

For It Is GOD Who Works

Dolly Martin Monroe

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Unless indicated otherwise, all Scripture references in this work were taken from the *New International Version*, 1978.

Table of Contents

Foreword	5
Preface.....	7
1. From Houston to the World	9
2. A Seed is Planted	13
3. Getting Started	17
4. The Lord's Ways.....	21
5. God Reveals His Best	27
6. The Lord Provides Personnel	29
7. Remodeling.....	35
8. Financial Struggles	41
9. Ministering Servants.....	47
10. KHCB Goes to the Rodeo	53
11. Programming	57
12. Expanding	63
13. New Studio Building	73
14. The Tall Tower	77
15. Volunteers	83
16. Changed Lives.....	89
17. Trustees.....	93
18. AM Station Acquired	95
19. Hispanics Launch Friendship Radio.....	99
20. Chinese Language Programming	107
21. The Gospel in Vietnamese	113
22. Translator Takes KHCB-FM to Bryan	117
23. Reaching for the Stars.....	121
24. To the Ends of the Earth.....	123
25. And the Work Goes On	125

Foreword

As you read Dolly Martin Monroe's account of the birth, growth and outreach of God's Word by KHCB Radio, there will be no doubt about its being a revelation of God's grace—even in the station's struggles of infancy.

My joy was to serve as a volunteer station operator in the early days, then to participate in the management of the ministry and finally to serve as one of the Trustees of the work. During this span of over 30 years, God was at work: refining, cleansing, shaping an outreach to bring glory to Himself and to magnify the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Of us He required only to "trust and obey."

You will recognize the result as one of the choice miracles of the twentieth century and will with the apostle Paul say, concerning our Lord, "For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen." (Romans 11:36) *KJV*

Pete Steigerwald
Executive Director
May 1995

Preface

"After that whole generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation grew up, who knew neither the LORD nor what he had done for Israel." (Judges 2:10)

The Lord repeatedly commanded the Children of Israel to teach their offspring about all the miraculous works He performed in Egypt and to teach them the ways He took care of them during their 40-year sojourn in the desert. Sadly, once they arrived in the promised land, the Israelites quickly forgot the Lord and what He had done for them. Thus, a whole generation grew up with no knowledge of all the incredible ways the Lord had worked to fulfill His promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. That is tragic. I do not want to see that lapse occur in my generation or in future generations.

This same Lord who performed these miracles for the Children of Israel has also worked mightily to bring Christian Radio to Houston. During the course of this writing, I had to sit back in awe and let the tears fall as I learned of how the Lord worked over and over to bring about His plans for KHCB.

Our God is an awesome God and He deserves to be honored and magnified. These words have been penned as they were told to me by Del Underwood, Pete Steigerwald and many others. My desire is that this and future generations will read this saga and learn all that God has done for KHCB since 1962. As you read, fill the heavens with songs of praise.

Dolly Martin Monroe

Chapter 1

From Houston to the World

When KHCB staff member Joe Addison answered the phone, he noted the excitement in the gentleman's voice on the other end of the receiver. He had tuned in to KHCB that morning and was particularly pleased with the inspirational music played on Christian Radio. Those kinds of calls are not uncommon. KHCB listeners enjoy a balance of uplifting praise music and traditional hymns. Joe smiled and thanked the man for

his compliments. The caller asked several questions about what programs KHCB offers. Joe named several of the programs including the church services aired on Sunday morning with Houston area pastors.

Joe offered to send him a program schedule and asked for the caller's mailing address. When he came to the state and heard "Montana," Joe sat straight up in his chair. MONTANA?! "You must be listening on the satellite," Joe exclaimed excitedly.

As they talked further, Joe learned that his newfound friend was a retired army doctor who tuned to KHCB when he saw the station listed in the weekly satellite guide. He had lived in Texas at one point and was familiar with the names of some of the local pastors who have programs on KHCB. The doctor requested a dozen program schedules so that he could spread the word about KHCB to his church friends and to several Christian camps in his area.

After hanging up, Joe told the rest of the staff about his exciting phone call. It had only been two weeks since KHCB began broadcasting on the satellite. In the following weeks calls came from Alaska, Georgia, California, Idaho, Mississippi, Nevada, and even as far away as British Columbia, Canada. Most of those who called expressed their appreciation for the uplifting music and excellent Bible teaching on the station.

In the meantime, electronic mail started coming in from all over the world from people who had discovered KHCB on the Internet. The Trustees had been praying and searching for opportunities to expand the ministry. New technology made it possible for those with a sound card and modem to listen to Christian Radio while working at their computer.

How did a non-commercial, listener-supported Christian Radio station in Houston with only a dozen people on staff and a monthly budget of less than \$75,000 come to have this worldwide outreach? Is there a secret resource that keeps the station afloat? Yes; it is an all-powerful, wealthy Heavenly Father that "giveth, and giveth, and giveth again." The story of KHCB is intertwined with the story of God's love poured out in bountiful heaps upon those who have chosen to trust **Him alone** to meet the daily needs.

Unlike most non-commercial stations, KHCB holds no fund-raising campaigns. In fact, listeners are offered a variety of services including cassette copies of programs at no charge; not even a suggested donation. What's more, KHCB listeners never hear a plea for funds. The staff and Trustees look daily to the Lord to put it in the hearts of listeners to participate in the ministry. This has been the policy since the station went on the air in 1962 as the first Christian radio station in Houston. Now, KHCB has grown to include an FM and AM station, a translator station, satellite programming and worldwide access via the Internet. This is the story of how it all began.

Chapter 2

A Seed is Planted

In the late '50s, there were few Christian radio stations in the world. Christian programming on radio was available on secular stations, but only large churches had the funds required to pay for a segment of time on these stations. Houston's Berachah Church had a vibrant and growing congregation which was very interested in having Christian programming on the radio. They began a radio ministry in Houston by investing their time and resources in two radio programs on Sunday evenings on station KTHT (790 AM). The first was an exposition from the Word of God by Berachah's Pastor, R.B. Thieme Jr., and the second was a 15-minute Christian music program produced by Marvin Franer.

Marvin Franer was a very handsome man. His tall frame and stately walk commanded respect, but his gentle blue eyes radiated the love of God. Music was Mr. Franer's passion; although he owned and operated Franer Manufacturing Co., in his spare time he served the Lord in various singing groups and as the Music Director for Berachah Church.

During his radio program, he sang favorite hymns of the faith while Perry Sue Hamilton accompanied him on the organ. He always introduced a hymn by sharing some interesting facts about the author or the circumstances surrounding the writing of the song. Special guests were invited to sing with him or play a favorite hymn on the organ. A quartet from Berachah Church, in which Marvin and his wife Lenora were a part, sometimes sang a few numbers. Marvin sang bass and Lenora sang alto.

In his business, Marvin travelled extensively. He and Lenora had relatives living in the Chicago area so they often went to Chicago. Each time they did so, Marvin was impressed by Chicago's Christian station, WMBI. The uplifting Christian music and Bible programs on the Moody Bible Institute station contrasted sharply with the programming on secular stations. Marvin often asked himself, "Why can't Houston have a Christian station?" If the believers committed to praying for a Christian radio station, he was sure the Lord would grant their request.

During one of his radio programs, Marvin took a few minutes to share his burden with the listeners. As he shared the joy of having been in Chicago and the delightful experience of listening to WMBI, he challenged the Christian community to pray that God would open the doors to bring a Christian radio station to Houston. He didn't really elaborate; in fact, it was more like a passing comment, but Marvin's challenge did not fall on deaf ears. All around the city, believers began to pray. The Heavenly Father's all-powerful hand began moving people's hearts and orchestrating miraculous circumstances that would bring an answer to each of those prayers.

When God's people begin to pray, days, weeks or years may pass with little or no visible evidence that God has heard or that He is working. That is why faith is so important in the Christian life. The Lord defines faith as "being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see" Hebrews 11:1. Several years passed from the time Marvin issued his challenge for people to pray before the answer to those prayers became visible. God was working, but quietly. In fact, if those who prayed had depended on the circumstances to know whether God was listening and working, they would have been very discouraged, because after Marvin's challenge, rather than seeing doors open for Christian programs on radio, doors quickly began to close.

In 1959, one year later, the climate among radio station owners turned against variety programming. Station owners in Houston believed that specialization of formats, such as total country music or total news, would draw a larger audience than a variety format which had a bit of everything, including a little "religion." Thus, each radio station began to program its specialty, and religious time was relegated to an hour or two on Sunday mornings.

KTHT awarded its Sunday religious time to another church so Mr. Franer began looking for an alternate station on which to put the programs. However, he found that no station would sell him time because, according to Pete Steigerwald, "nobody was interested in selling religious time at the price religious groups were willing or able to pay." The door appeared to be closed to further broadcasts, but the Lord tells us in His Word, "Surely, as I have planned, so it will be, and as I have purposed, so it will stand...For the Lord Almighty has purposed, and who can thwart him? His hand is stretched out, and who can turn it back?" (Isaiah 14:24,27). The seed that the Lord had planted twelve months earlier had germinated and had already begun to grow. Most Christians were not aware of what God was doing, but had to continue praying in faith that God was indeed working, even though they could not see tangible evidence of that work.

Chapter 3

Getting Started

While listening to Marvin Franer's program, the Lord invited Del Underwood to become a partner with Him in this awesome task of bringing a Christian station to Houston. There were many key players in this work of God, as you will read in the following pages, but Del played a significant role.

Del was a member of Berachah Church and shared Marvin's desire to see Christian Radio in Houston. He had initiative and determination, two character qualities that the Lord knew would carry him through the difficult months and years ahead. His intense dedication held him to the task despite the many obstacles. Del's training as an engineer was a major tool that the Lord used in the nuts and bolts of putting together a radio station.

But skill was not all that was necessary and Del knew that. He was painfully aware that he could not take on this task without help. The job was too big to tackle by himself. His engineering skills would be of some use, and the things he didn't know he could learn. If he could find someone to serve as the administrative

head, that would at least be a starting place. Other details such as financial backing, radio equipment, office space, Gospel music, and good Bible programs would come later. Thus, he began sharing his vision and burden with everyone he met with the goal of finding someone who could serve as station manager. The person would have to be a strong Christian with a heart for sharing the Gospel through radio.

This was a particularly difficult time in Del's life because his wife, Bea, was receiving radiation treatments after cancer surgery. The three Underwood girls were very small and Del had to be both mom and dad to them. The cancer, though, seemed to have stopped its death march for the time being and this turn of events allowed Del to concentrate on Christian Radio.

In the ensuing months, Del poured all of his energy into the project. The first hurdle he encountered was the need to obtain a federal First Class Radio Telephone Operators License in order to be qualified to fill out the paper work with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). At that very time, the Lord moved Del's employer in order to provide Del with this license. A project came up that required someone to be certified with a First Class License. Del was selected for the job and was paid to study and take the test required to get the license. Months later, Del passed the exam and received his license. Curiously, at this point his employer decided to cancel the project. Del no longer needed his First Class License for work, but the license now permitted him to proceed with God's plan to make Houston Christian Radio a reality. The Lord worked out each detail to accomplish His sovereign will.

Del was now equipped to begin transactions leading to a Christian radio station. He shared his desires with several individuals and Christian organizations. Many thought that having a Christian radio station in Houston would be thrilling, but the biggest question was where to get the funds. Del didn't have answers for all the questions, but his faith was in God. He knew that the Lord was not one to forget any details. So he left the finances in the Lord's hands and began collecting used radio equipment in his garage.

Chapter 4

The Lord's Ways

In 1960, Doug Ford, a fellow church member, began helping Del and took over the job of raising funds for the station. Doug was an insurance salesman, an entrepreneur and a visionary with zeal. He immediately set to work on a plan to make the station a business venture in which Christians could invest. Those involved were divided about whether or not to make KHCB a "for-profit" or "non-profit" corporation. Some looked at it strictly as a ministry, while others, like Doug, saw great potential for KHCB to be a thriving God-honoring corporation. He felt strongly that there was nothing wrong with having a ministry that made a profit. They all agreed, however, that the station should be non-commercial and that funds should come from listener contributions. Doug had an attorney draw up the paperwork for the station as a for-profit corporation under the name Houston Christian Broadcasters, Inc.

He quickly began calling his Christian contacts in the business world encouraging them to become stockholders in the corporation. He saw KHCB as a ministry that gave investors an opportunity to have a return on their investment. As Doug and other Christians bought stock in the corporation, financing was provided to get the station off the ground. If the station grew and prospered, the stockholders would then get a return on their investment.

Many of those who bought stock were friends at church who were aware of the pursuit to open a Christian radio station and regularly prayed for the Lord's guidance and blessing on these efforts. Through the sale of stock, \$22,000 was raised for the station.

A key piece of equipment in the operation of a station is a transmitter to broadcast the signal. Doug heard of a 10,000- watt FM transmitter which radio station KXYZ (FM) had for sale. This station had debuted in 1948 with a classical music format but the lack of a strong listener base forced it to close down in 1950. It was now 1960 and the station was still shut down. Doug shared the news with Del, who decided to investigate the possibility of purchasing the transmitter.

What Del discovered in that visit was that not only was the transmitter for sale, but the entire station was on the market. The station was located on the top floor of the Gulf Building in downtown Houston, and the antenna was on the roof. Having the antenna on site was a significant advantage because there would not be a need to send the radio signal from the studio to a remote antenna location. The studios were fully furnished including an operating console which was practically brand new. The transmitter in particular was immaculate and was itself worth \$35,000.

The chief engineer for KXYZ, Jerry Chinski, was very kind and spent several afternoons with Del showing him the equipment and teaching him about FM transmitters and how they operate. Mr. Chinski was probably the foremost authority in Houston on FM broadcasting at that time. Del learned a great deal about the business from him.

After looking over the situation, both Del and Doug felt that this station was ideal. Doug made an offer of \$7500 for everything. To their total amazement, the local management accepted his offer without even making a counter-offer. After months of searching for an appropriate facility to begin a Christian radio station in Houston and finding nothing, both men felt certain that their dreams were finally going to come true.

All the paperwork was prepared. In a very short time, KXYZ would become Houston's first Christian radio station. The only remaining detail was the formality of final approval from the station owners in California. The owners usually followed the recommendations offered by their local managers.

Several weeks went by and the anticipated phone call from the local management finally came. So sure were Del and Doug that this was their answer to prayer, the news they received left them both in total shock. The owners in California sent word that they would not accept Doug's offer. In addition, they announced that the station was no longer for sale.

At first, this avenue appeared to be the leading of the Lord. Everything looked perfect. How could they have missed the Lord's leading so completely? Questions tumbled out one after another with very few answers. Was the Lord unwilling to move the owner's hearts? Was the timing wrong? How long should they pray and wait on the Lord? The only explanation given for the refusal was that the station provided a tax write-off for the parent company and selling it would not be beneficial to the owners.

This turn of events put Del and Doug back to square one. Not until several months later did the Lord reveal to them why station KXYZ (FM) had not been in His plan for them. Through conversations with others in the field, Del discovered that what had appeared to be a "perfect deal" was not so perfect after all. In fact, it would have been a disaster had the Lord not intervened. It turned out that the transmitter they would have inherited was very expensive to operate. The output power tubes, of which there were two, cost \$1100 each and had to be replaced yearly. In addition, since these tubes were no longer manufactured, they were difficult to obtain. The cost of maintaining this transmitter would have been higher than the payments on a new one. Furthermore, KHCB's future possibilities of upgrading the signal from a monaural transmission to a stereo broadcast would have been limited because of the antiquated equipment design.

By closing the door to the purchase of this station, the Lord spared the ministry from a tremendous debt and early demise. Del was encouraged to see that the Lord was clearly controlling circumstances to keep him on the right track toward bringing Christian Radio to Houston. The Bible declares: "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." (Jeremiah 29:11)

Chapter 5

God Reveals His Best

Wayne Marcy is another man whom the Lord brought along to reveal His will for the beginning of a station. As a broadcast equipment dealer, Wayne had connections in the broadcast industry throughout the country. He was very astute, and a good negotiator.

Del and Wayne had been friends for years. Wayne had been one of the first persons Del called when the Lord put the burden on his heart to bring Christian Radio to Houston. Now three years later, Del's vision and enthusiasm had not waned.

Wayne had been helping by keeping his eyes and ears open for any stations available in the Houston area. He called one afternoon with the tip that an FM radio construction permit owned by Walter D. Caldwell of Amarillo was for sale. The experience with KXYZ (FM) was still fresh on Del's mind so he was only cautiously optimistic about this report.

Mr. Caldwell owned several FM permits in different cities and had planned to put them all on the air, but his expenses were higher than he had anticipated, so he was anxious to sell the Houston permit for KWDC (FM) 105.7. A construction permit detailed the proposed studio site, transmitter site (which may not be at the same location), the operating frequency and the operating power for a proposed new radio station. Since FM radio was still in its infancy and not many people had receivers in 1961, it was not a money-making medium. An FM permit sold for a fraction of the cost of an AM outlet.

In light of this fact, Caldwell, as an incentive, was offering a package deal which included all of the equipment that he had purchased for the station along with the permit. Included were a 1000-watt transmitter and an antenna. From Caldwell's perspective, Houston Christian Broadcasters would be taking the construction permit off his hands as a favor.

After praying about this offer, the Board felt the Lord leading them to go ahead with the purchase of the construction permit for FM 105.7. The sale was consummated in the summer of 1961 to Houston Christian Broadcasters, Inc. The sale price was \$2,550.73. The Lord had closed all other doors and preserved what was to be the best for KHCB's future.

The call letters, KHCB, were derived from HCB—Houston Christian Broadcasters and the K is mandatory for all stations west of the Mississippi River. (All stations east of the Mississippi must begin with a W). A few stations established before the Communications Act of 1934, which established this policy, were allowed to keep their former call letters.

Chapter 6

The Lord Provides Personnel and Property

One area of KHCB's ministry in which the Lord's care has been evident is that of providing faithful men and women to serve at the station as both volunteers and staff. With the construction permit in hand, the Board began in earnest to look for a person who could serve as the Program Director for Christian Radio.

A formal list of qualifications was never drawn nor did the Trustees ask for resumes. They simply looked for someone who had a heart for serving the Lord. Experience was not a prerequisite. They knew that those whom the Lord called, the Lord would equip. Del was an example of the Lord equipping those He called. He had not known the first thing about broadcast engineering, yet the Lord had taken him step by step and had always brought along an expert at just the right time to lend a hand and keep the project moving in the right direction.

Some of those on the Board of Directors had met Dick Semaan at church. He seemed to possess the qualities that would make him a terrific asset as the Program Director. Dick was a solid Christian and had a degree from the University of Houston in Radio and Television Production. After praying and seeking the Lord's guidance, Dick was asked to consider serving as Program Director once the station was on the air. Dick was overjoyed at this opportunity because it would allow him to use his secular training in a Christian setting.

Acquiring the construction permit and some of the basic equipment for the station had been the first major hurdle, but many more obstacles still had to be crossed before Christian Radio could go on the air. One of them was finding a suitable studio building from which to operate. Another was finding a tower on which to lease space for the antenna.

The studio location and tower on Mr. Caldwell's construction permit for 105.7 FM were in downtown Houston. However, office space in downtown was very expensive and funds were limited, so Del had a great

deal of trouble finding a suitable studio location. In addition, few landlords trusted that a faith-operated Christian ministry would consistently receive enough funds to pay rent.

One radio station that had moved its studio to a new site offered KHCB a lease on its old studio, located in a downtown hotel. It was offered for a very reasonable price and the deal included two floors with high-ceiling studios. All the wiring was in place. It seemed perfect.

Despite enthusiasm over finding what again appeared to be God's perfect plan for the station, Del decided to take the rental contract home and read the "fine print." Several details came to light of which he had not been told. One of these "details" was that the availability of this site expired in only six months. Another was that the lease was not renewable, and a third was that the station would have to assume the cost for restoring the two floors to hotel rooms—a cost of \$400,000! They had come very close to signing the contract, but thanks to the Lord's care and close scrutiny, the ministry was once again spared from financial disaster.

Del finally gave up trying to rent space in downtown Houston and started to look for any inexpensive office that could be converted to a studio building. This meant that moving in would be delayed while necessary wiring and soundproofing was installed. After an exhaustive search, he found a small storefront on Almeda-Genoa Road a mile from his house. Space was rented for a very reasonable price, and it became KHCB's first home.

Changes in the construction permit would have to be made to show the new studio and transmitter locations. The FCC required a series of engineering studies to document the requested new sites and show that broadcasting from these sites would not interfere with the signal of other FM stations in the area. Wayne Marcy made arrangements with a radio consultant in San Antonio to do the required studies at no charge. Unfortunately, the FCC rejected the initial application, so Del was left to redo all the paperwork on his own.

God was leading and guiding. He even orchestrated events to allow Del to get time off from work to achieve His goals. On September 11, 1961, virtually every person living in Galveston, and most of those in Houston as well, were preparing for the arrival of Hurricane Carla. The storm was predicted to hit Galveston the next morning, so many of the residents evacuated the Island.

The management at Del's job notified all the employees that they had the next few days off so that the workplace could be used to shelter evacuees from Galveston Island. Del worked hard on the FCC documents for these "enforced" holidays and spent hours on the phone with friends in the engineering field who were helping him answer difficult questions about the application for changes.

On the second afternoon, Del was at his kitchen table immersed in mathematical equations. Electrical power was lost the day before, but that didn't slow him in the least. Looking outside he noticed that there was a deafening silence. The winds had been blowing with such fury that the contrast now seemed eerie. The eye of the hurricane was passing when a thought suddenly crossed his mind. What if he drove to the proposed tower site and made some calculations that he was missing? It was only three miles to the tower. As he grabbed the car keys he reasoned, "It will only take a few minutes."

He made it to the tower without any problem and worked quickly to gather the information he lacked. Jumping back into his 1954 Buick Roadmaster he could feel the winds picking up again. Suddenly the trees started to sway violently. The wind whipped about and lightning bolts slashed through the dark. Would he make it back? Del accelerated.

As he drove the last mile, he had to swerve around several fallen trees and wondered whether the fierce 75 mile an hour winds would carry him away. He finally made it home breathing prayers of thanks. That night the studies were finished, and the application for permission to change the construction permit to the new sites was ready to be submitted to the FCC.

The Directors fully expected to have to wait at least three months for word from the FCC about the application. But, they were pleasantly surprised to receive a letter from the FCC just two months later stating that they had been granted permission to move the studio building to the rented space on Almeda-Genoa Road and the antenna to a tower just three miles away from the studio building.

Chapter 7

Remodeling

A great deal of cleaning had to be done before KHCB could occupy the rented “storefront” on Almeda-Genoa Road. God provided a faithful group of volunteers who labored arduously to adapt the building to appropriate studio space for the radio station. The previous tenant had operated a convenience store that went bankrupt. The sheriff had taken the store fixtures and the light company had cut off the electricity. All the food in the store had spoiled, so a major cleaning job lay ahead.

During the months of cleanup and construction that followed, over and over the Lord brought along the right people at the right time. The tile floors in the studio had so much dirt and grime on them that the true color of the tile could barely be distinguished. One of the volunteers sent by the Lord was a specialist in floor cleaning. When he walked into the Almeda studio volunteering to help, he immediately noticed the unsightly condition of the tile floors. He brought over a supply of his chemicals and proceeded to clean the floor. In a matter of days KHCB had a professionally finished floor with a beautiful shine.

John Bush entered the door of the studio one day saying that he had three days off from his regular job and wanted to know if there was anything he could do. Mr. Bush had never been to the studio before, but a friend told him volunteers were needed and he wanted to help. There were many things that needed work, but the most pressing need was in the area of carpentry. Several doors needed to be framed and hung. Today, hardware stores sell door frames that are pre-fabricated; but at that time, carpenters had to construct door frames from scratch. The average man found this a most difficult and time-consuming job. When Del asked John if he had any experience in carpentry he smiled and replied that he was a professional carpenter. Del also smiled and praised the Lord for once again providing the right man at just the right time. In just two days, John had all the doors framed and hung, a job that would have taken any of the other men weeks to complete.

Many came to the station daily after work and helped with whatever needed to be done. Others spent their weekends or vacations at the station for several months until the studio building was complete. A police officer, Wimpy Shackelford, who had accumulated a lot of sick leave, used it by helping KHCB with the construction. Two production studios and a control room were built leaving a larger reception area near the front door. The desk for the control board was built by volunteers in the breezeway of Del’s house.

Having the studios and antenna on the tallest building downtown was thought by engineers of that day to be the best location for an FM station in order to get the best coverage of the city. Thus, all of the FM stations in Houston had their antennas located on the tallest buildings in downtown. Since KHCB was unable to rent space on a tower in downtown Houston, arrangements were made to put the station’s broadcast antenna on a 300-foot communications tower several miles outside the city limits, near the intersection of Holmes Road and Kirby Drive.

The Directors accepted this location as a temporary measure. They purposed to move the antenna back to a site in downtown Houston as soon as it could be arranged. However, once KHCB went on the air, to the amazement of the FCC and other FM station owners in the area, Christian Radio had a much stronger signal and could be heard farther than another FM station in Houston that had sixty times more power than KHCB. Being on the outskirts of town eliminated the interference that the other FM stations downtown were experiencing because of the tall buildings which blocked their signals.

This issue provided meaningful testimony to both Christians and non-Christians that the Lord was guiding and directing the ministry. KHCB discovered the truth of the Scripture: “For it is written: I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate... Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?” (1 Cor. 1:19-20). KHCB kept the antenna outside the city limits and, in subsequent years, other FM stations followed KHCB’s example and moved their antennas away from downtown.

At this point, KHCB still lacked one major piece of equipment that was necessary to go on the air: a microwave transmitter. This transmitter would act as a radio relay to send the broadcast signal from the studio on Almeda-Genoa Road to the tower site 3 miles away. As yet the Lord had not let one need go unmet, and here again He proved faithful. The Baptist General Convention of Texas had a microwave transmitter left over from a radio station they had sold. KHCB was able to purchase that transmitter for \$500.

This microwave transmitter was an older model that required an expert to calibrate it properly. No one knew any experts in the field of microwave transmitters so Del and his assistant, Leonard Schmidt, patiently

worked on the unit for one week trying to tune it. The task was difficult and tedious and at the end of the week, despite all their hard work, they were no closer to having it tuned than when they started.

One day, a man whom neither Del nor Leonard knew walked into the studio and asked, "Would you like me to tune that transmitter for you?" He was a microwave specialist for A.T. &T, and within an hour he had the transmitter tuned and broadcasting perfectly. There was nothing left to do but praise the Lord and rejoice in the Lord's timely provision.

By now, everyone had been working for months to get the studio building ready. The process took longer than expected, but finally everything seemed to be ready. KHCB notified the FCC, and an inspector visited the station the day before the construction permit was to expire. As Del showed the inspector all the equipment and answered his questions, he silently prayed that the station would pass the inspection without any problems.

The inspector seemed to be particularly interested in the music. He asked to hear one gospel song after another and afterward explained "I have to get a better radio." He finally admitted that he was a brother in Christ and that he was very excited about Christian Radio coming to Houston. Del was shocked. But why should he be? Hadn't the Lord's hand been very clearly with KHCB from the beginning? This was simply the "icing on the cake." God had chosen this Christian man to be the one to inspect KHCB as a clear demonstration that He was in charge.

Since the construction permit expired the next day, there was not time for the normal process of acceptance. A delay would have forced KHCB to re-apply for the construction permit and re-submit a new set of engineering studies. The FCC inspector went out of his way to show kindness and sensitivity to KHCB by wiring Washington that the station had passed his inspection and was approved for a license.

The license was granted on March 9, 1962 and to the glory of God, KHCB went on the air at 10:30 that evening with a power of 3,410 watts. It was an exciting moment for all those who had worked for many years so that Houston could have a Christian radio station.

Chapter 8

Financial Struggles

Doug Ford, who became KHCB's first general manager, was also managing the finances for the station. He had optimistically speculated that if 10,000 listeners gave \$1 per month, the station could operate on a monthly budget of \$10,000. Thus, the monthly budget was set at \$10,000 and according to budget, during the first six months on the air, the station spent \$60,000. Most of these funds were used to pay the staff. Although volunteers had helped in many aspects of the ministry, professionals were hired to keep the station on the air 18 hours a day.

Unfortunately, Doug had overestimated the number of listeners as well as the potential income. The average monthly income for the first six months was \$1,500. There was capital of \$35,000 available at the start but the expenses far exceeded the income, and by September of 1962 the station was \$52,000 in debt. As general manager, Doug felt responsible for the problem but didn't know how to solve it. He hoped and prayed that the income would increase as more people found out about the station.

In an effort to increase public awareness of the station and thereby increase the income, the station decided to put an advertisement in the local paper. On June 16, 1962, just three months after the station went on the air, KHCB purchased an eight page advertising supplement to the *Houston Chronicle*. Several articles gave information about the station, and the philosophy of ministry. A Statement of Belief was included giving KHCB's doctrinal stand. A large map showed the studio location and gave Houstonians an invitation to attend the Dedication Ceremony to be conducted by Dr. K. Owen White, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Houston. Another special guest was Dick Palmquist, Executive Director of Family Stations with which KHCB was then affiliated.

At the dedication, Mr. Palmquist outlined Family Station's sevenfold plan to achieve their main goal: "To exalt the person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ." Palmquist also explained the policy of not soliciting

funds. Doug reinforced this and expressed a firm faith in God by saying, "If the station can supply spiritual needs of people through music and the spoken word, God will supply the needs of the station."

Doug also shared his testimony and how he became involved. During the months of preparing for the station, Doug and his wife Lucile supported their family with proceeds from the sale of his insurance firm.

Doug's contacts in the real estate business were beneficial to the station as many of them agreed to buy ads in the *Chronicle* supplement to congratulate KHCB, thereby paying for the cost of the supplement. Several local banks, florists, individual businessmen and even churches expressed their support of the station with advertisements. The supplement also included write-ups about the employees and Directors.

Despite these heroic efforts, the contributions didn't increase. Bills began to pile up and creditors began calling wanting payment for their services. The Board finally decided to have an emergency meeting to deal with the situation.

It was a somber group that met at the studios that night. Many were advising the Board and stockholders to jump ship and sell KHCB before the station went bankrupt. No one wanted to lend money to a losing enterprise. The situation seemed bleak. But the Lord had placed Paul King on the Board of Directors.

Paul grew up in Oklahoma where his father was an official in an oil company. During the war, he was in the chemical warfare service. After the war, King purchased from the U.S. government stores of scrap pipe that had been left abandoned in Africa and sold them to oil companies in the U.S.

Having a great deal of experience in sales made King a very good judge of character. Most importantly, he had a sincere heart for the ministry and the financial means to save KHCB from bankruptcy. Against all logic and business sense, Mr. King lent the station \$20,000. He stood in the gap for Christian Radio financially and saved the station from what would have been certain economic ruin.

Rescue Operation

In response to the desperate financial situation, the Board of Directors prayerfully took several measures to put KHCB back on sure footing. First, most of the paid staff were let go. Those who stayed doubled up on duties. Dick Semaan was asked to assume the roles of both station manager and program director.

Volunteers were enlisted to help in all aspects of the ministry including operating the control board through which programs were put on the air. This economic benefit provided a valuable precedent that continues to set KHCB apart from other Christian radio stations. To this day, volunteers are in charge of keeping Missionary Radio on the air weeknights and all day Saturday and Sunday. The broadcast day was trimmed from 18 to 6 hours a day, but with the help of volunteers and the enactment of other cost-cutting measures, the schedule soon returned to 18 hours daily.

The Directors also decided that the station should be a non-commercial, listener-sponsored radio station. They began the lengthy process necessary to change the corporation from "for-profit" status to "non-profit." Attorney Joe Raynolds volunteered his legal services to help KHCB receive non-profit status. The process required three and one-half years to complete, but during this interim KHCB was always operated as a non-profit ministry.

The financial position of the station improved almost immediately. Listener contributions continued to be solicited, but the intent had changed from a Christian business to a ministry that did not seek material gain. Non-profit status was finally granted by the IRS on February 16, 1966. At this time, a Board of Trustees replaced the former Board of Directors as the governing body for the station. Trustee Board members came from those persons who had been serving on the former Board of Directors.

Meanwhile, Del was facing a personal crisis at home. Bea's cancer returned and soon spread to all parts of her body. She required constant nursing care, but Del did not have the funds to pay for her long stay in the hospital. As he agonized and prayed over this situation, a dear friend from church, Winifred Bleeker, came to his aid. Miss Bleeker was a registered nurse, and she volunteered to take care of Bea in the Underwood home.

As the disease spread, Bea grew weaker and was unable to perform daily household duties. At this point, Miss Bleeker decided to move in with the Underwoods so that she could give Mrs. Underwood round-the-clock care, and help Del with the children. The months came and went until finally, Bea's body couldn't hold on any longer.

On April 1, 1964, after battling the disease in bed for over one year, Bea Underwood went home to be with the Lord. Del felt the loss intensely, especially with the girls still so young. The youngest was only 4 years old. Del's father came to stay with the family for a short time while Del adjusted to the loss.

The station had many financial struggles in those early years, but the Lord always provided, sometimes in miraculous ways, to meet these needs. Although all the staff was promised a humble salary, even that was

dependent on the donations received. If the giving was low, then the staff had to wait for its paychecks till the money came in.

During the time in which Dick Semaan was general manager, the Lord used an anonymous gift to remind Dick and the staff at KHCB that He was taking care of them. It was late in the day and Dick was resting on a couch in his office when he heard the front door open. A few seconds later the door opened again and he heard a car drive off. He got up to investigate and found a \$1000 cashier's check for KHCB on the front desk. This was one of the largest gifts the station had received. What an encouragement to Dick and the staff!

The creditors agreed to allow KHCB to pay each bill a little at a time. With patience and dedication, God enabled KHCB to remain on the air. Current bills were paid first and all the excess funds were allocated toward paying previous bills. Month by month and year by year KHCB faithfully paid one debt after another. A debt that took only 6 months to amass took almost 3 years to erase, but to the glory of God the station was completely debt-free by the end of 1966 and has remained that way until today.

With the station out of debt, the Trustees of non-profit Houston Christian Broadcasters, Inc. now had the freedom to seek opportunities for growth and expansion. In November of 1970, the monthly operating budget was \$4,300. As more staff were added, the budget began increasing to reflect this need. The largest portion of KHCB's budget (about 60%) has always been allocated for staff needs.

Chapter 9

Ministering Servants

The first three years that Christian Radio was on the air, five men had served as station managers: Doug Ford, Dick Semaan, Steve Garon, Clarence Shaleen and Jim O'Quinn. In September of 1965, the Directors were again looking for someone to fill the role of general manager. Jim O'Quinn, the manager at that time, had given notice to the Board that in February of 1966 he would be moving to Jackson, Mississippi. As the Board began to think and pray about who the Lord might want to fill that important role, one man who seemed to be a good candidate was Peter S. Steigerwald.

Pete had heard about KHCB shortly after the station went on the air in 1962. Since FM radio was a relatively new medium in Houston, very few people owned radio sets with an FM receiver. After purchasing an FM receiver in the Fall of 1962 and tuning to 105.7, Pete immediately recognized the voice of station manager Dick Semaan with whom he had attended Lamar High School years before. What really impressed Pete as a listener was that he never heard the staff groan or complain on the air about the financial struggles the station was experiencing. Instead, God's grace was heralded as the reason that KHCB stayed on the air.

Reflecting on those days, Pete states, "Talking about God's grace today is easy because KHCB is not struggling financially as it was when the station first went on the air. I praise the Lord for the KHCB staff and Directors in the early days as they maintained the Godly integrity of the station during the tough times."

Pete's involvement with the station began after he called the station one evening and struck up a conversation with staff member Danny Tucker. In the course of the conversation, Pete learned that there was a shortage of volunteers to run the station in the evenings. On many occasions, Danny worked 12- to 16-hour days. The next week Pete showed up at the station and offered to be a volunteer. Jim O'Quinn, who was the station manager, nearly fell out of his chair because volunteers were not abundant and seeing Pete so willing to serve at KHCB was a pleasant surprise. Pete was trained over the next few months and took over the Wednesday evening shift as a volunteer board operator in December of 1964.

The station soon became like a second home to him. He came to the station several times each week just to chat with the staff and help in any way he could. Del had an office next door to KHCB so he often saw Pete coming and going. During the summer of 1965, Del asked Pete to help him with a contract job working nights at NASA. Since Pete was going to school during the day to finish his undergraduate degree, he welcomed the opportunity to earn extra money to pay for schooling and other expenses. This gave Del an opportunity to get to know Pete better. He knew that Pete was a humble man, a hard worker and a man of

integrity. Pete seemed to always be helping someone who had a need. These and other character qualities made him a prime candidate for the position of manager.

Pete was in a transitional time in his career. He had quit his job working in his family's business in order to finish his undergraduate education at the University of Houston and then go to seminary. He had already been accepted by Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth. While completing his degree in management, Pete was preaching three times each week at Reagan Wells Baptist Church (about 100 miles west of San Antonio) where he had gone to church as a young child.

The Directors felt that Pete had all the qualifications to make him an excellent station manager, but they knew Pete was headed to Seminary. Although the path of his life seemed to be set they decided to ask Pete anyway and let the Lord lead.

In mid December 1965, Del invited Pete and his wife, Shirley Anne, to lunch and shared with them the desire of the Directors for Pete to become manager after Jimmy O'Quinn moved to Mississippi. Pete was excited about the possibility. He knew instinctively that working for the station would be sheer joy, but he and Shirley Anne felt an obligation to the small church in Reagan Wells. Was the Lord changing their plans? His immediate feeling was to accept the offer, but he and Shirley Anne both prayed to be certain that this was also the Lord's will for them.

Incidentally, at that time, Pete believed that the only way he could serve the Lord with his life was by entering the pastorate full-time, but over the years he came to realize and has often preached that wherever the Lord places you is where you can and should serve Him. A person in the secular workplace is serving the Lord just as much as a pastor if that is where the Lord has placed him. After much prayer and soul searching, Pete and Shirley Anne felt confident that indeed KHCB was where the Lord wanted them to serve, and Pete accepted the position as the general manager, a position which he held for 26 years.

Pete poured his life into the ministry. His dedication to Christian Radio was evident from the long hours he worked. On many occasions, he was up all night at the station making necessary repairs so that KHCB could be back on the air the next day.

Pete's long hours at the station came from his love for the ministry and for the Christian community in Houston. But his involvement at KHCB required so much time that he neglected God's mandate to care for his wife and family, a trap that catches many men and women in full-time Christian ministry. Pete is thankful, though, that God in His grace allowed him in later years to rebuild and repair the strained relationships with family members. Pete says, "I would like to encourage believers to pray for all those in full-time Christian ministry that God would give them wisdom to keep their priorities straight."

His capable, level-headed leadership helped bring the station out of debt and onto firm ground financially. In the formative days of the station, each day was a step of faith, trusting the Lord to provide the funds to pay the next bill. The station survived from day to day.

During these challenging days, Pete never lost his love for people. He always had an eye open for people in need. Helping people was the uppermost thought in his mind. His sensitive, gracious qualities surfaced time and time again. If someone's car broke down, he was the first to offer a ride or to help fix it.

In addition to his commitment to KHCB, year after year, until 1973, Pete faithfully traveled to Reagan Wells every other weekend to preach the gospel in that small church. Getting the gospel out is his top priority whether through the ministry of radio or preaching at a local church. Pete's example of Christ-likeness left an indelible mark on the station that will continue to guide the ministry for years to come.

KHCB Goes to the Rodeo

From 1966 to 1971, the Lord opened a “window of opportunity” for KHCB to share the love of Christ to those who attended the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. KHCB was allowed to have a commercial exhibit booth in the Astroarena as well as a float in the rodeo parade.

The Trustees felt this was a valuable opportunity to make Houstonians aware of Christian Radio and encourage them to tune in. The Lord brought along several volunteers including carpenters who constructed a papier maché float of a steer and a slogan which read “Let KHCB Steer You Right.” Miss Texas of 1966, Mary Lynn Naye is a believer, and she graciously consented to ride on the float accompanied by the children of KHCB staff and volunteers. During the rodeo season, KHCB did several remote broadcasts from the Astroarena, and a host of men and women voluntarily manned the exhibit booth everyday, handing out literature about the station and encouraging people to listen to Christian Radio.

The following year, the climate changed and the Rodeo Committee made a new rule excluding all commercial floats from participating in the parade. This ruling, however, did not prohibit commercial exhibits from having booths in the Astroarena.

The Trustees decided to prayerfully re-evaluate KHCB’s participation in the Rodeo with an exhibit booth. The purpose of having a float and a booth had been to increase public awareness of KHCB in order to draw more listeners. However, during the rodeo and in the months that followed, there had been no indication that listenership had increased. Gifts continued to come in at the same level as before. In effect, all of the time and expense poured into this effort had not yielded the results which were anticipated.

After much prayer, the decision was made to continue hosting a booth but with a new focus. Rather than use the booth to seek public awareness of KHCB, the station would train volunteers in personal evangelism and use the booth as a platform to share the gospel. Hershhal Martindale and R.I. “Robbie” Thompson were very gifted in personal evangelism and agreed to be in charge of training volunteers and manning the booth everyday. Year after year, despite the fact that he battled severe eye problems, Hershhal spent many hours standing in front of the exhibit booth handing out tracts and talking to people about the Lord. Through this medium, and under Thompson’s and Martindale’s direction, Christian Radio handed out 3 million gospel tracts and led hundreds of people to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

On one occasion, a large group of Russian sailors stopped by the table. Their grain ship had docked in the Port of Houston. They were in town for just one day so they decided to visit the Rodeo. Curiously, many of the sailors stayed at the booth for hours reading tract after tract. None of them took any tracts with them, but they all took the information in their hearts and minds.

In 1971, several cult groups approached the Rodeo Committee asking for permission to set up booths to pass out their literature. Due to pressure from these groups, the Committee decided to ban all religious groups from having booths. Although this window of opportunity closed, the Lord allowed many people to hear the gospel for the first time during the rodeo.

Chapter 11

Programming

One of the first programs that KHCB produced locally was a daily program for teenagers called “Teen Time” hosted by Dick Semaan. Dick’s vibrant personality was a natural drawing card. The program included music, interviews with young people, requests, and dedications. “Teen Time” was a big hit with young people and was done in a very professional manner. “Dick did everything precisely, and he wouldn’t stand for anything that wasn’t just right,” says Pete Steigerwald.

Only a handful of Christian ministries was producing Bible programs for radio in the early ’60s. This meant that the majority of KHCB’s air time was spent playing favorite Gospel hymns and choruses. However, shortly after going on the air, KHCB entered a partnership with Family Stations of Oakland, California, to provide pre-recorded professionally produced Christian radio programs. Family Stations

operates a group of non-commercial Christian stations whose purpose is similar to KHCB: to change lives through exalting the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Its well-trained staff of believers combined Christian music and Bible teaching and produced such programs as “The Christian Home,” “Morning Clock,” “Music to Live By,” and others.

KHCB agreed to pay Family Stations 15% of its income each month for the right to use Family’s programming. Today, radio stations receive programming primarily through satellite receivers, but in the early ’60s satellite technology was not available for radio. This meant that pre-taped programs for the entire broadcast day were supplied daily by Family Radio on large reels of magnetic tape. KHCB’s income was minimal during the first few years so the payments to Family Stations were hardly enough for them to pay the postage on the tapes. Nevertheless, Family Radio continued to supply KHCB with its programming for many years.

By 1969, through the Lord’s provision, KHCB had sufficient finances to add two members to the staff. With the extra manpower, the broadcast day was able to be expanded to the present 24-hour format. As a result, the Trustees felt that it was no longer necessary to carry programming from Family Stations. God used Family Stations in a mighty way to help KHCB at a crucial time.

The addition of overnight programming has proved to be a blessing to many people, but in particular the elderly and those who have night jobs. Some of these are shut-ins who do not have an opportunity to fellowship with other believers in church, so KHCB has become their sole companion. One letter said:

I’m elderly and rather feeble but want to send my gift to help keep KHCB on the radio. I can’t go to church anymore, so your songs and messages, etc. and my Bible are my daily (and nightly) portion. Thank you and may God bless and continue to keep you on the air.

Another woman wrote:

Thanks for being on the air 24 hours a day. Being a senior, I do not sleep 8 hours a night. My devotional and meditation time is between 2:30 a.m. and 8 a.m. The programs at that time are very inspiring.

The programming on Christian Radio has consistently emphasized the teaching of God’s Word. The Board of Trustees has always directed the staff to maintain a blend of uplifting Christian music, children’s programs, dramas, Bible studies, and interactive programs in which listeners can call and ask Bible questions of a local pastor.

The music heard on KHCB has been a source of comfort and encouragement to many people. Missionary Radio receives between five and ten new releases each week. Each song is evaluated for its doctrinal content to see if it conforms to Biblical teaching and fits the musical format. These songs are entered into the computer library file, and an alphabetical printout is made of all songs. This helps all the staff and volunteers locate a song easily. Of the music, a listener writes:

The music you play is wonderful. It calms my stress-filled days.

Christian Radio is aware that music is a very personal expression of worship to the Lord and personal taste in music varies widely among believers. Therefore, KHCB tries to keep a balance of favorite gospel hymns as well as more modern praise songs and choruses. During the early evening hours as people are driving home, Bonnie BeMent tries to keep the music light and uplifting. Listeners have written commenting on the pleasant music:

I have found great comfort in the programs presented on your station. I most enjoy Bonnie’s program. After a hectic day at the office, the ride home is a lot more tolerable with the uplifting music.

A young mother is likewise blessed by KHCB’s music:

Thank you for your broadcasts. I especially enjoy the music between 4:30 and 6:30 p.m. I have 3 boys under 4 years old. This is an especially chaotic time at our house and the calming music you broadcast helps us to stay focused above.

Since its inception, KHCB has also provided messages by local pastors to feed the flock of God by radio. The Trustees wanted KHCB to have a local sound so that listeners could identify with the station, and those who do not attend church would be encouraged to do so. That philosophy continues to hold true today. Over 20 local pastors and laypeople from all around the city participate in KHCB's ministry each week. Christian Radio doesn't want to take the place of the local church. Instead, the station seeks to help the believer remain close to the Lord during the week, between times of corporate worship, when the problems of life threaten to lead him astray.

Missionary Radio regularly receives correspondence from prison inmates who listen to the station. With dozens of prisons all around the city, the potential number of incarcerated listeners is very high. For these, going to church is not an option so KHCB becomes their primary source of teaching in the Word. One inmate writes:

I am writing this letter from behind the walls of Livingston Penitentiary. I would just like to thank you for your dedication to the Lord and thank the Lord for your ministry. Yours at this time is the only church I am able to have.

Chapter 12

Expanding

When KHCB went on the air in 1962, the station had a power of 3,410 watts. Since KHCB's license classification gave the station the opportunity to broadcast at a maximum power of 100,000 watts, Christian Radio wanted to take advantage of this expanded outreach and increase to full power as quickly as the Lord allowed. But radio equipment is expensive, and after working so hard to get the station out of debt the first years on the air, the Trustees developed a policy of not borrowing money to buy new equipment or to cover operating expenses. As the Lord provided funds beyond those needed for the operating budget, the Trustees invested these monies toward improving the station's signal and increasing the output.

Two basic elements of an FM radio station, the transmitter power and the antenna height, determine the station's broadcast coverage. The radio waves from an FM station behave very differently from those of an AM station. AM radio waves hug the ground, whereas the FM signal travels by line of sight. This means that for an FM station, antenna height is a crucial element. The taller the tower on which the antenna is mounted, the farther the signal will travel before the Earth's curve falls away and the signal does not reach the ground.

From 1962 to 1977, the transmitter and antenna were upgraded several times and the height of the antenna was raised twice. The first enhancement came in 1964. On January 21 of that year, the Lord permitted KHCB-FM to raise the effective radiated power ten times to 34,100 watts through the use of a new, more powerful 10,000-watt broadcast transmitter. This improvement gave much better reception across the entire broadcast area. The station increased its power again in February, 1967 by installing a new broadcast antenna and raising its elevation to 370 feet. The effective radiated power was then 55,100 watts.

In 1972, KHCB began raising funds to make the final upgrade to the maximum authorized power of 100,000 watts. From the first day KHCB went on the air, the Trustees had set the policy that no funds were to be solicited from listeners by coercion. The Bible states: "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver." (II Corinthians 9:7)

The financial status of the station was to be mentioned only on a short five-minute program called "Sincerely Yours" in which listeners' letters were read and a daily financial report was given. Even when the station was going through serious financial difficulties, the staff did not waver from this policy. Each time a project arose, a special fund was begun so that listeners could give as the Lord led, and the report of that fund was included in the daily financial report on "Sincerely Yours."

One such fund was established in 1972 and listeners began contributing to help KHCB buy a new, more powerful transmitter and antenna that would raise the output to full power. The cost for this upgrade was estimated at \$200,000.

Living on Little and Giving Much

Special friends of KHCB at the LeTourneau Foundation heard of Christian Radio's need and offered to help by means of a matching gift of \$100,000. The LeTourneau Foundation and LeTourneau College of Longview, Texas was founded by R.G. LeTourneau. Although R.G. was a humble, uneducated young man, his frank, heartfelt commitment to Jesus Christ as a teenager guided him to become the inventor of the biggest, most powerful, and most productive earth-moving machines of this century.

After the death of his firstborn son at 4 months, LeTourneau established the priority of "God first" in his life. Toward the end of his life, LeTourneau was living on an inverted 10 percent basis. He lived on only 10 percent of his profits and gave 90 percent to the Lord's work (*More Than Conquerors*: "Moving Heaven and Earth").

Without the use of share-a-thons or other fund-raising techniques, the Lord provided the needed funds for the purchase of a new transmitter and antenna through listener gifts. KHCB was able to match the gift from the LeTourneau Foundation and purchased a 20,000-watt transmitter. The new equipment began operating in September of 1972. To the glory of God and to the joy of all the KHCB family, the coverage of Christian Radio doubled overnight and could now be heard fifty miles from Houston.

Getting equipment to broadcast in stereo was the next major project which occupied the minds of the Trustees. Until this time, Christian Radio had broadcast a monaural signal. However, the FM radio industry was blossoming rapidly because the fidelity of the FM signal was far superior to that of AM radio. The advent of stereo broadcasting further enhanced the quality of the signal. More stereo receivers were now being manufactured and made available to the public. In 1974, the Lord directed the Trustees to begin a fund for the purchase of stereo equipment. The LeTourneau Foundation was once again instrumental in helping KHCB raise the needed funds through a generous \$10,000 matching gift. In less than one year, KHCB listeners supplied the needed \$10,000 and on November 10, 1974, KHCB-FM began proclaiming the Word of God in stereo.

The Lord Provides An Auxiliary Generator

Many of the enhancements to KHCB's signal came through the help of Bill Cordell, a very talented engineer and Christian man. His prowess and technical expertise have been used of the Lord repeatedly over the years to help Christian Radio improve its facilities or purchase new equipment. His many industry contacts have made him a valuable consultant who has helped KHCB save money on many occasions.

In 1978, the Lord used Bill to help KHCB purchase an auxiliary power generator. The staff and Trustees had been praying for months that the Lord would provide a back-up generator that could be used to keep the station on the air whenever there was a power outage. Bill had his eye open for any generators for sale and one day came across one that looked like a good deal.

The Municipal Utility District (MUD) in Willis was selling its used generator for \$15,000. Bill called Pete to advise him of this generator, but after hearing the price, Pete responded, "Bill, you know we don't even have 15 cents to spare much less \$15,000. That is totally out of the question." Bill knew of KHCB's policy to not borrow money to buy equipment and respected Pete's position to wait till funds were available, but this looked like a once-in-a-lifetime offer.

Bill kept his eyes open and several months later he found out that the price on the generator had dropped to \$10,000. This was a great price, considering the generator was in very good condition and a new generator would cost \$50,000. Bill informed Pete of the drop in price, but Pete maintained that it was still far outside of KHCB's financial possibilities. More time elapsed, and the price dropped again to \$5,000; this time Bill approached Pete strongly urging him to at least drive out and take a look at the generator.

A few days later Bill, Pete, Del and Chuck Underwood (who was KHCB's engineer at the time) drove to Willis together and all agreed that it was an exceptional offer. The generator was in pristine shape. It was housed in a building and included an external radiator and an external fuel tank.

After talking with the executive director of the MUD, Pete stepped out on faith and told him that KHCB would buy it. Pete advised him that it would take a few days to get the money, knowing full well that he had no idea where the money would come from. When they returned to the studios that afternoon, the secretary

announced to Pete, "You'll never guess what came in the mail today." It was a check for \$5,000 with a note that said, "For a special need."

Pete looked at Bill and both men smiled at God's kindness to the station. The Lord honored faith and allowed the station to purchase this generator without having to borrow money or even share the need with KHCB's listeners. Pete later had lunch with the couple who gave this gift, and they rejoiced together at how God had used their contribution in such a timely fashion to meet an immediate need. They had felt the Lord prompting them to make this offering and their obedience brought honor and glory to His name.

Chapter 13

New Studio Building

By 1975, the Trustees realized that a larger facility was necessary with more office and production space to accommodate a larger staff and to allow local production of programs. Since there was no more space at the Alameda site, they began to look around Houston for a property that would be suitable to construct a new facility.

One of KHCB's Trustees, Miss Winifred Bleeker, owned some property on South Boulevard which she made available to KHCB for this purpose. She had offered the property in 1973, but the Trustees felt that the timing was not right. Despite repeated offers from others to buy the property, Miss Bleeker was persistent in saving the property for KHCB. Her foresight and patience for the right timing gave the station the benefit of having a studio constructed on a prime site near downtown Houston.

The Trustees estimated that the construction would cost \$400,000, so a building fund was established with that goal in mind. Many kind and generous friends of KHCB began sending gifts for the building fund above and beyond the monthly budget needs.

On the morning of July 15, 1977, KHCB held a ground-breaking ceremony dedicating the property to the Lord and asking the Lord's blessing on the future home of KHCB. The staff, Trustees, and many friends of the station came to witness this exciting moment. A small platform and about 50 folding chairs were set on the lawn near some shade trees. After some introductory words, Harvey Neal, then pastor of Gulf Way Baptist Church, led the group in a prayer of dedication.

A rather comical scene took place when Trustee Del Underwood introduced Miss Bleeker. At length, he hailed Miss Bleeker's generosity and years of service to KHCB. He then asked Miss Bleeker to come forward and say a few words. Being an elderly woman, she took several minutes to reach the makeshift platform. In the meantime, everyone waited in hushed anticipation of what she would say. When she finally reached the microphone, Miss Bleeker shocked everyone with her one sentence speech: "I have nothing to say." Leaving everyone silently chuckling, she then left the stage, turned the first spade of earth, and returned to her seat. When Miss Bleeker passed away in February of 1993, the Trustees named the KHCB studios "The Bleeker Building" in honor of this fine woman who did so much for Christian Radio.

The radio station chose to be its own contractor and during the ensuing two and one-half years Del Underwood volunteered countless hours of his time overseeing the construction. Initially, the Trustees decided that everything would be paid for in cash so that no money would have to be borrowed. However, a listener offered to lend the station construction money at a favorable interest rate to enable the building to proceed in a timely fashion.

God touched the hearts of many very kind listeners to donate services to the station during this time. The firm Wylie Vale and Associates provided all the architectural services for the new building. Cecil Dunlap was the special representative on the job and Mr. Vale provided all the services at no cost. Using the floor plan designed by KHCB, Mr. Vale's firm furnished the engineering and exterior design.

The structural and mechanical engineers also volunteered their services at a moderate cost. The structural engineer made sure all the walls were sound and could withstand strong winds and other natural disasters. The mechanical engineer laid out all of the electrical wiring and laid out the air conditioning system. All of the plants for the exterior of the building were a gift from another kind listener, Mrs. Hans Peterson, who owned a local nursery. A sign on the front of the building was donated by Anibal Martin.

On October 7, 1979, hundreds of listeners joined KHCB at the dedication ceremony in the new studios. Dr. Theodore Epp, founder of the Back to the Bible Broadcast, gave a message entitled "Where to Now?"

Video monitors were placed all around the studios and outside in the parking lot to accommodate the overflow crowd. It is estimated that over 1000 believers from all over Houston attended this special ceremony.

The station was still \$60,000 short of the building fund goal at the time of the dedication, but over the next few months, listeners continued to contribute to the fund, and by April 1980 KHCB was once again completely debt free. A question many people ask is whether Christian Radio is a cost effective means of propagating the Gospel. Missionary Radio reaches the Houston metropolitan area (over four million people) for less than \$100 per hour, or less than two dollars per minute. This does not count the impact of KHCB via translator, satellite, or the Internet (see chapters 23-25).

Chapter 14

“Is this Keeping Him Close By?”

Shortly after KHCB settled into it's new facility, an appraiser visited the offices to measure the property. Six weeks later a letter arrived from the Appraisal District notifying that the tax exemption for KHCB had been canceled and advising that the ministry would have to pay almost \$100,000 in back taxes. This seemed like a hopeless situation because KHCB had no contacts in the Appraisal District, however, once again the Lord brought along the right person to rescue the ministry from this situation.

Ralph Neighbor, one of KHCB's programmers, had a cell group that met and discussed the problem. One member of the group was a woman who worked in property tax services. She offered to work on the problem and recommended a good tax attorney. They gathered all the papers and made an appointment to meet personally with the appraisal board. Pete, Bruce, the lawyer and the woman came before the board and after looking over the documents, one of the members of the board asked, "Is this Keeping Him Close By?" Pete joyfully replied, "Yes it is." The board member announced to the other members of the board, "They don't ask for anything." The board promptly dismissed all the charges and once again the Lord received the glory for putting His man on that board.

Chapter 15

The Tall Tower

The early eighties saw a boom in Houston's economy and skyscrapers began to multiply in the downtown area. Although this growth benefited the city, KHCB was adversely affected because these tall buildings blocked the signal for those listening in the north and northeast sectors of the city. The Lord used an FCC ruling to nudge KHCB to address this problem.

The FCC passed a ruling called RM 80-90 which mandated that by 1986, all FM stations with an antenna height at or below 1,000 feet would be frozen at that height with no possibility of ever increasing. KHCB's antenna was at 370 feet. This meant that if KHCB did not raise the antenna above 1000 feet, it would be permanently frozen at 370 feet, severely crippling the listening range of the station.

In response to this ruling, the Trustees established a "Tall Tower Fund" to be used to raise the antenna and improve the transmitter site. Plans were made to purchase a new, more efficient antenna and install it above the minimum requirement.

A second part of the improvement involved the construction of a suitable transmitter building to house electronic equipment and provide power for the antenna. The transmitter had previously been housed in a temporary building for most of its 20 years. As in the past, Del Underwood graciously volunteered to be the coordinator for the construction of the new transmitter building, and Bill Cordell volunteered his services as the consultant for the project.

An Exciting Option Turns Sour

At this time, nine FM stations had joined forces in what was called the Senior Road Tower Project. Bill Cordell was named manager of this project in which a 2,049-foot tower would be built for and shared by these

nine stations. Each station was to furnish eleven percent of the cost. Using Bill as a go-between, KHCB asked to be included in the project.

Each station would be required to pay between \$800,000 and one million dollars to be a partner in the project. Although this cost was extremely high, the Trustees felt this was a worthwhile investment and agreed to the sum. However, the Lord went before KHCB and closed the door to what would have been an exorbitant expense. The other stations involved on the project decided that they did not want KHCB included. This was a big disappointment, but there was nothing to do but look elsewhere.

Subsequently Bill Cordell found that KPRC-TV was planning to build its own tower and was willing to lease space to other radio and television stations. Bill negotiated a lease of tower space on the Channel 2 tower in early 1985. In the course of two years KHCB was able to raise \$400,000 to pay for the new equipment and \$20,000 to be put down as a non-refundable deposit to Channel 2. A stipulation KPRC made was that KHCB put up a multi-station antenna that others could use as well. The final capital cost of the project was \$500,000, which was half of what the initial cost would have been if KHCB had been included on the Senior Road Tower. The Tall Tower site went into operation on September 13, 1985, effectively increasing its coverage area four-fold. KHCB-FM now radiates its signal from an antenna height of 1613 feet, allowing communities within an 80-mile radius of Houston to hear non-commercial Christian Radio by KHCB.

Emergency Transmitter

Since all electronic equipment can develop serious technical problems without warning, the station's Trustees felt that the development of system standby equipment would be most beneficial to the consistent outreach of the Word of God by Missionary Radio.

Both KHCB-FM at the tall tower site and later KHCB-AM in Galveston have full standby transmitting facilities ready at a moment's notice, to start operating if the main transmitters fail.

An additional backup system for KHCB-FM is a separately located but reduced power (10,000 watt) emergency transmitting site located in the Greenway Plaza area. This site enabled 105.7 FM to stay on the air in the Fall of 1996 during a transmission line failure at the tall tower site which would have otherwise kept Christian Radio off the air for several days. Further use of the emergency site was made necessary by major antenna repairs at the tall tower site during the Winter of 1996-97. Equipment for the backup systems is provided by refurbished transmitters used formerly by KHCB as its main transmitters from 1964 through 1985.

The Lord is to be praised for His provision of equipment and engineering expertise which has allowed Missionary Radio, KHCB, to provide almost uninterrupted service over the years.

Chapter 15

Volunteers

Volunteers have always been the lifeblood of KHCB's ministry. Hundreds of dedicated men and women have served in one capacity or another. The same criteria were used for the selection of volunteers as that for the staff of Missionary Radio. Experience was not necessary. Rather, the staff has always looked for men and women who love the ministry and are not looking for personal gain. Some of the tasks relegated to volunteers include: receptionist, stuffing and mailing the program schedule each month, running the control board at night and on weekends, producing local programs, and many other important jobs. KHCB is the only Christian radio station in Houston that entrusts a large portion of the work to volunteers. This emphasis makes KHCB unique.

Some have helped the station for a relatively short time while others like Jim Gilliam and Frank Warren have served on a weekly basis for over twenty years. Shortly after KHCB went on the air, Jim Moehle became a volunteer. In addition to being a weekend board operator, Jim regularly climbed KHCB's tower whenever repairs or adjustments had to be made. Since FM technology went through a period of instability, there were

many upgrades requiring changes to be made in the tower. Jim's experience as a tower climber saved the station from having to pay a high price for these services.

Bill Neyland is another of KHCB's longtime volunteers. Bill found out about the station in 1962 through an article in the paper which mentioned a new FM station and gave a list of the programs. He was attending Rice University at the time, and his roommate told him KHCB was a Christian station.

Bill began listening regularly and a few months later had occasion to visit the studio building. In May of 1963 after graduating from Rice, Bill was hired by the Texas Highway Department and the same month began as a volunteer for KHCB. Shortly afterward, Bill took over the most unattractive shift of the week, Sunday morning from 6 a.m. to 12 Noon. Pete Steigerwald says of Bill, "Very few people are willing to give up their Sunday 50 weeks out of the year to serve the Lord in a volunteer capacity." Bill has done this not just for one year, but for 33 years, and that is a notable record worthy of praise. In 1993, Mr. Neyland retired from the highway department but continues to volunteer faithfully at KHCB.

In 1978 the staff was again enlarged as Bruce Munsterman, a communications graduate of University of Houston, was hired to handle announcing, production and news editing duties at KHCB. Bruce grew up in the suburbs of Chicago and accepted the Lord as his personal Savior at a very young age at a Vacation Bible School. He had a fascination for media, both T.V. and radio, from his youth. His father owned a rental store, and Bruce used to take home the unrented tape recorders. He spent hours recording theme songs from favorite T.V. shows, adding his voice over the music as the announcer. He also had a clock radio and became an avid radio listener. He always had the radio on while studying in his bedroom and flipped back and forth from station to station comparing the styles and formats.

Bruce used his growing talents in his local church creating skits and dramas for the youth group. Often the youth performed for the Chicago Rescue Mission. After graduation, he enrolled at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago where he experienced radio production doing sound effects for "Stories of Great Christians," "Bookshelf" and other dramas. After studying three years at Moody and receiving his diploma, Bruce moved to Houston to finish his undergraduate degree in Radio/Television at the University of Houston. He soon found out about KHCB and approached Pete seeking employment for a "poor college student." Pete told Bruce that the only position available was that of a volunteer. Bruce decided to trust the Lord to meet his needs and began volunteering for the station one day a week.

During his last semester at U of H, Bruce worked as an intern in the news department for a local radio station owned by ABC. In the meantime, he continued volunteering at KHCB. Bruce sent his resume to several radio stations around the country. Bruce again approached Pete about a job at KHCB, and although the finances were tight, Pete saw great potential in Bruce and decided to offer Bruce a job and trust the Lord to provide. After weighing several offers (not all of them in radio), Bruce accepted KHCB's offer, and joined the staff in May of 1978.

A few years later, Bruce became the news and music director. As more staff were hired and his responsibilities increased, Bruce was again promoted to assistant manager in 1985. He walked alongside Pete learning the ins and outs of Christian Radio. When Pete shed his mantle as general manager to become the executive director in September of 1991, the Board promoted him to take over the reigns of leadership at the station.

Much the same as Bruce, Bonnie BeMent came to KHCB as a student intern in 1984. A graduate of Moody Bible Institute, Bonnie now serves as KHCB's news and music director.

Two others who began as volunteers and later joined the staff were Dan Tucker and Rex Sanders. Dan began volunteering when he was 15 years old. Being a victim of polio, Dan was confined to a wheelchair but that didn't deter him in the least. Wheelchair ramps were installed for him and for the next twenty years, Dan was a familiar voice to the KHCB listening audience.

Rex Sanders began listening to KHCB on his transistor radio while in the army, stationed at Fort Hood, Texas. One long weekend, Rex decided to visit KHCB and, undaunted by the lack of a car, he took a bus to downtown Houston and walked eight miles to the studio building. After completing his military service and college education, Rex joined the staff in February, 1969. He has served on staff for over 25 years. His extensive knowledge of Scripture has been a valuable resource to many listeners.

Chapter 16

Changed Lives

Someone once said that serving the Lord is 10% ability and 90% availability. The staff and Trustees of KHCB, and particularly Pete, have always had an open-door policy in which people are welcome to call or come by for whatever reason, whether they are struggling with a problem or just need to pray with someone. This spirit of availability has given the staff of Christian Radio the privilege of being used of the Lord in the lives of many people.

Truck Driver

One day, a truck driver came into KHCB's studios very distraught because he had just been through a divorce. Pete's acute sensitivity to this man's need drew him to help the truck driver. The two men talked and prayed for a long time. At the end of their conversation, the truck driver had calmed down and seemed to be at peace with his situation. He sincerely thanked Pete and left.

More than 10 years later, he returned to visit the station. After explaining who he was, he thanked Pete for the encouragement he had given him ten years earlier. He also explained that the morning he stopped and asked for prayer, he was on his way to commit suicide. The Lord had led him to stop at KHCB first and, because of Pete's availability, a man's life was spared.

Handicapped Young Man

A silver-plated fresco given to KHCB is a testimony to the impact of Missionary Radio on the life of one young man who suffered from severe physical and mental handicaps. For a period of years this young man was a familiar voice to the staff of the station. Because of a speech impediment it was very difficult to understand him, but the staff patiently talked to him and joyfully complied, playing the songs he requested.

One sad morning his parents called and said he had committed suicide. He left a note saying he was a Christian, but that he was tired of living in his harsh physical condition and wanted to go Home. His parents sent a silver-plated fresco to go over KHCB's phone handset in gratitude for the countless times the staff patiently listened and talked to their son. They said that KHCB had been a bright spot in their son's life.

Only the Lord has record of all those who have come to know Him through the teaching presented on KHCB, but a few of these have written the station to tell of their newfound faith.

Thank you for ministering to me for the last year. It was about this time a year ago the Lord gave me a new spirit from above. Charles Stanley explained the meaning of the cross to me on your radio station one morning while driving to work and that was when His love first pierced through me. I give thanks and praise to the Lord for my new life in Christ and the work KHCB is doing for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Another listener realized her need for a Savior through the program during a message by Dr. Anthony Evans:

I would like to thank you for the "Urban Alternative." It was five years ago while flipping through radio stations that I landed on Tony Evans' sermon and realized my need for Jesus in my life.

Although the majority of KHCB's audience is Christian, many, such as the man in the following letter, are listening to KHCB in order to find out about the Christian life.

I am a lost sheep searching for his Shepherd (the Lord God, His Son Jesus, and the Holy Ghost). I am using your radio station as a beacon to help in my search for my Shepherd.

And:

I had to write you and tell you how much I appreciate the work that you are doing. I am forty-four years old. I became born again just a few months ago, and I wanted to say that your station played no small part in my conversion. It seemed that no matter what time of day or night I listened there was always a message for me.

Some have been listening to the station almost since the first day.

You will never know how much I enjoy listening to your radio station. I found KHCB when I was expecting my son in 1962. He is now 32 years old. I was born again at a Billy Graham Revival in 1952. Your programs thru the years have really helped me to grow in the Lord Jesus Christ.

And:

I again wish to thank you and tell you my appreciation for all the years I have been able to hear God's Word and music from your station. I have been listening since early 1962 when the station was on for just a few hours a day. Since I've been a widow since December 16, 1961, I just can't tell you how much your broadcasting has meant to me.

Chapter 17

Trustees

When Christian Radio became a non-profit, non-stock corporation in February of 1966, a Board of Trustees was created in order to fulfill the Texas requirements of governing the ministry. The original members of the Board came from those who had donated their stock to the newly founded tax-exempt entity. The Board's responsibilities were to establish policy and the doctrinal stand of the ministry as well as to set goals, to give direction, and to assist management in carrying out the Trustees' decisions. They met regularly deciding on matters such as the type of programming to be aired and other pertinent issues necessary for the ongoing mission.

All of the Trustees have played important roles in the life of KHCB. Paul King, one of the original Trustees, cared deeply for people, and he was particularly concerned about those who worked at KHCB. He didn't buy the philosophy that missionaries must be poor.

The first time the station had a financial surplus at the end of the year was in 1969 and ideas abounded as to what to do with the money. Some wanted to spend it on improvements to the station. Paul argued strongly for the money to be given to the employees. "Whatever money we don't need, we should give to our people."

Paul used to cherish opportunities to visit the station and take Pete out to lunch. He was always helping people in one way or another, but his help was always private. He never flaunted his giving. On the contrary, his life exemplified Christ's command "Do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing." On one occasion, his maid was in danger of losing her home, and without telling his wife, he paid her rent. He delighted in helping people who he knew.

Del Underwood served as the first chairman of the Board, a position which he held until 1987. He not only served in an advisory capacity as a Trustee, but often helped in the day to day operation. The Lord used Del in many ways, not only to bring Christian Radio to Houston but to help direct and oversee the ministry for 25 years. His selfless giving of time and resources has been an example to all those who have come after him.

Some of the other Trustees who have served or are serving are: Ross Foltz, Bill Strube, Jack Frey, Dan Dominguez, Paul Pressler, Mike Wells, Alex Adams, Bruce Munsterman, as well as the late Dr. Ardis White, Miss Winifred Bleeker, and Sydney Green.

Chapter 18

AM Station Acquired

A few years after KHCB went on the air in 1962, the Lord brought Ramon Boras to the station to help as a weekly volunteer. Born in Argentina, Ramon came to the United States as a young man and, although he spoke English well, his mother tongue was Spanish, and he felt a burden to reach the growing Hispanic community in Houston with the Gospel. Over a period of months, Ramon prayed and talked with Pete about the possibility of setting aside one hour on KHCB for programming in Spanish. Pete also prayed and brought the idea before the Board of Trustees.

The Trustees were open to this missionary effort aimed at Hispanics, but were fearful that the interruption in programming with one hour of Spanish would alienate many English-speaking listeners. After praying and talking more, the Trustees decided to set aside 11:30 p.m. to 12:30 a.m. each weeknight for Spanish programming. This was agreeable to both Ramon and the Trustees since that hour is not a prime listening time for the English audience. Hispanics traditionally worked late-night jobs and could listen to KHCB while working. Ramon took on the responsibility of overseeing the Spanish programming, a job which he faithfully executed for more than 25 years. Through the years, this program gained a very strong following among Spanish speaking believers and only the Lord knows how many have come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ through these late-night Spanish broadcasts.

In the late 1980s the Trustees made a demographic study of the Houston area which revealed that the three largest foreign language groups in Houston were Spanish, Chinese and Vietnamese. Knowing that the station could not increase the hours of programming in Spanish, they began praying about the purchase of an AM station that could be dedicated exclusively to foreign language broadcasting. They prayed regularly and searched diligently for more than five years. They made offers on a few stations but the Lord closed the door until 1990 when the Board came across KTUS, AM 1400 in Galveston.

The owner of KTUS, Tom Wisheart, was well-known and well respected in Galveston, and the station was one of the most popular on the Island. AM 1400 went on the air in 1922 and has the honor of being one of the oldest radio stations in the entire United States.

Mr. Wisheart retired in 1986 and sold the station to Breckenridge Co. based in Waco. Unfortunately, station revenues declined and within three years, Breckenridge Co. was facing bankruptcy. Mr. Wisheart had to repossess the station but failing health prohibited him from working to rebuild it to its former days of glory. He was losing as much as \$10,000 each month so he decided to shut the station down. The Trustees of KHCB began negotiations with KTUS in 1989, and finalized the sale in December of 1990 for \$150,000.

Repairs

Several preparations had to be made before KHCB-Galveston would be ready to go on the air. The land on which the transmitter and antenna were located had been neglected for years and had to be cleared of trees and underbrush just to make the station operational. The transmitter needed fine-tuning and several parts had to be repaired or replaced.

A second phase of the preparations involved transporting all of the broadcast equipment from the studio in Texas City to the KHCB studios in Houston. Engineer Dan Wales and other KHCB staff set up the equipment in a small booth and wired all of the equipment into the console from which the programs would be broadcast. A short time later, permission was received from the FCC allowing the AM station to share the facilities and personnel at KHCB's Houston studio and operate more efficiently.

The final task was to install the equipment that would convey the signal from the studios in Houston to the tower and transmitter in Galveston where it would then be rebroadcast to Galveston and surrounding cities with 1000 watts of power.

During these months of preparation, some Hispanic Christians headed by Albert Martin and Raymond Boras took on the task of pre-recording dozens of reels of Bible programs interspersed with music. Many of these had never been involved in a radio ministry, but with the experience they acquired recording these reels, they were later able to serve as the first volunteer board operators.

Some of the Bible programs came from English programmers on KHCB-FM who also made their programs available to stations in Spanish. Others came from ministries in Latin America and the United States. In order to ensure that AM 1400 maintained a local appeal, Albert and Raymond contacted local pastors about having short devotionals or Bible studies in Spanish. By the time all the technical arrangements had been taken care of, the Spanish Christians were ready to bring the Good News of Jesus Christ to the Hispanic community via Christian Radio.

Chapter 19

Hispanics Launch Friendship Radio

On February 4, 1991, KHCB-Galveston, AM 1400 went on the air. The first week of programming was in English, broadcasting simultaneously with KHCB-FM. Then on February 11, at 7:00 a.m., the station began programming in Spanish under the slogan "Radio Amistad" or Friendship Radio. A large group of Christians were at the station to witness this historic event and celebrate the arrival of Christian Radio in Spanish. Letters began trickling in during the coming months from people who had discovered the station and were being blessed by it. A listener from Baytown wrote:

I feel so happy because since February of 1991 when I tuned to this blessed station that God put in my hands, I am a new woman. My house is full of blessings even though I have a sick husband and thanks to the Lord, I am not lacking anything.

The pre-recorded programs were used during the first two months that Friendship Radio was on the air. Following the precedent set by KHCB-FM, Radio Amistad is run almost entirely by volunteers. Dolly Martin, who had served as a volunteer for KHCB as a teenager, was hired one month later as the first full-time staff member for KHCB-Galveston.

Music

Radio Amistad's format includes a great deal of music because the Hispanic is a lover of music. Both Christians and non-Christians enjoy hearing music, so the Spanish programming consists of a segment of music followed by a short Bible study or devotional. The goal is to attract the non-Christian Hispanic through the music and news, and interest them in learning more about the Lord and His Word. Christian music in Spanish was much harder to obtain than music recorded in English. For the first few weeks, much of the music was instrumental and the few vocal tapes were acquired from Christian brothers and sisters who donated them to the station from their private collections. Of the music, one listener writes:

I want to thank you for the music you play on the radio. Sometimes I personally feel very discouraged and I begin to listen to this station and there are songs which have helped me feel the strength of the Lord who never leaves us alone although we may think he does.

Since Radio Amistad shares the same studio building with KHCB-FM, the experience and help of the FM staff allowed KHCB-AM to expand at a very rapid pace. Within a few months, as the list of volunteers grew and local pastors were added to the programming, the broadcast day began to lengthen. By the end of the year, Spanish programming could be heard on AM 1400 from 6:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.

The following summer, Radio Amistad decided to experimentally extend the broadcast day to 7:30 p.m. to take advantage of daylight savings time. The radio signal from an AM station has much more interference at night than during daylight hours. Thus, many areas of Houston that receive the signal clearly during the day cannot hear the station at night. By the fall of that year, the Lord provided sufficient volunteers so that Radio Amistad could permanently extend the broadcast to 10:00 p.m.

Kingdom Fruit

A number of listeners have either written or called Friendship Radio sharing how the Lord has touched their hearts and brought them into a personal relationship with Him. One trucker wrote:

I feel very fortunate for having discovered KHCB accidentally 8 or 9 months ago. I was driving an 18 wheeler when at the end of the message the preacher gave an invitation to receive and accept Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord of my life. And right then, while driving, I repeated after the preacher all that he said and I became a part of the family of God.

This man is now a part of a local church and is growing in his relationship with the Lord. His wife and children are also now interested in spiritual things and they attend church as a family.

A single young woman found out about KHCB through a coworker and started listening while doing her work as a house cleaner. Having just arrived from Mexico, she knew almost no English. Her mother and whole family were heavily involved in the occult so all that she was now hearing was totally new to her. She obtained a Bible from her employer and began following along to see if what was being preached was true.

As she listened and read her Bible daily, she began to feel very dirty. She felt that she was the worst sinner in the world. Then one day while listening to a local pastor, she heard him say that no one is too much of a sinner to accept Christ. After praying to receive Christ, she immediately felt a change in her heart and life. She had an insatiable desire to read and learn from God's Word. When she returned to Mexico one year later, she was able to lead several of the members of her family to the Lord.

Estella, a woman from El Salvador received Christ as her Savior while listening to "Vision Para Vivir", the Spanish translation of "Insight for Living" with Chuck Swindoll. Her spiritual journey began when her sister wrote from El Salvador saying that she had become a believer. Her mom, who lives in Houston, was already a believer and listened regularly to Friendship Radio; however, when Estella visited her mother and heard the Christian programs, she became irate because she felt the conviction of the Lord in her life. Soon she found herself praying and asking Him to help her.

The Lord humbled her and soon afterward she prayed to accept Christ while listening to "Radio Amistad." The changes in Estella's life were dramatic. She had been married four years and had been unable to bear children, but shortly after she became a believer, the Lord opened her womb. She now has two children and she and her husband, who trusted Christ a year after she did, worship the Lord together in a local church.

Limited Coverage

KHCB-AM is a blessing for those who live within the coverage area, but those Hispanics who live outside this area are only able to enjoy the one and one-half hours of programming which is still on late at night on 105.7 FM. The Trustees of KHCB have attempted several different avenues to try to increase the outreach of the AM station.

Shortly after KHCB bought AM 1400, the FCC passed a regulation saying that the AM band would be expanded in an effort to reduce interference. Various stations would be selected to move to the new part of the band and would be given the opportunity to increase their power to 10,000 watts. KHCB immediately applied to move to the new position on the AM dial. The staff and Trustees prayed fervently that the Lord would grant the station grace and good favor in the eyes of the FCC commissioners reviewing the applications.

The days and months passed and finally one year later KHCB received word that the station did not qualify to be considered for the new position on the AM dial. This came as a great shock and disappointment. Apparently, the Lord had some other means of expansion in mind. The Trustees went back to the drawing board and continued praying about what the Lord would have them do to expand AM 1400.

New AM Towers

The board prayerfully explored several other opportunities until they decided to build a new transmitter site closer to Houston with two new directional antennas that would allow the signal to reach most of the metro Houston area.

Chapter 20

Chinese Language Programming

Even before transactions had been finalized for the purchase of AM 1400, members of the Houston Chinese Church approached the Trustees with their desire to air some Gospel programs in Chinese. One of Houston's large minority groups are the Chinese, with over 100,000 immigrants from China. Of these, only one percent are believers. The Chinese Christians had been airing programs on a secular station, but the cost was prohibitive so they were seeking other avenues in which to broadcast the gospel to Asians living in Houston. The Trustees asked Ed Cho to coordinate the Chinese programming and allotted time on Saturday and Sunday for this foreign language ministry.

Ed recruited volunteers from two Chinese churches and divided them into teams of workers. The production team is in charge of recording all the programs for each weekend which is broken down into four main programs. In the Pastor's Study program, a local pastor gives a 30 minute sermon followed by 30 minutes of questions and answers. A layperson asks questions about the sermon and how it applies to everyday life. This is essentially for unchurched people who might not be accustomed to hearing sermons.

The music program consists of traditional hymns followed by comments about the author or the circumstances surrounding the writing of the hymn. Another segment features interviews with Christian celebrities in the music and business world. These men and women share their personal faith in God and how their relationship with the Lord has helped them through life's problems.

Family issues are addressed in a family program which includes a panel of Christian men and women who answer Bible questions and questions about the Christian life that have been sent in by listeners.

The audition team listens to all the programs before they are aired in order to ensure that the doctrinal content and quality of the program are acceptable. The broadcast team is a group of men and women who are responsible for putting the programs on the air on the weekends and answering the telephone if anyone calls for information or help. Several others help with tasks such as collecting and cataloging new music.

Since a large Chinese community lives outside the range of AM 1400, cassette tapes of all the Bible programs are offered by mail. One person contacts the Chinese papers each weekend with information about what the topics will be on the programs for that week. Asians check the paper weekly to see what programs will be airing and order copies of those they want to hear. In addition, the Chinese ministry has a catalogue of all the programs that have aired and make these catalogues available to the public. Requests for tapes come from as far as Canada and Russia. A Seaman's Ministry also distributes cassette tapes regularly at the Port of Houston to Asian sailors.

After several months of preparations, Chinese programming began on June 15, 1991. Although each region in China speaks different languages and dialects, Mandarin is the official language spoken by everyone, so programs began airing in Mandarin each Saturday from 8a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. on Sunday.

The Lord blessed their efforts as more people found out about the broadcasts. Other churches also joined the ministry and began offering their services to help with the programming.

In order to reach more of their countrymen with the gospel, two other Chinese languages, Cantonese and Taiwanese, were added to the weekend programming in January of 1994, and the hours were increased to six hours on Saturday and four hours on Sunday. Late at night, one hour of Chinese also began airing on KHCB-FM on the weekend in order to reach the large number of Chinese in Northeast Houston who are outside of AM 1400's range.

The response from the Chinese community has been very positive as they hear the good news about Jesus Christ in their own heart language. Many listeners write as a result of the ads in the Chinese papers and request tapes. One listener wrote from Dallas:

I was a KHCB listener for several years while I resided in Houston. One year ago I moved up to Dallas. The transition has been rough and shaky. I found great comfort in personal session with Ruth Yeh. She helped me to deal with stress and develop coping skills. Recently, I was informed that I could acquire a complete set of developmental stages psychology tapes (by Ruth Yeh). Please send me the complete set at once. I am very thankful that God is working in the Chinese community through KHCB.

The psychologist mentioned in this letter, Ruth Yeh, is one of the Chinese volunteers who is a counselor for HISD, specializing in youth psychology. She has helped many people in the Houston area through the Chinese radio ministry. Another listener writes about the impact of the tape ministry in his life:

I know about KHCB's Chinese program through the local Chinese newspaper. I live in an area that cannot receive your radio message, but through the tape ministry of the KHCB Chinese programs, I am beginning to know the Lord. Now I am a Christian and God has helped me to live a much better and happier life. I am concerned about my relatives in China. Can you send me the following programs so I can help my relatives?

Chapter 21

The Gospel in Vietnamese

Joe Phan had been a volunteer at KHCB-FM for many years. His heart's desire had been to air programs in Vietnamese so that his people could hear the Gospel in their own language. When KHCB-AM station was purchased, the Trustees offered the Vietnamese community an opportunity to participate with programs in their language. Joe Phan became Program Director and enlisted a number of volunteers to help in this task.

The team of Vietnamese volunteers spent several months preparing music and recording programs. On July 15, 1991, Joe's dream was realized as the Vietnamese language programming debuted with a one hour program on Saturday and one hour on Sunday. Since a majority of the Vietnamese are Buddhist, the focus of the programming has been to present the gospel to non-Christians.

Joe has found that short stories and simple messages are very attractive features. Testimonies of how God has changed people's lives through a personal relationship with Christ have also been effective tools for presenting the Good News. Having aroused the listener's curiosity with these short features, the programming concludes each day with a longer sermon that contains more spiritual "meat."

Believers and non-believers have been challenged and encouraged by the Vietnamese language programs. Listeners ask questions and request Christian literature. One in Scarsdale writes:

I enjoy your program so much that I tape it every week so I can listen again during the week, but one day I had a visitor so I could not tape that day. Please send me a copy of your program.

The Lord has blessed the ministry and has brought more churches and individuals to help. In addition, Vietnamese listeners have been challenged by the teaching and some have decided to join local churches. Here is a letter from one such listener:

My Chinese friend gave me a tape of the Voice of the Gospel in Vietnamese on KHCB 1400-AM. I enjoyed the music and the Gospel short stories so much that I shared it with my friend. I am now worshipping in a local Baptist church and involved in church activities. The Lord is really with me!

Still others are using the broadcast as a witnessing tool.

Every weekend about 3:00 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, any rider in my car will listen to the Voice of the Gospel in Vietnamese on KHCB 1400 AM. That is the way I witness to other people about Christ. I also introduced your broadcast to my friends in the Clear Lake area.

Since many Vietnamese are experienced fishermen, those who work on shrimp boats enjoy a clear reception of AM 1400 while working in the Galveston Bay. Shortly after the Vietnamese language programs began, a Vietnamese inmate in the prison wrote to KHCB wanting to know more about the Gospel. Joe Phan visited him and shared God's wonderful plan of salvation through Jesus Christ. The inmate and a friend who was also listening both gave their lives to the Savior. Joe gave him a Vietnamese Bible and visited him several times over the course of the next few months.

Although Vietnam continues to be closed to open preaching of the Word, the Vietnamese programming is reaching many hundreds of people who have never heard of God's love for them. Praise God!

Chapter 22

Translator Takes KHCB-FM to Bryan

For some time, the Board of Trustees had been praying and searching for opportunities to expand KHCB's coverage by acquiring translator stations on the fringes of KHCB's signal. One major hurdle which stood in the way was that KHCB was listed with the FCC as a commercial station. Although KHCB has always operated non-commercially, the original license was for a commercial station. The FCC has very stringent rules governing translator use by commercial stations. The stipulations on non-commercial stations, however, are much more relaxed. In order to facilitate the procedure to acquire translator stations, KHCB began transactions to change the license to non-commercial. In 1992, KHCB received its non-commercial license from the FCC. Christian Radio now began making plans to install translators to expand KHCB's coverage to outlying cities.

A translator is a mini-transmitter that is set up on the fringe of a station's radio signal for the purpose of rebroadcasting that signal. The Trustees sought to place translators in communities without a non-commercial Christian radio station with a format similar to KHCB. College towns were a top priority because Christian Radio has a burden to reach young people with the gospel. The Bryan/College Station metroplex was designated as the first city to receive a translator. These cities have a population of approximately 100,000 with an additional 40,000 students at Texas A&M University.

KHCB began transactions on the translator to Bryan/College Station in 1990 after a listener gave a \$10,000 gift toward the purchase of the translator. An engineering study was done to determine whether a frequency was available in Bryan. The studies showed that FM frequency 100.9 was available and that KHCB's signal would not interfere with other stations in the area. The next step was to secure a location from which the translator and related equipment would rebroadcast KHCB's signal.

The ideal location is a tall tower or tall building which would give maximum coverage of the area. Pete Steigerwald made several trips to Bryan/College Station over a period of six months trying to negotiate a lease. The prices of leasing a space on a tower were higher than KHCB had hoped to pay, so Pete's attention turned to the tall buildings in the area. After several closed doors, Pete found one proprietor who was open to leasing space on the roof where KHCB could set up an antenna and transmitter. Once a lease was signed, KHCB submitted the engineering study and applied to the FCC for permission. The translator station in Bryan would transmit at FM frequency 100.9 broadcasting with a power of 250 watts. This would cover a 10-to-15 mile radius.

Missionary Radio prayed and waited as the FCC processed the application for the translator station. Nine months later, KHCB received notice that the frequency 100.9 FM was approved to rebroadcast Christian Radio in Bryan/College Station. The necessary equipment was purchased and installed at the designated site with the help of engineering consultant Bill Cordell. Several trips had to be made from Houston to Bryan because of complications in the installation, but finally at 4:45 p.m. on June 24, 1994, KHCB's first translator station, K265DH, began broadcasting with 250 watts of power.

Within an hour, KHCB received a call from a listener in Bryan who was listening for the first time to the translator station. Since that time, many have written expressing their appreciation for the translator station which rebroadcasts Christian Radio to Bryan and College Station. One listener writes:

Thank you so eternally for your dedication to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We, as a family of ten, have been listening for six years, but it wasn't until the translator came to Bryan/College Station that we could receive all the programs all the time. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

Another listener describes KHCB as an "old friend."

What a surprise to hear KHCB again! I listened to you for 20 years while living in Houston and 5 years ago we moved to the Bryan/College Station area. It was like leaving an old friend to leave KHCB behind. Thank you to all who had a hand in the translator station. I feel I have a great new gift or maybe an old dear friend has come back.

Chapter 23

Reaching for the Stars

Shortly after KHCB installed the translator in Bryan, the Trustees saw new opportunities for expansion through advances in satellite technology. They began praying and investigating the possibility of expanding KHCB's outreach by rebroadcasting the programming heard on 105.7FM via satellite. This would allow KHCB to establish satellators and satellite stations around the state.

A satellator, like a translator, rebroadcasts a signal to a local community outside the primary coverage area of a station. The difference is that a satellator station receives the signal from a satellite whereas a translator station receives it directly from the station. Broadcasting Missionary Radio via satellite would also allow anyone with a full size dish in the entire United States to receive Christian Radio in their home.

A satellite station is a full-fledged station that has more power than a satellator, and can originate local programming. Each satellator will cost approximately \$20,000 to install, and a satellite station is priced at \$60,000. By setting up a full-fledged station, the ministry can reach many cities from one transmitting point. These satellite stations will be allowed to operate with much more power than a satellator. In addition, a station can reach a 25 mile radius while a satellator covers only 10 miles.

The monthly expenses of between \$1500 and \$3000 will include the cost of satellite time, and the operating costs of each facility. The monthly budget was raised to \$62,000 in order to absorb the added monthly expenses, and a "satellite fund" was established to raise the construction capital for each satellator and satellite station.

In April 1996, negotiations were finalized and the Lord opened the door for KHCB-FM to be heard on satellite across the United States on Satcom C1, Channel 10, at 7.3mhz. Two weeks later, KHCB began appearing in the national satellite guides. Almost immediately, people began calling the station from all over the United States and Canada saying that they had tuned in to KHCB on their satellite dish. One of the first calls was from the retired medical doctor in Montana (see page 11).

Phase One

The Trustees of KHCB mapped out a plan for the satellite expansion of KHCB-FM called Phase One. The goal of Phase One was to reach 12 cities in Texas with KHCB's programming using a combination of satellators and satellite stations.

Chapter 24

To the Ends of the Earth

Through the use of the international computer superhighway called Internet, KHCB is now heard all over the world. In June of 1996, KHCB-FM began sending its programming via telephone lines to the Internet, which has approximately 30 million subscribers. KHCB's Home Page can be accessed by keying in www.khcb.org. In order to hear KHCB via the Internet, one needs only a computer and a sound card.

People living in countries that are closed to traditional methods of evangelism are able to hear the sound Bible teaching presented on KHCB. Many have begun to write KHCB through electronic mail (e-mail) from such places as Brazil, Hong Kong, and New Zealand. One listener from Japan writes:

I just got a letter the other day from my mom telling me all about KHCB on the Internet. I live here in Kyoto, Japan, and haven't been able to get any kind of live Christian programming in the seven years I've been here. Today I listened to "Unshackled" and was really blessed. I grew up on KHCB and have often longed to listen to it again. Thanks for making it available.

Another listener from Korea says:

Just wanted to drop you a line and say thank you for your live Christian music and the Word. I and my family are presently overseas for several years with our Armed Forces in Taegu, Korea. I really miss Christian Radio. Now I can get a little bit of home AND God's Word. Thank you.

Every major university, large businesses, and many government agencies are connected to the Internet. Missionaries working overseas are also able to hear messages and Christian music at any time of the day or night. KHCB appears to be the first non-commercial Christian station to tap this avenue for the Kingdom of God.

Up to 40 people are able to listen to KHCB simultaneously, and it is estimated that up to 8,000 people are able to be reached through this medium each week. The sound is comparable to that of AM radio, but it is hoped that new technology will improve the reception in the future.

Chapter 25

And the Work Goes On

The Lord has favored KHCB immensely and the blessings continue to flow from the Throne of Grace. The founders of KHCB didn't know where the Lord would take the station. They simply prayed and allowed the Lord to show them His plans. Subsequent leaders have followed this precedent and year after year the Lord continues to unfold His perfect plan. Day by day, one step at a time the Lord has led and orchestrated a countless number of miracles in order to accomplish His will. Faithful men and women committed to God's best are all part of the miracle of KHCB and helped to bring about the good works that He had prepared beforehand.

The last chapter of KHCB's history will never be written because the Lord continues to show the Board new avenues of expansion. Please pray for the Trustees and for KHCB that the Lord would continually guide and give wisdom to lead the station according to His will. Christian Radio looks to the Lord for direction and guidance and encourages listeners to do the same, "**For it is God who works** in you to will and to act according to His good purpose." (Philippians 2:13)