

I was always interested in communicating the good news of the Gospel through the media. If people came to church then I wanted to show them in the best way possible the good news and this would involve music, drama, film and audio-visual. If people didn't come to church then I wanted to find ways of getting out to those people where they were and show them in pictures or in word-pictures what it was they were missing. In any event the main aim was to communicate through the media the good news of Jesus.

When I was a Pastor to the slums in Ascot Vale and Newmarket we did our presentations as colourfully as possible, except in those days of the 1950's and 60's we used slides, lots of thirty-five millimetre slides, using the new colour film that had just been produced by Kodak. We even got quite professional at writing scripts, filming actors in a drama and synchronising the slides to a taped script. We also used some young actors with eight-millimetre movie film.

Some of these were done in black and white so we had the Charlie Chaplin style and effect. And others were done in colour with all the panache of a young film producer and director. Inside the church above the porch we put up a spotlight so that it could be used in evening services to highlight some dramatic presentation and the curtain that covered the double doors could be drawn up and opened like a professional theatre revealing a rear projection screen upon which suitable pieces of film or slides could be projected to create the right atmosphere, or very simply to be used as a teaching aid with maps and points presented.

When I became a country parson in Ararat in the 1960's once more a great deal of energy went into the production of drama, a play for Easter and Christmas, the presentation of good music with spotlights and again the use of movie film. But now technology was marching on and we were able to produce some colour eight-millimetre film.

How people loved to come to see themselves on the screen in the church, having been featured in some church picnic or youth activity. It was in those middle nineteen sixties that I first was introduced to the mass media.

I was invited to do a number of interviews on television at BTV Channel 6. They were broadcasting at the time in black and white but nevertheless it was television. Radio was in its heyday and I broadcast

interview spots and Christian commentary on a whole host of country radio stations, travelling from country town to country town to record material, going to 3BA in Ballarat, then on to 3BO Bendigo, then on to 3CV Central Victoria at Shepparton, down to 3CO Colac and back via 3HA Hamilton.

I never did all of the stations at any one time but over a couple of years made programmes on them all.

Then an Executive Producer of BTV Channel 6 rang me in Ararat and asked if I would do a series of late night epilogues. In those days not even the television station had a video recorder and even the epilogues had to be done live. I would drive, usually accompanied by my wife, baby daughter Jenny and new-born son Peter down to Ballarat arriving just before midnight in order to get made up and ready for the close of transmission.

BTV 6 was running at night with only one staff member present. He would set me up on a chair in front of a set and get the right turret on the four turret black and white camera focused on me and then rush upstairs until the film had finished. As soon as the film was finished and he had discharged the final two or three ads, it was simply a matter of the red light being switched on and suddenly there was I in living black and white at 12.30 am and speaking to all the countryside that could receive BTV Channel 6.

At the end of five minutes the light went off, the station played the National Anthem and both of us went home. Meanwhile my wife sat in the car waiting, having settled down our little daughter Jenny asleep in the back seat and then as we drove back home the hour-long journey to Ararat she would heat the baby's bottle by putting it on the car heater. **Most cold wintry nights we would have the heater on full blast, holding Peter's bottle up to the outlet so he could have warm milk.**

I discovered then in the country town of Ararat that people everywhere in vast numbers watched television, even to the close of transmission.

Many of my colleagues in the ministry would say, "You're mad. Fancy travelling all that way to Ballarat in the middle of the night just to be on TV!" I wouldn't argue with them. But the fact was I was speaking every night in those five minutes to more people than they had ever preached to in all of their lives with every Sunday put together.

When I became a suburban Minister in the Cheltenham Church of Christ a couple of years later, we continued to present the good news of Jesus, using the media in church services. Only now, we used colour eight millimetre film complete with sound stripe. Don Stokie, the young pharmacist, had set up state-of-the-art equipment and he managed to attach living sound with recorded music and spoken documentary to the eight millimetre films we made of all of the activities in the church. All of our church activities were filmed and we would put on evenings when everyone turned up to see themselves.

Then when I went as a preaching evangelist to New Zealand or the United States of America, or somewhere else, I usually took loads of colour film that later on we edited, spliced together and turned into one-hour specials on two reels. Then we invited people to come to our home, on one night all those whose surnames began A to D, the next night E to H, the next night I to M and so on until hundreds of people would have attended the supper and film nights in the manse. They felt they were part of these successful programs.

These were great ways of getting to know your people and building fellowship with them.

As usual we produced plenty of drama in them, skits and action, again using light and sound to the best of our ability on a limited budget.

It was then that I discovered the State Film Centre and the Canadian Film Library with their magnificent libraries of sixteen millimetre films. Frequently on a Sunday night we would use in the middle of a service a situation out of some film, perhaps only three or four minutes long, just simply to set up a situation against which I would then preach the good news. Every Thursday we would load up the film projector with some film to take off to Cheltenham High School, then on Friday to the Mentone Girls' High School where we used films to tell the message of the good news and to provide Christian teaching.

On balmy summer nights after Church we had open-air summer film festivals and sometimes over in the church lounge films on particular issues that were topical to that day.

But it was while I was a suburban minister that the work that was done earlier on country radio stations and with the black and white four turret camera at BTV Channel 6 in Ballarat started to take hold.

Melbourne's leading station, GTV Channel 9, was moving into colour. They needed a new image and a new way of presenting their epilogues at night. In those days ministers used to record the epilogues for showing at midnight or half past twelve in the morning.

Because GTV Channel 9 had video recorders, unlike BTV 6 in Ballarat, I was able to record six at a time with five minutes available every night for an epilogue and ten minutes available on Sunday. Most viewers who religiously watched the epilogue didn't realise the amount of effort that was required in scripting a five-minute programme every night on television. But in a way I became well known to those who regularly stayed to watch the last of the night's programming.

In those days GTV 9 used to claim they had a quarter of a million viewers watching. I always reckoned that a quarter of a million viewers were far more people that I could reach with the good news of Jesus than I ever would by just staying in my church waiting for them to come to me.

One day the Executive Producer of Programming at Channel 9 rang and asked, " Would you care to come in for a test? We're looking for a regular Epilogue personality and we'd like to have a look at you on our new colour cameras". I remember quite vividly in the waiting room of GTV Channel 9 meeting with the other person who had been called in for the screen test. I was overawed when I first met him. He was Rev Tom Thomas. He was almost bald; he wrote regularly in the Saturday papers and was Dean of St Paul's Anglican Cathedral, Melbourne. He was a great preacher, a warm friendly person with a smiling rotund face. And there he stood thrusting his hand out to greet me in friendship, wearing a black suit, black socks, black shoes and a simple white collar around his neck. I felt rather awkward.

I, as a young suburban minister, knowing that I would be on colour television wore my latest outfit. I blush when I think of it now, but I was wearing a powder blue suit with wide lapels and wide flared trousers, white shoes, a red shirt and a wide white tie. It sounds ghastly now, but it was the fashion of the mid-sixties. My hair was long and curly. Both of us were made up and then the Executive Producer came down to meet with us.

I'll never forget his opening comment. He looked me up and down, then looked the Anglican Dean up and down and then turning to the Dean, a man who had so much wisdom and theological knowledge and an eminent position within the church and said to him quite bluntly, "We have just spent \$6 million on colour cameras and you come in here in black and white! Thank you for coming. We'll call you if we need you."

And so it was that I became the regular Epilogue man on Melbourne television. I wrote scores of scripts that today fill some filing cabinets. It was much easier to make six Epilogues and one Sunday night ten minute special in one afternoon in the television station and I really enjoyed the work, particularly the art of working without a script and being able to stare right down the camera so that I would look straight into the eyes of those who were watching.

Those newsreaders who read from the television prompters always gave away the fact that they were reading, not by the tone of voice but by the movement of the pupils of their eyes. I was determined to avoid that. I don't know how many Epilogues I made in those years as a suburban minister, but I know they stood me in good stead. I would also have something in my hands to introduce, the subject, such as a New Guinea drum with python skin top, if I were to speak on the Mission of the Church or a crusty loaf of bread if I were to talk on Jesus the Bread of Life. In the late seventies when we moved to Sydney I commenced a half hour television program on Channel 9, a half hour program that still runs twenty-seven years later all around Australia, on the Channel 9 network. The man who asked me to come onto the Nine network offered me studio and transmission costs valued at \$500,000 pa to go on his network at a time when religious programs from USA paid for the airtime, as they still do.

Today over seventy channels present *Turn 'Round Australia* twice every week to the largest audience of all religious television programs and five times a week on the pay television channels. This is the only program to be on free to air and pay channels.

Through the ministry of television week by week we have been able to speak to millions of people across this nation and beyond, and we have followed up with specials produced every year from the Opera House, and our Darling Harbour Christmas, the most watched Christmas programme in the nation. Wesley Mission in association with Mary Lopez Productions presented An Australian Christmas at Darling Harbour 15 years from Tumbalong Park. Darling Harbour came alive with the

true story of Christmas. With some well-known female personality I would tell the Biblical story. The pageant was one of the most popular family events at Darling Harbour and was one of Sydney's premier community events.

And radio.... we mustn't forget those early days of starting on 3BA and 3BO and 3CV and the like. When I came to Sydney in 1979 the General Manager of 2CH rang me up and asked if I could do four spots a day on 2CH. The General Manager of 2CH was Mr Chris Brammall. He was a large genial man who said to me with a warm smile of greeting when I arrived to do my first recordings of daily spots, "I hope you do well. Most ministers don't last on this kind of programme. They run out of material after three months." I looked Chris in the eye and said, "I won't." He looked back at me and with equal firmness said, "What makes you so sure?" I replied "I have already four thousand scripts at home of illustrations and quotations suitable for radio spots and they are typed up and ready to go." For fifteen years I had been writing suitable material and having it typed up by volunteers because I knew that one day I would use them.

Through Wesley Mission's purchase of 2GB many years later I became Chairman of Harbour Radio Ltd and in 1990 I invited Chris Brammall to join us at 2GB where he became the very popular General Manager. When I was broadcasting on this station, he was the boss. And he still had me doing four one-minute spots a day.

When I had first arrived as Superintendent in the late 1970's I announced on my first Sunday that I would develop a national Christian television program, which would be telecast weekly. This would be the first Christian television program conducted by any one church with one presenter in Australia's television history.

Because I would be there every week it would be the first time that we would have one presenter on a regular basis 52 weeks a year. I believed continuity was absolutely essential if we were to get the message across. Not only that, for the first time in television history we would develop a television program that would be so good for the station that they would be prepared to pay for it. This was totally new thinking.

Turn 'Round Australia began a weekly half hour program, which is seen on more television stations in the nation than any other and has now been running consistently for the last 27 years. By 1983 I felt what we had been doing was ready for development in a totally new way.

On the 5th April 1983 I wrote to Martin Johnson whom I had just appointed as our new Director of Media and Stan Manning our general manager of the Mission a confidential note in which I said; "I want to share with you what I think will be the most significant development we have undertaken in our media work. I think the time has come for us to develop *Turn 'Round Australia* into a new direction by producing a special series of programs, which will be used in a wider purpose and then being remade for our existing TRA format. My plan would be to conduct a special series, each running for 12 weeks for each of the next 3 years. During this period of twelve weeks we would have these special programmes around a unified theme with music inserts and an increased number of visuals. These would be suitable for personal and group studies in churches and I would produce a study book to go with the texts plus Bible passages and key questions that could be used by individuals as well as groups. We would then market the series of twelve videotapes together with the booklet on the texts. The theme for the special series of twelve would be 'The Life and Significance of Jesus' followed by in 1984 a series on the Apostle Paul and then 'The Early Church' covering the rest of the New Testament.

I then outlined how I would see the first 12 programmes developing, asked the people to meet with me and discuss this development and then in a single sentence say "We could use films from Israel or else go to the Holy Land and film them on site" Martin Johnson replied "The idea for the proposed new TRA series sounds exciting and challenging. I appreciate there are still many decisions to be made regarding the series however if we are planning to put them to air in the first half of 1984 we need right now to do some work on the contents of each of the 12 episodes"

Martin then went on to show how he had developed the skills to produce such an historical series while he was on a year long Rotary scholarship at the San Diego State University in California, USA.

The idea of going to Israel and producing a series of 12 films on the life of Christ began to catch on. The big problem was money. We didn't have enough money to pay for the cost particularly if we were going to go on and make a total of 36 half hour programmes to be filmed on more than 150 locations in Israel throughout the Mediterranean Islands, Greece, Italy, Lebanon and Syria. I recognised that such a program would cost more than a million dollars and there was no way Wesley Mission could afford

this. We had only just reached the situation where we had been covering the past debts that had accumulated for years.

The catalyst was to come quickly in the form of John Gormley, the Managing Director of Perpetual Equity Limited who said quite simply “Why don’t you establish a film production company and raise capital from investors?” The idea was an appealing one but how could we go about developing a film company and raising such money? This was beyond the experience and expertise of us all. However we went ahead and established Wesley Film Productions Limited a company that achieved its approval from the Australian Government as a film production company able to raise investment capital and provide taxation and profit benefits. The board of the new company was made up of senior staff from Wesley Central Mission and Jim Mein of the Uniting Church of NSW who took the role of an independent investors representative.

We eventually gained approval from the taxation office, the Australian Film Commission, The Australian Home Office, Corporate Affairs and a whole bunch of other Authorities. I then called together a group of people who might share the vision. Some of them were personal friends, some were members of my Sydney Rotary Club and some were donors to Wesley Mission. One night in Wesley Centre I showed a sample videotape Martin and I had prepared showing how I had the vision of taking the gospel message to Australians through film, the sale of videos, the making of CD’s and cassettes and the production of 36 half hour television programs. And to do this we would need to cover for the first series, \$265,000.

In order to give people an idea of what it would be like we used a television technique called Chroma-Key. I stood in the studio while behind me photographs from books on the Holy Land were ‘keyed’ into the background. I walked around waving my hands and described the situation and told the story of Jesus meeting the woman at the well at Sychar.

It was very amateurish but after I had finished every one understood exactly what was intended. I asked people if they would fill in an investment sheet and on that first night \$186 000 had been promised by people as investors. I was staggered! Shortly there after we had reached a total of \$265 000 which was enough to cover the budget for the first series which I was now calling ‘Discovering Jesus’.

To prove our own commitment to it, my wife and I had invested all of our savings as well so if this thing was going to fail, Beverley and I would go down with it. One of the things that our investors really appreciated was that the Australian Government, in order to encourage an Australian Film Industry, was providing a 133% taxation deductibility for the total investment in the film. That certainly encouraged our investors. I have now before me a list of 25 investors who put up the \$265 000. I only found out later on that many of the investors said to each other “Well I don’t expect to get anything back out of this, but it’s a good thing to get behind a person who has got a vision as big as this.” The investment of our savings did well as every other investment, and from the first cheque we purchased a new family car, a gold Ford Fairlaine that served us until 2005.

It was one thing to raise the money by investment but now came the difficult task, I had to write the book and then write 12 scripts. Martin Johnson was an invaluable aid as he had studied script writing during his time at San Diego State University. He took my text and turned it into 12 documentary screenplays. We needed to get our proper 124ZAB certificate to make such a film internationally and Richard Baker came to our aid to help it through the minefields of Government bureaucracy.

Martin Johnson brought together an interesting team of people. I was the executive producer and Stan Manning and Richard Baker were the Associate Producers. Martin Johnson would be the Producer and Director and I would be the writer, the presenter and the host. From New York Martin had called cinematographer Robert Draper. Rob was a brilliant cinematographer and was going to go on to make his mark as director of photography on a number of very large big budget films in the United States. Our assistant cameraman was Theo Cremona who was then working in Europe. Our sound recordist was Bronwyn Murphy who had worked on some major Australian productions as had the production coordinator Alison Chambers. Production assistant was Sue Draper and editor was Greg Punch.

Telecine was the responsibility of Chris Hewat and Brian Himsley and Vicki Haynes were the on-line editors at Channel Nine. The graphics were done by Cathy Gribble, a member of staff at Wesley Mission. Our production accountant was Dick Menteith who had an enormous job over the next 15 years although he didn’t realise it at that time. My old colleague John Graham would come with us as our stills photographer and our foreign liaison officer based in Israel was Shmuel Moyal. Our solicitor Bryce Bridges headed up several legal people who were responsible for all the investment documents and all of the relationships with countries overseas.

As soon as I had finished writing the manuscript for the book and the outline of each of the first twelve films, we sent off a crew of four people. The Cinematographer, the Production Manager, Photographer and Team Coordinator to do a location survey in Israel. They went to all of the major sites that I had mentioned and looked for about 150 location sites where we would actually do the filming. They tested the levels of light, the areas where we would stand and the areas from which we would shoot the films. The survey team finished their work and returned to Australia with hundreds of still photographs. These photographs were then assembled into order according to my scripts, which would enable us to visualise what we would later film.

We brought the team together and flew out of Australia while other team members came from across Europe, America and Great Britain to join us in Israel. The team worked from January to April 1984 and produced not only all the footage for the films but material for the 12 television programs as well. The result was 25 hours of Kodak 16 mm Film that had to be made into 12 television programmes and 12 films. Greg Punch spent countless hours editing the 25 hours of film. We produced both Betamax and VHS copies in order to provide the various markets. By this time I had the idea that these would sell internationally. The brilliant music of Robert Coleman sung in Israel and orchestrated in Nashville Tennessee was made into an LP record and cassette, which sold widely.

The television series was stunning and was shown at peak viewing times all over Australia. The videos went on sale and immediately were snapped up. We were selling videos at the rate of \$10 000 worth per month and within a few months the 1000th video set was purchased by a Mr Hardman of North Sydney.

In between filming I had finished off the book manuscript for 'Discovering Jesus'. However I had set myself a very difficult task because I was writing four books at the one time: 'Confidence in Time of Trouble', which was to be published by Vital Publications, 'Discovering Jesus' which was to be published by Albatross, 'Twelve Steps to Serenity' which was being published in Australia and England by Hodder and Stoughton and 'Mission On', which was to be published by Vision Press. All books were going to have good sales.

In fact 'Discovering Jesus' which Albatross were publishing was a highlight in the publishing career of the Australian publisher John Waterhouse. He made arrangements to publish 10,000 copies on the first

edition and 5,000 copies on an American Edition. Later this book was to go through several other editions. In the April 1984 issue of 'Australian Bookseller and Publisher', the book *Discovering Jesus* was written up as Australia's best selling religious book. It was beautifully photographed and illustrated by John Graham. We had hired a helicopter to get unusual angles in a country of a million photographs but few had been taken from a low flying helicopter. Later I was to sell all of the still photographs, for which we had no use, to Lion Publishers in the UK for a large amount of money. They were more than recouping our costs. I still see them illustrating books today.

John Waterhouse said; "We set out to produce a book that commends the Christian Gospel to people outside of the Church. While it is still early days it is our hope that many of these encouraging sales have gone to this intended audience." John also encouraged me with the writing of two other books, 'Discovering Paul' and 'Discovering the Young Church'. 'Discovering Jesus' was used in colleges and secondary schools throughout the United States but our biggest delight was to come 15 years later when it was published in main land China in Chinese when each of the three books of the series was to be printed in numbers exceeding 500, 000 copies each. A former Chinese student of mine Miss Lolita Chan oversaw the production, distribution and sales of these books.

Richard Baker and Martin Johnson had attended the National Religious Broadcasters Media Expo in Washington DC. He wrote back excitedly; 'The response for 'Discovering Jesus' was nothing short of amazing. The series certainly far outshone anything I have experienced in several years of marketing secular documentary films overseas. Literally hundreds of inquiries were received for the video pack and book and many more for television broadcast rights on stations all the way from Florida to Alaska. Several major distributors of Christian films and television programmes want the US distribution rights to the series. I am also able to confirm that the technical standard of *Discovering Jesus* is equal to the very best ever produced in the United States of America. It soon became clear that the series has a tremendous potential both for broadcast nationally and for home, church, and school use in the USA."

The time had come for me now to write the next two books in the series 'Discovering Paul', and 'Discovering the Young Church'. I also had to write 24 scripts. Martin Johnson was again an invaluable help in these scripts. We also needed to get a new round of approvals from the Australian Government and Film Corporation for this next series. We also had to raise another \$700 000, although that soon stretched as I developed new ideas.

I wrote to the Department of Foreign Affairs in Canberra pointing out that this next series of films would be made in some of the most difficult countries of the world. Rome, Greece, Turkey, Malta, Cypress and Israel were OK but we also wanted to go to some of the warring Middle Eastern Countries. I thought we had better acquaint the Department of Foreign Affairs in case they had to pull a jailed film crew out of some difficult country. I gave them the schedule of the countries to which we were going and the list of crew members. I insured every person for a million dollars each. On this trip I took my 21-year-old son Peter. Our previous visit had involved an immense amount of heavy carrying and I was utterly exhausted. He took care of all of that work as well as good times talking together when I was not the boss or the executive producer, but 'Dad'.

I had never been so tired in all of my life. In order to get what we called the 'National Geographic Colour' in our film shots, we got up at 4:30 of a morning, travelled to the film site and with the first light, placing beautiful blues and violets in the sky we would film free from any tourists troubling us. In fact people later would constantly say they couldn't understand how we would be in some of the best known tourist spots in the world without a tourist in sight.

The reason was quite simple. We set up dolly tracks for the cameras, concealed lighting and we filmed just around dawn for a couple of hours. At the end of that time we would all go off and have breakfast together, reassemble on board a big bus capable of taking forty people that we had sent down from Germany, and head for the next site. We slept on the bus and then got ready for all of our sunset filming. Again, against the beautiful sunsets we filmed other sequences. Our 'auto bus' was equipped with toilet, kitchenette and so on, so we could sleep, travel, eat, sit round a table to work on scripts or whatever.

We filmed our sequences on more than 180 different locations, which involved many changes of clothes for me, and we would repeat each sequence several times so that those who would edit the films would have many options from which to choose. Every article of clothing was numbered and every sequence would have the wardrobe numbers in succession.

For 'Discovering Paul' and 'Discovering the Young Church' we had hired Simon Walker who had composed the musical scores for 40 films. His budget was high but it involved the use of some of Australia's best musicians, studio time, and tape stock for magnificent music backgrounds. Like

everything else this was done at a first rate level. Our team was out in the field for more than three months filming and I joined them during September 1985 through to November 1985.

Looking back I am thankful to God that we now had a good product that I was able to show to a new group of investors and upon seeing it more than \$750,000 was invested. In the middle of October I wrote a letter to all of our investors from Ephesus in Turkey. At that occasion we had been shooting for thirty days without a break.

I wrote to them: "Each day we are up and on the go by 4am and we start shooting about 5am. Our shooting finishes at sunset at about 6pm. The bus then takes the whole team back to where we are staying, where we shower and have a team meeting to discuss the next day's schedule, have an evening meal, wash clothes and fall into bed. Many people wonder how we have such wonderful light in 'Discovering Jesus' and no tourists ever in a shot. The secret is we do all of our important shots before crowds are out and about."

In the same letter I reported that we had shot in Malta, Italy, Greece, Macedonia and Turkey and had filmed more than 450 sequences so far. Every place mentioned in the New Testament has had something filmed on that location. I added a simple Post Script; "P.S. While I have been away I have also made 12 radio programmes for 2GB each an hour long and I have planned a series of four new books. The whole crew appreciate your interest and prayers and your support for our loved ones back at home. We have 14 days of filming to go in Turkey and Israel. God's blessing be with you."

By the time the series was cut and edited and produced we had two other successful series ready. World wide, Richard Baker had signed agreements with the production of the series into German for distribution throughout Germany, Austria and German-speaking Switzerland, in French not only for use in France but also through out Africa where French was spoken, in Italian by San Paolo Films with lip synchronisation for use throughout Italy, in English for distribution on the major television networks in the United Kingdom, had made a significant sale to public television in Botswana and in the USA. Our man on the scene, Al Nader in Chicago, had arranged for our entire series to be repeated on the public broadcasting system right across the United States. But even more amazing was the Spanish-speaking edition, which was screened over and over again throughout South America, in Santa Clara, Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay, and other Spanish speaking countries.

Further editions were sold to Canada and many other places.

The story of these three films didn't end there. We had lots of 'off cuts', which were not used in the three series so a couple of years later we put all the off cuts together in a fourth called 'Discovering Israel'. Our investors were happy. Many of them received back more than three times the amount of money that they had invested, with the earlier investors doing best. After 12 years we closed down Wesley Film Productions Limited as having completed its task.

The Sydney Morning Herald finance pages wrote an article under the heading: "Cecil B. de Moyes" saying "If you are asked for the names of the most commercially successful film makers in Australia, top of the list might not be the Rev. Dr. Gordon Moyes who is heard regularly on 2GB and the channel 9 network but he also runs Wesley Film Productions which not long ago completed and got wide sales for a 12 program documentary on the life of Jesus. The 12 half hour episodes of 'Discovering Jesus' have already been seen by about 4 million people on 37 stations around Australia and the next two series are expected to get bigger audiences. All of the extras you normally connect with commercial promotion such as video release, translation rights and worldwide distributions are already tied up including translations in French, Italian, Japanese and Spanish. The remarkable fact is the first series has already returned 23% of its sponsor's money, quite apart from having earned them a full 133% tax deduction. Moyes said most of the investors were Christian Businessmen who liked the project and appreciated the tax break but who had no serious hopes of getting their money back"

I will always be appreciative of those people who trusted us and who received a benefit.

We have now reinvented the series adding to my original commentary on site dramatic representation of the events as I describe them and this has seen new releases 'The Man Who Changed the World', 'The Apostle Who Changed the World' and 'The Church that Changed the World'. Then a new series on 'The Birth of Jesus', 'The Parables of Jesus', 'Teachings of Jesus', and 'The Disciples of Jesus'.

Now they have been re-produced on DVD, and this opened another million dollar market.

Who would ever have dreamed that multiple millions of people in many languages and in scores of countries would have heard the Gospel because we had faith to put it together in an Australian

Company that became the most successful of its kind, simply called Wesley Film Productions. Wesley Film Productions Ltd was then to produce other films in widely separate parts of the world.

The anniversary of the landing of Australian and New Zealand soldiers at Gallipoli every year challenges us all. The stories of that event, together with the various myths and legends that grew up in the youth of nationhood have meant that Australians have a special place in their hearts for that Turkish Peninsula. Like many others of a later generation, I wondered what it was all about, and studied the history, read the diaries... I was watching the film, 'Gallipoli' on an aircraft when I realised that the Australian soldiers were being shot on wide sweeping sand beaches. I kept thinking, why are they not scraping some sand barricade, some trenches?

But Gallipoli is not like that. I knew that from geography lessons. Its beaches are rocky, even flinty, solid stone. It took a lot of effort to dig rock trenches to give them shelter. Every fresh brigade on landing, were mown down by the machine guns up on the cliffs. You could tell, looking at a pile of freshly uncovered skulls, which belonged to the allied forces – they all had bullet holes in the tops of their head from the guns firing down upon them. The Turks were fighting to defend their homeland and families from invaders.

So bad was that film, in mis-representing the hardships our troops faced, I decided to take our film crew to Gallipoli and film from inside the trenches. This was the first time since 1923 when the burial party arrived that a film was made on the actual site. I researched the history, wrote the scripts, raised the money and set off to Gallipoli. I took the same 40 member crew with me to Gallipoli I made my own pilgrimage to Anzac Cove. As I walked the beaches, climbed into the trenches, read the tombstones and thought of piles of contorted flesh of young Australian manhood, I realised that here, in a foreign country, will always be a part of Australia.

Col. Mustafa Kemal, who led the Turkish resistance so brilliantly in defending his own country, later became Attaturk, President of Turkey, and the man who brought Turkey into the twentieth century. In 1934, Kemal Attaturk spoke of the Australian war dead some of the most moving words I have read:

"You heroes that shed your blood and lost your lives,
you are now lying in the soil of a friendly country.
Therefore you rest in peace. There is no difference

Between the Johnnies and the Mahomets to us
where they lie side by side in this country of ours.
You the mothers, who sent your sons from far away countries,
wipe your tears. Your sons are now lying in our bosom,
and they are in peace. After having lost their lives
on this land, they have become our sons as well."

As I stood in tears reading those words, and reading the names of the young men fallen, who lie buried in the cemetery known forever as 'Lone Pine', I realised that on the west coast of Turkey part of the heart of Australia lies buried. Far greater numbers of Australians would be killed and wounded in later wars, and other war cemeteries would be built in Europe, The Middle East, South East Asia, the Pacific Islands, Papua New Guinea, Malaysia, Korea, Vietnam - but Gallipoli holds part of the heart of Australia.

Long before it was popular, I made the film, 'Our Magnificent Defeat'. For about 15 years it was screened every Anzac Day across Australia. It played some part in the renewal of interest in people going there. That was to lead us make the other documentary films including youth specials on drugs, sport and sex, using a whole series of celebrities popular with teenagers.

One of the films, Martin Johnson, Beverley and a small team made that thrills me was 'Inside The Great Wall' a film that examines the church in China under persecution. I have long been a 'China Watcher' and a chance to see my three books, translated and spread throughout China, and the opportunity to speak to Chinese pastors from the Underground Church who had been persecuted in jail for so many years, touched me deeply.

There are thousands of unmarked graves in China of faithful missionaries who died taking the faith to the Chinese. Most missionary gravestones were destroyed during the Cultural Revolution, which burned Churches, books, libraries, institutions of learning and any sign of Western influence. One newly erected gravestone marks the grave of the Olympic Gold Medallist and China missionary Eric Liddell who was the subject of the great film 'Chariots of Fire'.

But there is one grave in Hueili in the Western province of Sichuan that I wanted to see. My desire goes back to when I was a teenager attending youth camps in the old Waterman Camp buildings at Monbulk, Victoria. I remember the sonorous tones of our leader, Laurie Trizise, telling of the origin of the name. Will Waterman was a young missionary in Hueilichou during the 1920's and 1930's. His young fiancée Grace travelled out to be married to him there, trekking 15 days through the mountains of the upper Yangtze River. The Watermans and the Andersons were married in a double ceremony by Dr Kilmier. Joan and Win Waterman were subsequently born there. It was there that Will Waterman, the clever linguist, died at 35 of peritonitis and was buried in the Mission compound. The deep tones of our Camp Leader told us on a still summer night under the stars, around a camp fire, that an Australian heart still lies in the heart of China.

I was determined to make a pilgrimage and try to see if anything of the Church in Hueili remained. Nothing had been heard of it since the evacuation of Australian missionaries after the Communist take-over in 1949. Then in July 1996, as I was making my plans, I heard that my friend, Jeff Weston, with his deep missionary interest had just made the pilgrimage. I was thrilled at the news. The church remains. The old buildings built by Australian Churches of Christ during World War 2 still house the only Protestant congregation in the area.

Each Sunday over 400 Chinese people meet in worship, filling the building. Many have been imprisoned and beaten for their faith. The church has endured fifty years of persecution. Pastor Wang has led the work since the Communist Government came to power. He was imprisoned for 14 years for his faith. He died in 1993, but his widow continues as Pastor assisted by three elders. The work of pioneer Australian missionaries remains.

In 1925 Will Waterman wrote: "Our territory supports unnumbered multitudes. There are half a dozen distinct people and languages. Everyone here is to be won for Christ - with your help." His wife Grace in later years prepared my college meals during my years of study. She often talked at night with me telling me much of China. I remembered the Watermans, Kilmiers, Andersons, Clarks and Rosa Tomkin and others who achieved much in China. One impression the visitor gets from the Christians in China is that their faith is thriving. There are few examples of churches seen on major streets, and few in public places. But I did see a number of clearly identified churches in rural areas from the train as we travelled the length of China. Contact with Government Religious Affairs Bureau officials

enabled a visit to a registered church that is usually packed with people. Within the towering housings apartments, small squalid street level houses, and on rural farms, unknown numbers of home churches (as they prefer to be called) meet, but there is no directory of these except by word of mouth from careful members.

The registered churches are growing. Since 1979, over 12,000 church properties have been handed back to the local church councils for use in worship. Sunday schools are not permitted, youth activities for people under 18 years are banned, evangelistic outreaches are not allowed, but worship is. In most major cities the Council of Churches (Government registered) is listed in the telephone book and will give you worship times. One of the Three Self Patriotic Movement Churches in Beijing, a Government registered church, was built as a Methodist Church in 1840. It has been burnt down three times, wrecked by the Boxers in the Rebellion of 1900, damaged by the Japanese occupation from 1937 to 1944, closed down by the Red Guards in 1966 during the Cultural Revolution.

But in February 1998 while I was there, it was packed with 2000 crammed into the church and annexe with another 1000 packed into the basement watching by closed circuit TV! Bibles were sold in their bookshop from the Amity Press with a long queue of purchasers. I saw one elderly man purchase about twenty Bibles, pack them on the back of his bicycle and ride off without attending the service, probably to go to some unregistered church.

The Amity Printing Foundation, with paper and support from the United Bible Societies have printed 16 million Bibles, Testaments and hymn books since 1988 and up to 3 million portions will be published this year. Almost all of these are sold by registered churches in major cities. Roman Catholic and Protestant members of the registered churches number about 3 million. There are several registered seminaries with about 300 students, and Walter Birklin Ministries have received permission to conduct about a score of pastoral training schools in major cities with Western lecturers since 1991.

The unregistered underground churches, however, have seen greater growth. It is estimated that 85% of the Christians in China belong to unregistered churches meeting in homes. Government estimates acknowledge now up to 30 million home church believers. Underground Leaders told me they estimate 50 million members. China watchers talk about 70 million Christians in total in China. I have been told by leaders of the unregistered churches that there are about 50,000 groups currently in China. For

China, every statistic is an approximation. One home church where I spoke was held in a University dormitory block. It was filled with students and lecturers. They were thrilled with the dozens of Chinese Bibles Beverley and I gave them, which we had got past customs illegally. The location of their underground church is constantly being revealed by other people who hear the singing. Yet they manage to move before the police arrive each time and still keep their members all informed where they'll meet.

I met with many leaders including several that were imprisoned for their faith for many years. One fine man had been beaten constantly to force him to deny his faith. The beatings which he described graphically for me, continued in prison for 23 years. Another lady doctor still works as an evangelist at age 93! She was forced to sweep the streets during the tyranny of 'The Gang of Four'. Their location is highly secret and involved back street travelling, many phone calls and several encounters with members of the Government Bureau of Religious Affairs and the police.

Several of the team I was with were stopped, searched, interrogated, had Bibles confiscated, and all details entered upon Government computers against any further entry into the country.

One underground leader I met does not keep his location secret. Pastor Samuel Lamb of Guangzhou, refuses to move and has lived on and off in the same three storey narrow house belonging to his grandfather and father for 68 years. I say on and off, because he had to flee the Japanese in the 1940's. He started a house church at Easter 1950 just after the Communists came to power. The Public Security Bureau has outlawed this church in his house. In 1955 he was imprisoned for one and a half years. In May 1978 he was imprisoned for brainwashing for five years where he counteracted communist teachings with memorised portions of the Bible. He was sent from that five years confinement to 15 years slave labour in the Shanxi Talyuan Xiyu Coal Mine. It was here he composed many hymns, which are sung in the underground churches today. After 20 years imprisonment he was released in 1978 and returned to the little house and started services again. Then 300 people attended crammed together in the tiny rooms on three levels. By 1986 over 1000 people were attending three services.

In 1988 the Government tried six times to close him down. He started over again. On Thursday February 22nd 1990, at midnight, over 50 police smashed their way into his narrow house and confiscated all the Bibles, hymnbooks, recorders, close circuit TV, organ, tracts, pens and pencils and

Pastor Samuel Lamb was interrogated for 25 hours. That Sunday Pastor Samuel Lamb started all over again as more than one thousand people stood in tears in a totally empty house. The same thing has happened in 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, and 1995. Nothing happened in 1996.

In 1997, Pastor Lamb was again interrogated over Hong Kong's return to China from Britain. The next year the church held more services, conducted 351 baptisms, and averaged over 2,000 people attending weekly. Today, over 2000 a week are attending the five services (each of 2 hours duration) with about 80% (my estimate) being young people. The authorities again tried to close his house church down, and this time he was forced to re-locate.

I was with him when Government officials said that if the church stays open beyond a certain date, Pastor Lamb will be fined \$50,000 and in default, an extended period of imprisonment. He does not have the money. He is 78 years of age and in poor health suffering from degeneration of the spinal discs and cerebral arteriosclerosis. But whatever happens now, I am sure Pastor Lamb will start again. These Chinese Christians need our prayers.

Since October 1996, Government restrictions and human rights violations have dramatically increased. I met with a colleague of Pastor Peter Xu who on September 25th 1996 was sentenced to ten years imprisonment for "disturbing the public order." Another pastor told me of his colleague who was arrested and kicked to death in prison leaving a widow and three little children that the churches are supporting. The Roman Catholic Bishop Su Zhimin of Baoding has been imprisoned, for the sixth occasion, having spent over twenty years in prison. Several hundred Roman Catholic school children have been forced to renounce their faith or else join an official church in order to attend school this year. House church pastors told me that when their members become known to the Religious Affairs Bureau, their electricity is cut off, their education is ended, and their employment is terminated. Several told of houses where home groups meet having been bulldozed to the ground.

The US State Department declares that human rights violations have dramatically increased, including torture, forced confessions and arbitrary detentions. The faith is being tested. The 140 years of Protestant Missions up until the Liberation of 1949 has borne great fruit in the lives of faithful Chinese believers. But the situation at this moment is the worst since the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). One bright spot is that in taking over Hong Kong (July 1st 1997) China took over 13 seminaries producing

evangelical graduate students for ministry who are keen to serve anywhere in China. The Red Dragon is breathing fire and smoke, but the Christians are thriving and are faithful even unto death.

The film we made 'Inside the Great Wall' captures all the sights and sounds, and interviews in the churches and with their great leaders under persecution. It was shown nationally on television and thousands of copies purchased. Once more I wrote the scripts and hosted the program, Martin Johnson produced and directed, but this time Beverley was an associate producer. We used this video to promote the work of the Bible League as they printed, smuggled into China, and distributed hundreds of thousand of Bibles.

When I first started appearing regularly on Television in 1964 I discovered that people either hated you or supported you. So the letters started to come: "I can't stand your fat smiling face, I watch you every week. You scumbag supporting the corrupt and illegal government run by..." and so on. Then there were those that said, "I know you never ask, but please find \$2 to support your work."

I decided I would reply to every letter, including the hate mail. I also decided I would be different from the American Christian preachers on TV who were always appealing for money. They sometimes took up a large part of the program urging believers to send money to buy more time to have more outlets where they could urge more people to send money to buy more time so they could urge more people to send.... I predicted our Australian people would get sick of that kind of religion.

I was right. Over the next twenty years almost all of those religious beggars went off Australian television. Unfortunately a new group of Pentecostal ministers using the same old begging routine, are currently buying Australian TV time.

Not wanting to be treated like them, I decided I would never accept any payment for speaking the Gospel on television and would never accept any personal gifts. I would appeal for support for Christian missions, but only for those I did not operate personally so my appeal would be at arms length from those using the gift.

I would also receipt every one of those gifts to others and send every person who contacted me an annual report with our audited financial statements. After forty years on television every week, I believe I am the only Christian presenter to operate like this.

Today after thousands of hours of telecasting, and hundreds of thousands of pieces of mail, I receive virtually no hate mail and no criticisms of our financial approach. I have never been paid for any of my television work.

This has involved setting up a large staff to help me with the answers to people's letters, telephone counsellors to answer calls for spiritual help, and a production team to produce the program.

But I did break one of these rules once.

A lady from Sydney's north shore, a Mrs Cruikshank, rang me at my home one Saturday afternoon. "Are you the Dr Moyes who speaks on television?" I replied I was.

She said, "I have your address from the telephone book. I would like to come around this afternoon because I have a gift for you."

I replied, "Thank you Mrs Cruikshank, but I have a policy of never accepting any gifts from viewers. If you want to show your appreciation for our TV ministry, then send a gift to one of the Christian ministries I promote on the program."

"No. I have a gift for you personally. I want you to have it. You don't live far from me, so I will come down now."

"I am sorry Mrs Cruikshank but I do not accept any gifts personally. That has been my policy now for many years."

"Well I must give this to you, because I have been keeping this for more than fifty years to give to you."

That got me in! I replied rather patiently, "Thank you Mrs Cruikshank but you couldn't have been keeping this gift for me for more than fifty years, because I wasn't born fifty years ago!"

Mrs Cruikshank was not to be put off. "I want to give you a gift that once belonged to my father who died a long time ago. It is a pair of gold cuff links he used to wear, and I want to give them to you, because I notice you always wear cufflinks."

"That is right Mrs Cruikshank. I do. But I still do not accept personal presents or gifts."

“Well these ones were meant for you and only for you. I have been keeping them all these years. I remember you speaking one day about the significance of names of people in the Bible, and how parents give children names that have significance for them. And you have special names.”

I replied, “Well, the only way my names are special, is that my mother gave me the four surnames of my four grandparents. Gordon was my maternal grandfather’s surname; Keith was my maternal grandmother’s surname; Mackenzie was my paternal grandmother’s surname and Moyes was my paternal grandfather’s surname. It’s a bit of a mouthful, but I guess my mother couldn’t leave out one grandparent.”

“Of course not”, replied Mrs Cruikshank. “My late father was named after his four Irish grandparents in the same way. His name was Grantley Kieran Mackearney Marsh. He died over fifty years ago.”

“Well that is a bit of a mouthful like my name.”

“Yes, But you haven’t grasped the significance. When he died I kept his cufflinks to give to the man who had the same initials as my father had engraved upon his cufflinks. You are the only man I have found in more than fifty years that have the initials, G.K.M.M. I want you to have the cufflinks I have been keeping for you for more than fifty years.”

I treasured them.

Our venture into radio brought the most violent reaction from some within the Uniting Church. A 1979 Quadrant survey of 2000 citizens didn't even list Wesley Central Mission among the first 25 charities. I knew we would have to do something to increase public awareness of our work, if we were to compete for the public’s limited charity dollar. I knew radio exposure would do that best.

A similar survey a decade later showed that Wesley Central Mission had crept up to tenth place, and by 1995 another Quadrant report revealed Wesley Mission ranked as third best-known charity. With that in mind in 1980 my plans emphasised radio programmes and spots over 2CH and ‘Sunday Celebrations’ which took the form of a half hour of sacred music and exposition tied into the College for Christians. Then 2CH changed its policy and the worship service from the Lyceum Theatre was broadcast live on 2KY and a two-hour program ‘Country Gospel’ became my weekly talk programme. This continued until 1983 when 2GB invited me to commence a talkback programme. When

opportunity presented Wesley Mission secured some 87.7% shares in Radio 2GB, worth \$3,087,000. The WM Board were greatly excited over this deal; they considered that it had enormous potential for spreading Christian ethics and the gospel message of God's wonderful love for "every nation, kindred, tongue and people." Revelation 14:6

Unfortunately an influential segment of the Uniting Church did not share this view. They contended that it was unethical for a religious body to virtually own a secular radio station. They totally ignored the benefits, concentrating instead on a prolonged attack against the Wesley Mission leaders. Publicly, privately and in the press they criticised the 2GB personnel, the programmes and the presenters. For more than half a decade they kept up their concerted censure. Led by Rev. Harry Herbert the press were presented with a mixture of lies and distorted facts.

I think they were still rankling over my appointment as WCM superintendent. Not once did they even grudgingly admit that Wesley Mission showed foresight in acquiring the radio station.

The ownership of that 2GB occasioned me more worry and attracted more criticism than any other of our moves. Before our time as owners, investors lost millions of dollars due to well-meaning but incompetent management. Ratings fluctuated, personnel came and went. We were able to buy the station shares cheaply because of these problems. Then we set about improving the situation.

Wesley Mission had a policy of not censoring trained journalists, a policy others in the Church bureaucracy could not accept. I was often rung in the middle of the night to be told by some listener some nighttime broadcaster had sworn or expressed an un-Christian viewpoint.

Station personnel came and went. We lost John Laws to rival 2UE. Michael Carlton left in a childish huff because I showed him he was not attracting advertisers to make the extra salary increase he was demanding viable. Derryn Hinch came and declared that he would be No. 1 in Australia by the end of the year beating John Laws, and that he would "see Rev Gordon Moyes out the front door by Christmas!" He never became No. 1. He never beat John Laws, and at Christmas I held the front door open as he left.

Clive Robertson joined us and was immediately liked by all. When I offered him a salary package, I included a new car. He replied, "I don't need a new car, I am happy with my old one!" This was the only time a new employee has ever said that to me.

Although the all-important ratings climbed steadily they were slow and for several years the overall condition of 2GB remained far from the ratings top. However we were turning the station around without wasting any money.

The new management also succeeded in reducing expenditure by \$5 million per annum but still it could not keep pace with costs, which remained around \$1 million above income. Some Synod leaders wrongly said we were paying this from offerings or fundraising. That was a childish understanding. Buying rating success was the way to go bankrupt. Careful expenditure control would produce only medium level ratings, but that approach was beginning to return all costs and make small profits.

In mid 1995 the vociferous minority in the UCA synod made threats against Wesley Mission for our share-holdings in 2GB. Each monthly Board meeting at 2GB, records the better management and slow climb to profitably. In March '93 I wrote, "2GB is increasing revenue but still not quite covering costs. Ratings are slowly moving up. An additional \$1 million a year would see it going well. We need to reduce staff but the very overstaffed newsroom is heavily unionised and any retrenchments will see a flurry of adverse articles in the major newspapers. We need to come up with some bright ideas." At that stage 2GB had no debts to anybody except a past debt prior to Wesley's time, of \$1.2 million to the Federal Government for licence fees. We were being charged 18% on this old debt. My frequent trips to Canberra to resolve this were to no avail.

In June '93 I wrote, "*We are still struggling at 2GB to get programming as we want it, to get rid of some of our difficult investors from years ago, to reduce costs which are still about \$1 million pa above revenue, to increase revenue which is currently \$6.2 million per year (up from last year by \$1 million). But we have lowered costs since we became involved by \$5 million per year. Our plan was to offer to buy out existing shareholders at ½ cent per share to get rid of the negative and divided Board. The Federal Government and the banks were standing strongly behind our business plan. They provided two advisors and were affirming of our goals and administration. We now owned 86.7% of the company. Our ratings were at 5.5 percent. If we could rate at 6% we would be profitable*".

In April '94, I wrote, *"2GB finances are improving according to plan. In the last 9 months our revenue has grown by \$900,000. The next three months will see us in profit."* There was the problem of the residual debt from before we came onto the Board. It was \$14.2 million two years earlier, and we had reduced it to \$5.5 million. That was a marvellous achievement. I now offered to buy that debt from the State Bank for \$3 million cash. They agreed. We then negotiated with the National Australian Bank for a \$3 million loan to 2GB (not to Wesley Mission) at extremely low interest rate. Hence in 2 years the residual debt had been towered from \$14.2 million to \$3 million on interest, long-term repayment basis. February '95 saw *"2GB ratings increase to 5.9 % with a 27% increase in listeners. We have almost made it."*

Just when it seemed we were on top of the 2GB situation Rev David Milikan, formerly of the ABC published a defamatory article on Wesley Mission, 2GB and myself. It was full of factual errors. Our solicitors from both Wesley Mission and 2GB declared it clearly defamatory. I decided not to respond with litigation. Over the years I have rarely responded to people who have criticised us. Usually they are non-achievers who are racked with envy. But this gave the Synod opposition some ammunition for their attack on us for allowing some of our broadcasters the right to state their opinions on issues that were not politically correct. I wrote at the time, April 95, *"I have insisted that we will support freedom of speech on 2GB so long as it is not defamatory, illegal or immoral. But the Synod wants 2GB to be a 'politically correct' station. (representing the left wing views of some of the bureaucrats)."*

In September '95, I wrote, *"Met with the Uniting Church's Board of Finance and Property, with General Secretary Jim Mien over our ownership of 2GB. They are sympathetic and appreciate our financial results but they are paranoid about Rev Harry Herbert's mounting an attack on us at the next Synod."* At the '95 Synod, I recorded, *"The attack on 2GB was vicious led by Harry Herbert. Their methods of debate and innuendos on our financial handling of the matter were disgraceful. Synod voted for a long list of unethical issues (comments by our Broadcasters) to be declared unable to be discussed"*. I then announced a bombshell. *"Recognising that Synod was moving to a position where any investment in the media above 7% of shareholding was to be declared unethical, I announced I was in negotiations to sell our shares at a good profit, retain a 15% shareholding to give us continuing Christian influence on the Board, legally tie the purchaser into giving us continued air time of four hours per week, hold all the benefits of ownership without being responsible for the repayment of the one loan to NAB nor any future debts nor for everything said on air."*

There was stunned silence. The Synod officials were dumbfounded. I had approached John Singleton the owner of 2CH to buy our shares and form a joint company that would cut our overheads by \$2 million per year, which would drop straight to the bottom line. I had cordial discussion with John Singleton and he agreed to buy the shares we had purchased two years earlier for half a cent each for 33 cents each plus whatever we had put into the company. We would retain 15% of the merged company, retain all our on-air time, be paid \$6.5 million cash and Richard Menteith would remain on the Board and I would remain as Chairman of the Board.

This valued our shareholding at \$10.6 million which was far in excess of our total purchase cost, any loans made to the company, plus 12% interest on our investment, remove any threat of a future need of cash investment or future liability for any debts that may be incurred. It would also give us air-time access on 2CH to Wesley Mission. No one on the council of Synod seemed to have the capacity to realise what a good deal this was. That is a Church problem – the people who go to such meetings are laymen usually retired or women not at work, or clergy who live in a Synod owned house, drive a Synod owned car, have never had any business or company experience, and whose greatest expense is at the Supermarket check-out. This description also includes most of the Synod officials who are not able to comprehend business matters.

The two moderators at this time were Rev Ken Cornwell (a minister at Wesley Mission who in the previous three years of service at above the recommended salary had increased his congregation from 63 to 69), and Rev Dean Drayton who had been on our Board for several years. Both had access monthly to all our financial statements, monthly reports from the 2GB Board, took part in Wesley Mission Council and Board decisions approving all of our activities with 2GB, yet in the Synod meetings, revealed none of this but voted with the Synod bureaucracy. Their silence spoke eloquently to us of them.

The next few years were interesting on the Board of 2GB. Alan Jones and a group of other people joined the station and John Singleton did what we could not do because of the adverse articles that would have been written against us – he sacked 70 journalists and other workers. No articles were even published of criticism of this; no editor would do that against the owner of an advertising agency that purchased square meters of advertising space every week! There were two ironies about this – this allowed 2GB to employ the right wing broadcasters who spoke against all the left wing political

activists in the Synod. Our ownership had not satisfied these political activists in the Synod but we had kept a balanced approach even if the extremes were sometimes 'politically incorrect'.

The second was the resistance to our 15% shareholding continued and we were not allowed to contribute any extra shareholder funds at a time when a new share issue of millions of shares were made in equity for a debt deal. This meant that in 2005 when the company's value reached \$108 million, and all shareholders value was extremely high, Alan Jones was suddenly \$14 million richer (on paper) but the Uniting Church had missed out on at least \$15 million if we held onto those shares.

With the Jack Richardson proposal gift of \$12 million lost by Rev Harry Herbert's actions and the 2GB missed revenue, the Church has paid dearly for continuing the employment of some of its officials, and for not having in office people with business and management qualification or as Moderators people who have foresight and courage.

The newspapers had a field day. One reported this and another reported that. Some portrayed me as the villain, others as the hero. The public did not know what to believe. As the documents were signed, God's seal came in an unexpected way. One of 2GB's elderly listeners, Jack Richardson, who had no connection with any church, visited me to discuss his vision of helping others. Supported by his accountants and legal advisers, he met with me and handed over \$11.7 million--the largest donation ever given to me. My insistence that radio would pay off better than they could ever believe was justified. Over the next few years our original investment of \$3 million had returned us in cash over \$33 million, not counting this donation of \$11.7 million. It had been a tremendous financial success.

At the 1995 Synod I stated: *"No money invested or loaned by Wesley Mission into Harbour Radio Ltd has ever been lost, ever. All loans given to the company have attracted back to Wesley Mission a 12% interest rate, which is almost double what we were receiving from the Uniting Church Trust. There are no future loans or guarantees required, and we will have made a significant financial return on our capital. In the meanwhile, our fund-raising from the general public has increased by more than \$1million p.a., a listener who has never been inside a Uniting Church arranged for Wesley Mission to receive \$3million from his estate, special radio appeals have raised \$250,000 for Uniting Church activities, and our public awareness has now taken Wesley Mission to being second only to the Salvation Army as the largest welfare work in NSW."*

“The Church has always wanted access to the media. Wesley Mission for the first time gave the Uniting Church what the Roman Catholic Church, and the Methodist Church in other states had - a commercial radio licence. Now we shall have paramount influence in two commercial radio stations with more than 750,000 different listeners each week. We will have 10 hours weekly of Christian broadcasting and profitability upon the merger.”

“Moderator, when you broadcast next Sunday night over 2GB, your sermon will be heard by more people than attended all the Uniting Churches in Australia next Sunday. And our counselling lines will be busy with people professing conversion to Jesus Christ - a event not found frequently in the Uniting Church, but which now occurs every week over radio.” Unfortunately the political activists in the Uniting Church show no interest in evangelism.

Always beware of those who would take us out of the public arena to the comfort zone of talking to only ourselves.

The next few years were plain sailing on both 2GB and 2 CH but the time came when Dick Menteith and I were satisfied that all conditions of the sale were finalised and our last portion of the sale price was paid. That was the time for us to resign from the Board and myself as Chairman. I was replaced by Sam Chisholm, one of the top media managers in the world. He was the man who did the deal with me twenty-five years earlier while he was General Manager of the Channel Nine Network and we commenced our national television program *Turn 'Round Australia*.

Wesley Mission is grateful to God for seventeen years broadcasting on 2GB, and The Macquarie Network, through a series of ownerships. Under the new management 2GB and 2CH again rose in the ratings stakes but the recent hiring for broadcasters that led to the station's improved public response came at great cost. I then recommenced on Radio 2 with our normal broadcasting.

There is a down side about being seen on television across the nation every couple of days, and being heard constantly on radio, and being read about in magazines and newspapers, and that is being recognised. I love people to come up to me and make some comment, but every day, on public transport, walking the city streets, in restaurants and shops people just stare! They recognise but do not

smile or speak, just stare! That is a little unnerving. I often smile at them and speak and that unnerves them!

But that is a minor matter – staring is one thing but being innocently blamed and therefore threatened is another. My life has been under serious threat many times. Even in church. Once after speaking out about the inappropriateness of a lesbian minister living in a relationship with another woman, continuing as the Uniting Church's head of 'Mission', a group of lesbians plus some male friends decided to invade my church and physically assault me. Before that service I told two friends and members who had been remarkably converted, a man who was a Kung Fu expert who had been converted from an abusive sexual relationship and a woman, who had been a lesbian who had a black belt in Karate, who had also been remarkably converted. After Church, as I farewelled people, these two stood either side of me in a protective manner. The threatening abusers melted away!

One night, a credible witness told me I was to be stabbed by a man I had never seen or met. He wanted to do it during a televised service. That night 2 men, wearing overcoats sat in the front row immediately in front of the pulpit where I was to preach. Our large security man came and sat beside them. During the sermon no one moved and nothing happened. At the door later, the security man showed me a razor sharp carving knife he had taken from underneath one of the overcoats. He had also organised the video cameras to record the people and the discovery of the knife. One man was identified from the videotape by police who later arrested him and charged him. Unfortunately the security man is now always present. The days of innocence have gone.

But it was twenty years of speaking with people about their needs and cares that put me in the most danger. Not always do I agree with a person who rings talk back radio. And some times, usually with people who make racist or terrorist-like remarks, my disagreement with them leads to threats of violence against me or even death. Because of the time delay button, I do not allow these comments to be broadcast.

After a series of these, the radio station had to change its procedures to prevent access to radio studios. Once a man threatened to kill me with a shotgun because I supported a certain court decision by a judge. Later that night, as I was preparing to go home just after midnight, my wife rang to tell me to stay in the studio. She had seen an armed man walk up our front path and sit on our front steps waiting

for me with his shotgun. She was brave and calm. She turned off the lights and rang for a police patrol. They arrived but he ran off into gardens of our neighbours and escaped. When I eventually came home that night we had no idea or not if he would come out of hiding to shoot me, or just wait until the police had gone and appear at the windows. After that I always came home with a taxi-driver named John Aquilina in his taxi. He waited until I was safely in the house. Another time, I talked a deeply disturbed man into surrendering his rifle to me. He did that, took me into his house and gave me another ten guns. I put them up in my roof until there was an amnesty, and he agreed to them being sold to the police and he received the cash for them.

But another case stays in my mind. In July 1984 the front door bell on a house a few streets away from mine, rang. The house was the home of a Family Court Judge, Mr Justice Ray Watson, a strong supporter of Wesley Mission. His wife, Pearl Watson, answered the door. A huge bomb exploded, killing her and demolishing the front of their house. At that time there was much controversy over the decisions of the Family Court, on Justice Lionel Murphy's alleged interference in the NSW court system, Premier Neville Wran's legalisation of homosexuality between consenting males, an alarming Royal Commission into organised crime, and a big push by drug traffickers. Members of the community were angry on many fronts.

One radio caller seemed to me to know details of the attempted assassination of Mr Justice Ray Watson that were unknown to the general public. He rang again and again. I notified the police investigation unit who encouraged me to keep talking to the man. Gradually I learnt he was the father of an only child ordered by Mr Justice Watson to remain with his mother. My caller rang me at home every morning (my home phone number has always been in the telephone book). Then he rang me at work several times a day.

With the knowledge of the police I invited him to come and visit me. He was a desperate father, but was he desperate enough to plant a bomb? Gradually the police gathered the evidence. There was not enough to convict him although a senior policeman told me he was the main suspect. He felt safe revealing information to me. He confessed to a terrible crime. His only son was being sexually abused by his mother who was living in a lesbian community. The details were revolting. So one night he had called on his wife, threw a bucket of petrol over her and lit it. She was horrifically burned. He was charged and imprisoned. I saw his wife's scarred body and face in hospital. Now the boy had neither

mother or father to care for him. The father was absolutely paranoid with lesbian employees of the Department of Community Services who may be involved in caring for his son.

I appealed to the court to release the boy into my custody and I would arrange for some of my Wesley Dalmar Staff to care for him in a safe house at a secret location.

When the father was released from prison, he demanded I reveal the location of his son. At the direction of the Department of Community Services I refused. He then turned his wrath against me. The next day he visited some of my childcare staff demanding details. They were traumatised. They felt intimidated and at risk and subsequently walked off the job. The police then told me that while he was the prime suspect in the bombing case, they were taking it no further. The man kept ringing and coming to see me. I always managed to calm him down and walk him out of our premises. I let his threats against me go un-argued. Nothing further happened. No one has been charged with the murder of Mrs Pearl Watson to this day. The impact on Mr Justice Watson was devastating. I kept a watchful eye on any potentially risky situations that may have endangered my life. The presence of a man with a loaded shotgun on my doorstep at midnight waiting for me to return was never far from the front of my mind. Then in 2004, early one morning, I answered the phone, and it was him - the prime suspect in the Watson bombing. I remained respectful, informed the police and did what they suggested which was to avoid personal meetings. Being well known through the media involves risk even if you have done nothing to exacerbate the problem.

I decided in 2003, to use the media in a set of lectures on Australian history. Australia's Christian foundations have been hidden by secular historians, educators and journalists. But Australia was founded by committed Christians in many fields. We never were a pagan secular community. Some of our greatest nation builders were men and women of faith.

I researched carefully and from our great libraries I obtained their letters, diaries and artifacts and prepared a series of lectures to be given in the Wesley Theatre. About 300 people attended each one, and the screen was filled with historical quotes, pictures, maps and their achievements. The response of the public was overwhelming. The lectures on the sea explorers, the land explorers, the first women, the convicts, the governors, the missionaries, the educators, the pioneers were all recorded on film and audiocassette and released as a series. Libraries in schools, churches and communities purchased sets

and many were donated by television viewers. I repeated the series on radio and television, and it is my intention to repeat them as a lunchtime series in the NSW Parliament Theatre.

There have been many remarkable stories come out of my years doing four hours every Sunday night on the No 1 radio station in Australia. One concerns a call to me one night just before midnight. At about five minutes to midnight in 1988, I received a call from a young woman who was sobbing. Her name was Melody. Later Melody wrote her account of what happened:

“It was the winter of 1988. It was cold and pouring with rain. It was after 11:30pm and I was driving back to Sydney having spent the weekend in Canberra saying goodbye to my friends. I had decided that the only way out of my problems was to kill myself. I had no self-esteem, believing that the abuse I suffered as a child and a young teenager was all my fault. As the trucks came thundering towards me out of the dark, I thought how easy it would be to steer my car underneath the front of one of them. It would be a quick and easy death. As I drove I usually listened to cassettes, but on this particular night I turned on the radio to see if I could find a friendly voice. As I listened I heard the announcer say that if anyone wanted him to pray for them, then to give him a call. It was Gordon Moyes on 2GB and immediately I knew I had to call. “I have to stop and phone. This is my only chance!”

“I was just leaving Goulburn and as I looked to the side of the road, there was a phone booth. I wondered if it would work and if I had any change. It did and I was put straight through to Gordon on the air. I was pretty upset and it took a while for me to tell Gordon why I had called. But I remember he just kept on talking to me. He didn’t even say the prayer that he normally says when he closes the program. After the program finished, he kept on talking to me off the air. That telephone and that link with another human being became my only hold on life. When we eventually stopped talking, I had calmed down a little and begun to see that maybe there was some way out of the deep depression I had sunk into. Gordon had made me promise to call him as soon as I got home. I remember the relief in his voice when I called him at 2:30am in the morning to say that I had arrived home safely. When we were talking on the air, he had asked people to pray for me. Those prayers were the only thing that carried me through that night and beyond.”

“During my teenage years I had always blamed myself for everything that had ever gone wrong. I felt utterly worthless. My life had no purpose and all I could see was that I had caused problems for everyone. In my depression I decided that the best thing I could do was to kill myself so I wouldn’t be a

burden anymore. That late night call to Gordon on 2GB changed my life. My life turned around a complete about-face! I began to see that what had happened to me was not my fault. I was not responsible for what others had done to me!”

“After I understood that and I put the blame squarely on those who had done wrong, I was able to take the next step in the process of healing to forgive those who had hurt me. I had also made a decision to take God at His Word and believe that what the Bible said was absolutely true. God said He loved me in His Word therefore it was true God loved me! I read the story of the unforgiving servant in Matthew. (Matt 18:23-35) God had forgiven me many things yet He still loved me. I also started to see that God loved those who had hurt me too and had sent Jesus to die for them as well. Slowly it sank into my heart that if God could love and forgive them, and then who was I to hold something against them! My only option was to forgive them and trust God with their lives. That step brought such freedom into my heart and for the first time I really saw what Jesus meant when He said, “I came that you might have life, and have it abundantly!” (John 10:10).”

“Since that time my life has been filled with God’s love and the joy of sharing His love and His Gospel of redemption, grace and wholeness with others. The change in me wasn’t something that happened instantly it was a process that had to be diligently worked through and couldn’t have been done without the love and support of friends who let me cry and who prayed for me. Because of all that God had done in my life, I wanted to work full-time for Him, and the opportunity arose for me to go to Africa at the beginning of 1990. It was a fantastic time of seeing God’s faithfulness over and over again as He supplied my every need and as He taught me constantly from His Word. My own spiritual life grew amazingly and it was such a joy to see peoples’ lives change radically upon hearing of the grace of God and the salvation He has made ours in Jesus. I spent seven months in South Africa, a month in Zimbabwe and England and three months in Canada. Each place was different, and in each place God had different things He wanted to emphasise, but in them all God’s word was, “I love you”. This is what has given me the strength to go on when my life seemed worthless, not just overseas, but here as well.”

“Now I’m back in Australia and grateful for the opportunity to say thank you to anyone who heard that first call to 2GB and who prayed for me. And to those of you who have friends who are struggling with

thoughts of suicide and worthlessness: don't give up helping. In Jeremiah 29:11 God declares, 'I know the plans I have for you, plans for your welfare and not for calamity, to give you a future and a hope.'"

There are a couple of points that Melody didn't know at that time. When she rang me at five minutes to midnight in tears and in the pouring rain from the phone box outside of Goulburn where she had been waiting to kill herself by driving her little car in front of an oncoming transport truck, I said to my listeners, *"Now I always close with my prayer. But tonight I do not want to have this prayer because I want to keep talking to Melody. Those of you who are Christian, would you please pray for me and Melody while we have this discussion, and I'm quite sure your prayers will help us resolve this problem."*

So the program ended without the prayer as usual. But out among my listeners, many people earnestly prayed for Melody and my discussions. Over the next half hour or so, I talked to her on the telephone. I suggested that she come on towards Sydney and I would drive to Liverpool and meet her. However, she said she felt quite confident that she could drive home to Lane Cove and ring me from there, which she did. I made arrangements to meet her the next day, and over the next few weeks we met several times and one of my staff provided Melody with a great deal of encouragement and help.

Her life was put back into order, and her visit to Africa, which she mentioned, was an absolute triumph for her as she went to help some of the most underprivileged and poor people in the world. From time to time I still talk with Melody and I am just grateful to God for those who prayed throughout our discussions.

Some time later, an elderly lady wrote to me and told me that when she heard the suicide call from Melody and when she heard me say that I was going to keep talking to her and I asked for listeners to pray, this elderly lady wrote, *"I got out of bed and knelt beside my bed and prayed for Melody as if she were my own grand daughter. I prayed over and over again, in fact, it was daylight before I got up from my knees."* God heard her prayers and enabled us to resolve the problems, and as a result, Melody today is living a fruitful and effective life. Who knows just what is the outcome of our sincere and effective prayer?

The influence of the media in changing lives is beyond imagination. It can start in the most ordinary of ways.

There is a photograph of me on a stand outside our church advertising our services to people passing by in the street. I have just heard that photo saved a woman's life. She lives in the western suburbs but every day travelled to down-town where she worked in a nearby bank as a Customer Services Officer, what we used to call a bank teller. Each day she went a few doors along the city street to a Club that provided cheap meals. Her life was empty, despite a good marriage, a nice home and three children. After lunch, seeking a thrill, she played the poker machines sparkling along the walls. As time went by she skipped eating to spend more time on the machines.

When her money was gone, she borrowed from the bank's cash drawer, planning to replace it with winnings. For some reason, no one noticed at the bank she frequently transferred money to make up for deficiencies in her cash drawer. Then she developed a means of covering her transactions. When the bank finally uncovered the paper trail, as banks always do, she had embezzled over \$800,000.

In the Dowling Street Court, she was sentenced to a custodial period in the Emu Plains Women's Prison for 11 months. Her family, and her life fell apart. While in Prison, like hundreds of prisoners across the nation, she watched my television program every week. She heard the testimonies of former prisoners who found that Jesus Christ filled their emptiness. She longed for that inner filling and vowed upon release, she would seek guidance about Jesus. Upon her release, the old emptiness was still there. Almost automatically, she caught the train into the city, and started to walk back to the club and the poker machines. At the last minute, thirty metres from the club's doors, she saw the sign with my photograph.

She stopped. She remembered the television programs and her questions about Jesus. This was a moment of decision. Which way? She decided to walk into Wesley Centre and come and see me. She did not make it to my office. Instead, she turned into our restaurant and had a long cup of coffee while she reviewed her life. Without anyone speaking to her, she prayed for Jesus to enter her life, to take away her compulsion to gamble, and make her a better wife and mother. He did and He did! Filled with joy, she walked out of Wesley Centre and continued down the street with purpose and assurance, right past the enticing doors into the Club, and past her old bank. She has continued to walk tall since. Jesus now fills her every need. There is no need for the gambling thrill. The media is powerful in allowing God to meet peoples' needs.