming that 17 million adults a month watch the show and over

10,000 call each day. The booklet ended with “Need a miracle?” and gave the “700 Club” phone number.

Then three days later the same booklet came in an envelope that stated “We Are Here for You.” Again they asked for money and this time offered Robertson’s book “Secrets of Financial Prosperity” for a monthly membership. Then two weeks later another letter came, with the ministry’s “Frontlines” newsletter that was basically an ad that offered “Pledge Express,” where contributions could be taken directly from a viewer’s bank account. No financial information was ever sent and potential contributors should be aware that the ministry does not provide audited financial information although it makes many requests by mail for money.

In an unusual arrangement that has started since the 2000 study, the show now apparently sells sponsorships within the show, such as ads for Oreck vacuums or John Tesh worship CDs. Once an interview with the founder of the Curves chain of exercise shops was followed by an ad for Curves! At times Robertson would even comment on the ads after they aired!

There is no doubt that Robertson is the central focus of this program. He seems to have to comment on everything, including the sponsors. And he has a proven loyal following that continue to watch for his daily commentary. However, it’s a bit disingenuous for him to call this a religious program or to say that it is Christ-centered. The spiritual elements have taken a back seat to politics and Pat’s viewpoints overshadow any other Christian messages.

CHARLES STANLEY

Ministry	91%
Political	4%
Promotion	1%
Fundraising	4%

Financial Information Provided Upon Request: Short audited financial statement sent immediately.

Atlanta pastor Charles Stanley continues to telecast the sermon portions of his church services from First Baptist Church. While an occasional song from the service may be included, most weekly episodes are 55 minutes of straight preaching from this thickly-accented, droll minister.

Most of Stanley’s messages involves psychological, “positive thinking” topics. One week it’s “Success God’s Way,” which only has a couple minutes of scripture references but 50 minutes of the humorless Stanley acting as a life coach, trying to rouse Christians from

their lethargy. “If you don’t like what’s going on in your life, change your thinking,” says the pastor.

Another week it’s “Can You Trust Your Conscience?,” in which Stanley condemns believers for getting their truth from the media or watching R-rated movies. And another episode is titled “The Power of Persistence,” which basically concludes that Christians need to have goals.

These are lessons in personality development that are based more on psychology than spirituality. Though he holds the Bible in his hand throughout the talk, he almost never quotes from it. Instead he thinks he will inspire backslidden Christians through his many words of reproof. But Stanley offers little in the way of substance and even less in the way of style. Namely, even though his words may be correct and even needed, his delivery style is dull, long-winded and downright boring.

Maybe he adapts his style from the many books he has written. Often his books are offered as incentives for contributions. Though he doesn’t use much time at the end of the broadcast to ask for money, requests range from \$15 to \$75 for tape sets, books and a “spiritual discernment kit.”

The audited financial statement was sent in three days but was somewhat incomplete. The four-page summary reported 2002 contributions of almost \$50 million plus another \$5 from sales of materials. “In Touch” paid \$34 million for TV and radio time and spent \$10.5 million in fundraising and administrative costs.

There was no other detailed information about salaries, expenses or even specifics about the television ministry (it was grouped with radio). While the numbers provided were appreciated they were too vague for contributors to know exactly how money was being spent and who was making the financial decisions.

In a couple of episodes he raised political issues, calling the Bible the “foundation” of American society and that if the Ten Commandments are removed from public buildings, “Ultimately the Supreme Court will have to answer to Almighty God.” Stanley tacked the gay marriage issue, saying “tolerance is fine except when it comes to tolerating sin.” He added that “In order for this Republic to last it must be built on Christian principles.” He encouraged viewers to vote (saying those who don’t can not be “called a good Christian”) and said that those who vote for big government programs are “selfish.”

So the words Stanley speaks may be necessary for today’s Christian community. But the 55-minute sermon format and uninspiring delivery style are not the most effective way for him to communicate the message.

JIMMY SWAGGART

Ministry	83%
Political	<1%
Promotion	2%
Fundraising	15%

Financial Information Provided Upon Request: None.

Though few are aware that this once-popular television evangelist is still on the air, Swaggart has kept his ministry alive by sticking with what he does best: prancing around the sanctuary stage condemning others who call themselves believers while admonishing viewers to heed what God has told him to say.

Jimmy has lost a little energy in his old age, but he still talks with a chip-on-the-shoulder attitude that is attractive to a few Christian rebels. After he was caught in sex scandals in 1988-89, his church crowds had thinned to only a few rows of pews being filled. But today the building looks a little more full and though the cameras work hard to avoid shots of the entire congregation, on one episode a quick picture of the group looked like about 400 people were attending the service. The weekly hour still features some of the best music on Christian television, though Swaggart often slows down the proceedings with an old-fashioned hound-dog style solo. He still has a small “World Evangelism Bible College and Seminary” and claims to have built over 143 schools in Africa and South America, though the footage shown is about 20 years old.

Swaggart sees himself as a modern-day prophet, even claiming for himself the quote from Luke 4:8 that refers to Jesus, “The spirit of the Lord is upon me.” The defrocked former Assemblies of God minister promotes himself as the first person in 500 years who is able to set the church straight, claiming “The modern church understands (sanctification) less than probably any time since the Reformation.” He condemns modern movements as “schemes and systems devised by men,” such as the best-selling book “The Purpose Driven Life,” which Swaggart says is “man attempting to do what God alone can do....It isn’t the word of God. What I’m teaching you is the word.”

So although Jimmy claims man can not have the answers, he promotes himself as having the answers (“What I’m talking about...is the only thing that works”). He says modern Christians aren’t preaching the true Word and he claims he alone is preaching the word. He condemns churchgoers as the ones Satan uses today to stop true ministry (“there is no evil like religious evil”), claiming they are jealous and “they don’t walk the walk.” Yet he is the only popular television minister who uses airtime jealousy condemning others ministries and the most prominent example in the past 30 years of a TV preacher hypocritically caught in scandal. Namely, he appears to be preaching sermons to himself and needs to play back his tapes to take some of his own advice.

The materials Swaggart offers reflect this incongruity. This man of raging emotions has a CD teaching entitled “God’s Solution for Emotional Disturbance!” This minister who

condemns others for focusing too much on interpretation and not enough on pure scripture sells a \$50 “Expositor’s New Testament,” which puts Jimmy’s interpretations in red in the middle of Bible verses and is often filled with more of what Swaggart says than what God says! “It doesn’t mean that we add to the Word of God,” the preacher assures contributors, but that is exactly what he is doing—the very thing he condemns others of doing!

Swaggart’s words come across as condescension. In his new Bible “we have to take very complicated subjects and bring them down to very few words” so that readers can “understand what the Bible says.” He calls his “Expositor’s New Testament” a “runaway best seller” and “one of the most sought after items in the Christian world today.” He even says an associate of Billy Graham called to say that he carries Swaggart’s Bible with him. So while he condemns other Christians he is thrilled when they praise him or buy his materials.

His New Testament ended up being a great fundraising gimmick. After years of being able to raise little due to his lack of credibility, he came upon a unique Bible format that allowed him to sell something as fast as he could print it. Claiming he can’t keep the books in stock, he uses the Bible to beg for funds: “We don’t have any money in the bank...the moment we get every dollar that is given to us it is spent on radio and television.” No evidence is offered and repeated requests for audited financial information is met with no response. The fact that historically most of the financial decisions about the ministry’s expenditures have come from Swaggart family members makes one skeptical about how the money is being used.

As Swaggart ages, the mantel of his ministry is falling upon the shoulders of son Donnie. Both father and son have been the subject of scandalous reports over the years, but those human weaknesses have only brought them closer to their followers. “We shouldn’t be here,” Donnie said in one sermon. “By all accounts this church should be closed.” He then over-dramatically compared the treatment of the Swaggart ministry to Christians being burned at the stake centuries ago.

Donnie seems to have copied many of his father’s mannerisms, such as head ticks and thick drawl, and sermon themes. After being caught in his own scandal, Donnie claimed in 2000 the Lord told him to “take a stand on false doctrine in the church.” He said he wasn’t talking about liberal churches or even evangelical churches, but the “charismatics and Pentecostals...where they’re actually taught ‘don’t bring your Bibles to church’.” He picked on TV preacher Joyce Meyer, who he claims admitted that she hadn’t read the Bible all the way through and has to look in the index to find some books of the Bible. “I love her enough to tell her the truth,” Donnie responded. “She is not a minister of the gospel.”

Then he accurately stated that most television preachers “Don’t even use the Bible as a reference point...they don’t even use scripture.” As seen by this study, most televangelists devote less than three percent of their ministry time to the Bible. But what he failed to point out is that the Swaggart ministry is just as guilty as the rest! In one

hour-long episode, just over three minutes was spent using scripture, while over 45 minutes was devoted to the opinions of the preacher (seven minutes of which was taken up condemning quotes from Meyer).

It was interesting to note that in the episodes viewed, Jimmy's stoic ministry-leading wife Frances was stone-faced during her husband's rants. But when Donnie preached Frances came to life, even waving her hands in agreement during one of Donnie's sermons. Maybe she was reminded of Jimmy's glory days, when he spent much of his ministry time bluntly condemning fellow preachers and used his resources to hunt down those he considered hypocrites (despite the fact that he was caught with prostitutes while preaching against non-marital sex). Donnie appears to have picked up on some of his father's traits and now has the parental blessing to carry on the ministry to possibly bring revival to the Swaggart name.

ROBERT TILTON

Ministry	65%
Political	<1%
Promotion	30%
Fundraising	5%

Financial Information Provided Upon Request: None. No way to contact the ministry.

Another ministry thought long dead after being exposed as fraudulent by a network television newsmagazine, Robert Tilton's "Success in Life" is very much alive. Tilton is the slick-haired money-raiser from the Oral Roberts school of the seed-planting prosperity gospel. Tilton was known for his focus on a few narrow scripture verses that encouraged people to give their all so that they would reap a reward of a "hundredfold," often asking people in debt to send him \$1,000. After his operation's fraud was revealed on ABC, Tilton backed off, made some changes and returned to television with new episodes that have a much more traditional feel with a lot less time devoted to asking for money.

It is an amazing transformation. This man who used to spend most of his show encouraging people to give now does almost no fundraising. Instead he preaches a prosperity message followed by an offer for a free booklet or tape. That will get people on a mailing list that will eventually ask for money, but on the air he only occasionally makes specific requests for money and those segments usually come from episodes of his show that are six years old and still running in the middle of the night on cable networks like BET.

The biggest change to the program is that Tilton is no longer by himself. His new wife Maria and three of their dogs make regular appearances by Robert's side. Maria is an unlikely television star: soft-spoken to the point of almost shy, she has little to say but sings on most of the new episodes. Her voice is off-key and nasal but Robert claims to

love her voice so much that in one episode he even joined her in singing the chorus of a song in his own out-of-tune voice.

This is a completely different Tilton than we've seen before. The slick, use-car-salesman tactics have been replaced by the preacher using baby talk with his three poodles! His intimidation tactics have been replaced by playing kissy-face with his wife and talking about their honeymoon in Paris. The man has learned from the bad publicity that he needs to put on a different face in order to have contributors trust him. And he has transformed his television image into that of a soft-spoken husband who dotes on his under-talented wife and kisses his dogs which he calls his "babies." He even tells the heart-warming story of how they named the dogs Paris, Eiffel and Stella after their honeymoon in France.

Not that longtime viewers will believe any of this. The transformation is on the surface alone, like a plastic surgery where what's inside hasn't changed. Tilton still preaches "success," with less emphasis on giving him money and more emphasis on the power of positive thinking, saying, "You are what you think you are."

"God has called me and anointed me to make you successful," Tilton tells viewers. "I'm teaching you to be rich...I'm not successful until you're successful." He shows pictures of yachts, mansions, swimming pools, and tells viewers that this can all be theirs if they apply the scriptural principles he gives them. And there is more scripture on this show than on almost any other TV ministry, but he uses most Bible stories to make admonitions for those at home to "release your faith" and "God is going to prosper you."

This may all sound like fundraising, but Tilton now stops short of asking people for that \$1,000 contribution. Instead he offers a free booklets or tapes, like "How to Be Rich and Have Everything you Ever Wanted" or "How to Pay Your Bills Supernaturally." The announcer says the books will "make you blessed, healed, successful and prosperous." Tilton even humorously says he listens to his own tape "all the time" and that his new book is so valuable that viewers should "Carry it around with you. Keep it in the bathroom."

There is no way to get an audited financial statement from the Tilton organization. They are the only one of the ministries studies that does not have a web contact and the 800 number given to call in for material is a pre-recorded voice mail.

One concern is that six-year-old Tilton videos are airing along side the modern Tilton videos, so during some parts of the night cable watchers are still seeing the old "Success 'n Life" with direct appeals for \$1,000. One older episode had the preacher tell of how hearing Ronald Reagan speak on the prosperity of America made Tilton decide to become a prosperity preacher. He also claimed in an older show that he had been "misunderstood, mistreated, lied about." These outdated programs filled with testimonies of people who gave \$1000 and became rich or clips of people touching their hands to Tilton's on the TV screen need to be dropped if Tilton wants any type of credibility in refashioning his old image.

Tilton has gone from a caricature of a money-grabbing TV preacher who wants your contribution to a caricature of a TV family man who only wants to help viewers prosper. He knows which buttons to push to get an emotional response out of viewers and has tempered his financial requests to make them so subtle that people at home may think he's doing them a favor by offering his financial tips. But longtime watchers of the show will realize that he hasn't changed his core philosophy. Tilton continues to take advantage of innocent, well-meaning believers looking for answers to life's physical problems and he still claims that their planting seeds in his ministry is the solution they are looking for.

TOMORROW'S WORLD

Ministry	77%
Political	5%
Promotion	18%
Fundraising	0%

Financial Information Provided Upon Request: None.

This one-note television ministry focuses on the end times and the signs in the world that show that the prophecies in the book of Revelation are being fulfilled today. Ministers from what is now known as the "Living Church of God" (formerly known as the "Worldwide Church of God") use most of the show to tie current events to specific biblical prophecies but devote about one-fifth of the program to offer free print materials that will get the viewer on the church's mailing list.

The program is somewhat political, pointedly condemning the European Union as the "new Holy Roman Empire" and saying, "God is going to punish those who go along with this foul system." The show often refers to past wars and says that world government will never bring peace to the planet. They often show a chart that measures exact predictions of the book of Revelation in days and predict that world violence will increase.

It even condemns the Pope for wanting to bring Europe together "in the name of religion" and tells people to come out of the "Great Mother Church." They even claim that "most of the mainstream churches" teach that Christ "didn't happen."

The mixture of theology and politics can be confusing. One of the rotating ministry leaders said God will use the "descendants of Assyria" in end-time Germany to "punish...modern descendants of the ancient house of Israel" in American and Britain. What does that mean?

Thousands of Christian ministries look at the book of Revelation and come up with dramatically different conclusions about the meaning of the scripture verses and whether

modern events fulfill prophecy. “Tomorrow’s World” teaches its perspective as fact. Claiming “The Bible gives its own interpretation,” the rotating ministers on the half-hour weekly show stand at a lectern and state their opinions as facts. “Don’t believe me, just believe what you read in the Bible.”

Yet the Bible does not interpret itself. That is why there are tens of thousands of different churches in the land, filled with individuals who interpret verses differently. The ministers on this show believe “Believe prophecy outlines the future and that outline is fast coming to conclusion.” But other believers would disagree and point to the fact that Christ said no one will know the time of His return.

The purpose of the program appears to be to stir up the emotions of weak-minded Christians who are looking to make some sense out of current world strife. “Tomorrow’s World” offers the simplified answer and invites viewers to get on a mailing list that offers specifics about solutions. The show offers a free magazine subscription or booklets with titles like “Who or What is the Anti-Christ?” and “The Beast of Revelation.” It’s admirable that the group never asks for money. But the group’s focus on a single issue, its narrow biblical interpretations and its unwillingness to consider the validity of outside views proves that viewers should be skeptical about what they see.

Though the TV ministry spends no time asking for money, an email request was made for an audited financial statement. An automated response was immediately received that said, “Please allow 2-3 weeks for a response” and that in some cases local pastors will be contacted to answer the questions. No other information was ever received.

JACK VAN IMPE

Ministry	66%
Political	15%
Promotion	2%
Fundraising	17%

Financial Information Provided Upon Request: None.

Another weekly half hour that mixes politics and religion, this show’s unique format has minister Jack Van Impe responding to current news events as read to viewers by wife Roxella Van Impe. Using a news studio setting, attractive anchorwoman Roxella relates the news from a clipping taken from a major publication. She then makes a comment, tossing the subject to Jack, who states his opinion before going into a scripture-quoting tirade.

Most subjects on “Jack Van Impe Presents,” which is called “news and in depth analysis” by the deep-voiced announcer, deal with end time issues. He calls the European Union “the revived Rome” and that the Bible calls it “the final world government.” He claims increased weather problems like major hurricanes “signals the fact that our Lord Jesus is

about to return.” He even says that global terrorism is “the final sign before His return.” When Roxella asks “Will we ever have real peace?,” Jack simply responds, “No.”

His commentary includes specific political references. During the 2004 presidential campaign Jack said that Democratic contender John Kerry “has a little problem there controlling (wife) Theresa...and God only knows what happens if he becomes president because if she gets a hold of the mic, watch out.” He also discussed the courts, saying, “Let’s get rid of some of these corrupt judges.” On another show he claimed “The CIA tells us that China will probably attack the U.S. of A. with missiles and hydrogen bombs before 2015.”

While the show’s subject matter and conclusions are similar to “Tomorrow’s World,” the format is quite different. This program mixes in a wide variety of topics and offers more mainstream evangelical Christian commentary on the subjects. The program is also more entertaining than others, with the couple humorously showing pictures of their cat that took a trip to Belgium with them.

Fundraising appeals are scheduled like commercials throughout the program. A video is typically offered for \$25, ranging from end times Hollywood movies to prophesy preaching videos that focus on the final world government and America’s future. Generally the requests for money are done in segments that are separate from the spiritual commentary.

With Van Impe’s concern over accountability one would think the organization would be accountable to potential contributors. But no response was given when a request was made for audited financial information.

Most interesting is Jack Van Impe’s changed attitude toward other Christians. He admits that 20 years earlier he narrow-mindedly preached against Billy Graham and Roman Catholics. But he says he changed after witnessing an Irish Catholic-bashing leader. Now he says he preaches love. Van Impe concludes that “the Pope has more love in his little finger” than those so-called Christian preachers who promote hate. And Van Impe’s humble though assertive attitude shows that he is open to loving others while presenting them with the possibility that believers may be living in the end times.

PAULA WHITE

Ministry	81%
Political	0%
Promotion	4%
Fundraising	15%

Financial Information Provided Upon Request: None.

This is the up-and-coming star of religious broadcasting. From her large church in Tampa, Paula White and her husband Randy have been reaching thousands in person, many who are disenfranchised or abandoned by society. That outreach has been translated to the television screen in a slick, well-packaged daily half-hour program that focuses on Paula's prosperity gospel preaching. She is so well liked that she is the current television minister who appeared on the most other religious broadcasts during this study period, such as helping raise money during TBN's "Praise the Lord" telethon.

As detailed in this study's description of her appearance on James Robison's show, White claims a tragic background and has transformed herself into an inspiring presence. She talks about her physical healing, in which she had an "incurable lung disease" and was given only six months to live but now has 90% lung capacity. She also talks of having a "compromised immune system" and a yeast infection that led to sugar cravings, which resulted in her not having "the energy to do all God's called me to do."

Her physical presence proves her transformation from onetime wild teen with no money to well-groomed, well-paid ministry leader. Her outfits are colorful and classy. Her hair and makeup perfect. She is the Barbie doll of television evangelism, a role model who says God has given her the power to help others "prosper and succeed." She encourages people to pray that they become wealthy so that they can "give to others."

What doesn't fit this picture is her preaching style. On stage in front of the congregation she takes on a vocal cadence that is typically associated with African-American preachers. She is a fast talker, getting caught up in the emotion of a service and over-emphasizing words while screaming into the microphone. This petite woman who seems so quiet when taping segments inside her overlit TV studio turns into a fireball when preaching in front of a congregation. She uses wording that would be appropriate in a bar, calling a sinner "a Jack Daniel freakin' fool dancin' with the devil with the blue dress on."

Who is the real Paula White? The quiet but firm studio host who reaches out to those at home with her charm? Or the over-the-top sermon shouter who reaches out to those in the auditorium? She would probably say that she is both. Her natural style appears to be laid back but once the Holy Spirit gets a hold of her she becomes a different person in front of the mostly black crowd. She has an African-American guard with her when she preaches, but during one sermon says, "Security can be seated today because God's getting ready to set something free." She seems to be a woman who wants it all, covering all of her bases while trying to promote herself as compassionate toward all.

The other question is, how much of this is just show? Since she so freely vacillates between quiet studio discussion and loud healing services, some of it comes across as fake. The stories of her background seem larger than life and the stories she tells of how God has used her (to heal an MS sufferer, to take away food cravings during fasting) seem overdramatic. She can best be compared to Benny Hinn, who obviously is successful at attracting a following but is he really accomplishing the spiritual success he claims?

Part of the skepticism comes from viewing the frequent requests for large donations. While she offered books and tapes for the \$25 to \$40 range, many of her fundraising appeals were for larger amounts ranging from \$100 to \$1,000. She asked for help funding her orphanages. She asked for money for inner city school supplies. "I want you to give me the power to bless others," White says.

She used guilt trips to encourage people to tithe, saying a believer "robs God" when not giving a tithe (the exact same words used by fellow TV preacher Fred Price in the 2000 study) and "you're cursed with a curse" of having demonic spirits if you don't give. She does encourage viewers to give to a local church, but if they don't "it's better to send your tithe (here) than not be in covenant...you need to get those demonic spirits off your back." She shares an example of a supporter who began giving White money and soon got a \$2,900 back payment for child support.

White offers no audited financial statement and fails to respond to a request for details of how the money is spent. Potential contributors should beware that her repeated encouragement for people to give is not balanced by proper financial accountability to donors.

Most interesting is her family, which is actively involved in the White's Tampa church but has little to do with the daily television ministry. Husband Randy, looking healthy with slickly-frosted hair and whitened teeth even though Paula claimed his triglycerides were once over 1000, appeared on the program to discuss "signs and wonders." He told Paula at the close, "I wish you had me on the program more often" with no explanation of why he isn't on daily. White's son was in the crowd during one preaching segment and White proclaimed, "You're destined for greatness because you came out of me...you might act like a hellion but you're blessed."

There appears to be much more going on here than is portrayed on the screen. Her slick theme music, Ricki Lake-style opening visuals and well-produced bumpers that sing "Gonna Win with Paula White Today" appear to be a concerted effort to make a star out of this rising minister. But incongruities on the program and within White's shifting style raise concerns that a lot of this may be just a good show.