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ow things have changed during the last fifty-five years of sharing Jesus with Australians through electronic media! The first 'Lutheran Hour' program was broadcast on Australian radio on 2 September, 1945. In those days, both men and women wore hats. 'Lutheran Hour' programs were recorded live with huge studios, choirs and music. They were extremely well-presented programs that rapidly caught the attention of listeners around Australia.

Dr Walter A Maier was the first regular speaker on 'The Lutheran Hour'. His knowledge of the Old Testament brought Bible stories to life. He became well known as both prophet and evangelist. The interesting thing is that, although Dr Maier was never a pastor of a congregation, through his broadcasts he preached to a congregation of millions of people. At one stage, 1236 stations broadcast his sermons. He had the largest parish of all time.

His voice and messages stirred the hearts and minds of

people of all walks of life and of all denominations. By the time of Dr Maier's death in January 1950, 'The Lutheran Hour' was the biggest non-government broadcast in the world.

The next speaker, Dr Oswald Hoffmann, was no less impressive. His unique contribution made the program even better. As president of the worldwide United Bible Societies, he promoted the gospel whenever the opportunity arose. He visited Australia a number of times, representing 'The Lutheran Hour' and the

United Bible Societies.

When Pastor Lance Steicke became director of the Australian 'Lutheran Hour' office, he began to 'Australianise' programs. American speakers were replaced with a panel of Australians. Several production teams generated Australian programs.

Australian production continues today with a panel of presenters on 'Face to Face' and 'On the Spot'. Hosted by Pastor Richard Mau, 'Face to Face' is broadcast on over 200 radio stations. Thirty second and



and sixty-second spots are broadcast on over 200 stations.

Blessings flow from the word on the radio

If ever there was evidence of the effectiveness of the word of God delivered through the modern media, we at Lutheran Media Ministry (LMM) are truly a witness to it. The phones ring frequently. Callers request booklets offered on our regular 'Face to Face' programs. We also receive lots of letters, e-mails and personal calls sharing the enthusiasm, appreciation and encouragement for the continuation of our work and telling us of blessings received from it. This has been the case ever since the first broadcast of 'The Lutheran Hour' in Australia in 1945.

Listeners respond – 1945

The 19 September, 1945 issue of *The Australian Lutheran* reported: 'With gratitude to God, our radio secretary, Pastor C E Zweck reports that in the first week, one-hundred-and-six letters of appreciation came to the Lutheran Hour Office, 70 Pirie Street, Adelaide, SA. The second week's total was one-hundred-and-fifteen. They came from every state of Australia including Tasmania. Lutherans and non-Lutherans wrote their thanks and sincere wishes for God's blessing on this unique radio ministry.'

A non-Lutheran missionary in Sydney wrote: 'Thank you for your broadcasts throughout Australia and the world. May God bless and use you.... Have told my people and urged others



Presenters of 'Face to Face' (c 1985). Left to right: Pastor Richard Mau, Lionel Otto, the late Robert Winderlich, Lance Steicke, Geoff Burger, Trevor Reu, Ed Koch and Martin Schirmer.

to tune in...'

A listener from Launceston wrote: 'We listened to your broadcast yesterday and were thrilled with the glorious message. The world is in sore need of such a message.'

Another letter came from a patient in the West Australia Military Hospital: 'I listened in at this hospital to your broadcast. It was splendid. The word is the only answer...'

Listeners respond – 2000

A listener called and requested the book, 'Take Heart in Your Grief'. Once she received it, she rang to thank us. The book arrived on the first anniversary of her fiancée's death. It was a great comfort to her, as she was still asking the question 'why?' She talked at length about her faith and the difficulties she had been through in the previous twelve months. She was thankful to God and to us for our positive messages and the help they provided to so many. She still listens every Sunday on her way home from worship services.

A letter received recently said: 'I am writing to congratulate you on an excellent program. Many years ago when I was a teenager, I frequently listened to your program. I recently came across it again as I was listening to the local Christian station in Adelaide.....Thank You for such an inspiring program because sometimes the road we travel isn't as smooth as we assume it to be. Thank you, and may God bless you all in everything you do.'

A radio presenter who uses our programs commented: 'I think your program is tops – the very best – in approach, in content and in selection of music, and also the presenter himself. The "spots" have the high acclaim of everyone. God's blessings to you for the continuation of your production of life-related gospel sessions for the people of our land, especially in this materialistic area.'

It is therefore true to say that God *is* as relevant today as in 1945. In this technological age, people are more than ever hungry for spiritual guidance and

A Financial Miracle

Committed, generous financial support has played a vital role in 'bringing Christ to the nations'. The Lutheran Laymen's League, based in USA, guaranteed financial support to pay for broadcasts in Australia in 1945. In the first two weeks, 45 pounds was received from listeners. Since then, listeners and supporters of the radio ministry have given donations, sponsorship gifts and bequests to keep God's good news on air.

Today a growing number of people who believe that this is a vital outreach mission of the Lutheran Church are putting their money where their mouths are. Last year they gave over \$200,000. Pray that God will make his people even more generous in the future, so that we can use the opportunities that he is giving us to preach the good news to everyone.

Please consider giving a donation or arrange for a bequest today. Email us for assistance at luthmedia@lca.org.au or call us for assistance on FREECALL 1800 353 350.

Giving can bring joy if you have the right spirit. It all depends on whether you think of it as: 'What can I spare?', or as 'What can I share?'

God will supply you with all the seed you need and will make it grow and produce a rich harvest from your generosity. 2 Corinthians 9:10

enlightenment. Through our programs, we are able to provide for this hunger. Not only are the listeners and viewers blessed by it, but everyone at Lutheran Media Ministry continues to be blessed and humbled to see God's word at work.

Come on Board!

Since 1945, Lutherans in Australia have enthusiastically shared Jesus through various forms of the electronic media. Today Lutheran Media Ministry continues to do everything it can, with its



Spreading the word across Australia



limited resources, to share the Gospel with people who have not heard it before. It also reaches many who know Jesus and who need help in their faith walk.

While our main focus is on broadcasting the good news, we also assist congregations to link up with people who respond to our programs through referrals. In this way, those who are interested in being helped are introduced to Lutherans in their community. In a number of cases a relationship of trust is developed and people have the opportunity to grow in faith through the church.

At the recent general synod, Australian Lutherans recognized that Lutheran Media Ministry is an important

mission arm of the church and encouraged congregations to:

- Use the resources and expertise of LMM to build bridges into the community
- Continue supporting LMM through prayer, donations, bequests and involvement on a local level
- Recognize the importance of developing a Lutheran web presence and make use of it.

The board and staff of Lutheran Media Ministry invite you to help keep media mission going strongly. Come on board, as we plan mission programs for the years ahead.

Pastor Richard Mau is the director of Lutheran Media Ministry