

---

# Soul-Searching at the Adventist Media Center: A Multimillion Dollar Debate

By Bonnie Dwyer

---

Financial difficulties at the Voice of Prophecy dictate the firing of the King's Heralds Quartet. Programming and financial woes at Faith for Today elicit at least temporary calls for its closing. A costly idle studio nearly bankrupts Adventist Media Productions. News from the Adventist Media Center, encompassing these and other programs, has been dramatic. Over the last two years, total operating losses from the Adventist Media Center has come to \$5 million; losses in 1981 rose over those in 1980, to \$2,591,330.

The Media Center—established in 1971 when the General Conference brought into one organization institutions that for decades had been separate and independent—is going through more than an economic crisis. As the creative talents like H.M.S. Richards and William A. Fagal exercise less direction over the programs which their vision created, General Conference commissions and committees are increasingly defining the content and direction of Adventist mission in the media.

The special General Conference Media Center Study Commission, created this spring under the chairmanship of William Murrell, under-treasurer of the General Conference, reports first to the General Conference officers and then to the Media Center Board. One of its first requirements was that each program at the Media Center undergo a fundamental self-examination of its goals and purposes. The painful transition some of the best-known Adventist institutions in the United States find themselves undergoing raises such basic issues as the autonomy of Adventist institutions, centralization of denominational authority, and definitions of Adventist mission.

Some within the previously independent components think the key to the present financial troubles can be traced back a decade—to the creation of the Media Center. While the Voice of Prophecy, Faith for Today, It Is Written, and Breath of Life raise funds donated to their programs, none of these programs controls the rate of expenditures incurred by central administration, nor by the film production studio that stands idle much of the time. Decisions about not only expenditures, but programming, that were previously made by each component, are increasingly dependent on approval of the General Conference in Washington. The problem is that new

---

Bonnie Dwyer, news editor of *SPECTRUM*, graduated from Loma Linda University and is completing a graduate degree in journalism from California State University at Fullerton.

studios, overarching administrative structures, and General Conference committees do not in themselves capture loyal listeners or generous viewers. Meanwhile, the bills mount.

And do they mount. In 1981, according to the unaudited financial statement of the Adventist Media Center, operating expenses for the center and all its components came to \$19.25 million. Program components' costs for public relations and development that maintain donations—rose higher than the \$2.25 million spent by the components on program production.

Most income for the Media Center comes from donations, solicited by the various programs. But appropriations have had to make up for the recent large deficits. The General Conference and other entities gave the Media Center about \$2.5 million in 1981, a 35-percent increase over 1980, and 13 percent of the media center's total income.

## Voice of Prophecy

A story, accompanied by a smiling photograph in the June 14, 1982, *Pacific Union Recorder*, tried to put the best face on the firing of the quartet. It announced: "King's Heralds Begin Independent Ministry". Baritone Jack Veazey told the *Recorder*, on behalf of the Heralds Ministries, as the quartet now calls itself, that "the primary interest of our group is evangelism. We've wanted for years to experiment with a concert ministry which would, through word and song, bring people to faith in Jesus Christ. We've never explored our full potential in this area, but because of the recession, a way has unexpectedly opened up for us to implement new ways of bringing people to the cross."

The Voice of Prophecy shocked the Adventist community when it announced that the King's Heralds quartet and its accompanist would be dropped January 1982. At that time, the organization seemed unable to

balance its budget. It took a special committee, formed by the Media Center Board, to solve the crisis, when the Voice of Prophecy's 1981 deficit amounted to about \$245,000. Record breaking income in December had prevented it from being twice that much.

H.M.S. Richards, Jr., director of the Voice of Prophecy radio program, said he hoped the committee would come up with some money to bail the organization out, but he didn't really expect that to happen. Instead, the committee eliminated 34 salaries—over one quarter of the staff. Other expenses had been drastically reduced in-house.

According to Treasurer Lance Liebelt, some of the cuts eliminated entire departments: music, evangelistic association, and the record company. The Bible School budget was sliced by \$100,000. Of the dozens of courses previously produced at no charge, only three courses will now be offered free. The development office terminated their contract with a professional consultant which was costing \$3,000 a month. Another decision cut the number of direct-mail appeals during the year from 20 to 12. Liebelt acknowledges this change may be costly, because traditional direct mail philosophy maintains that a lot of mail makes a lot of money. But so far, the Voice of Prophecy has not suffered from this cutback. Donations in February, the month following the announcement of budgetary problems, totaled \$343,000—a 63-percent increase over 1981's February figure of \$201,000. "We're all paring expenses every way we can," Liebelt says. "March ended very well—we managed to make a \$6,000 profit."

The total 1982 Voice of Prophecy budget now stands at \$7.4 million, which is \$450,000 less than what was spent in 1981, but is still the largest of any of the center's components.

Liebelt wants to use any extra money on radio time. Currently, the Voice of Prophecy's budget splits into thirds: one-third pays for station time, one-third for salaries,

and one-third for the actual program production and ancillary departments such as the Bible School. With the cost of station time up 25-35 percent this year, reaching Liebelt's goal of one-half of the budget for station time will require more record-breaking months.

Fundraising also affects programming. "To generate income, you talk to people who agree with you," says John Robertson, the Voice of Prophecy researcher and producer. "Programming to nonreligious groups requires having funds from an outside source. We're not kidding ourselves about who listens to us. When we consider going to a new city now, we go in and say, 'What's the best Christian station?'—and put the program on that." He does not see the situation changing, either, even though the daily broadcast will feature a new format in 1983.

The new daily broadcast will continue to use religious music and will be aimed at religious people, but it will probably be given a new name. It will shift toward a magazine style, with more voices, including individuals recounting their real life experiences. Gone will be the short lecture. In its place will be a two-year series which will start in Genesis and end in Revelation. "We're taking the themes from the Bible books and discussing each one for a week of five programs. For instance, Lamentations provides the setting for looking at contemporary people, like the Polish, at odds with foreign authorities. For the week in Genesis, we talk about creativity. For those programs, we're using children to talk about personal creativity."

It took Robertson three months to develop the new program. First he studied the audience, figured out what he thought they wanted to hear and designed the format from there. He wrote a document on the listeners and his suggestion for programming, which was accepted by the in-house board. He is already busy writing and preparing the new two-year cycle.

Besides the new daily program, H.M.S.

Richards, Jr., has other innovations in mind, such as offering computer Bible games. He would also like to have about 50-55 businessmen help sponsor the present daily radio broadcast. There would be a short announcement telling what they do, so they could count it as advertising expense. Such an arrangement would help relieve the pressure to request money over the air. In the past, the Voice of Prophecy did not ask listeners for money until they requested material from the Bible School. Lately, they've been asking for financial support on the daily broadcast.

The Voice of Prophecy's track record for successfully generating and producing new ideas is good. Fordyce Detamore helped the organization launch its first Bible school in 1942. Expansion from a weekly to a daily broadcast came in 1971. In 1973, a series of 30- and 60-second spot announcements was released to radio stations for use in public service time. By 1980, the Voice of Prophecy estimated it had received donated radio time worth \$22.5 million for these "commercials" geared to the unchurched. Today, radio programs affiliated with the Voice of Prophecy broadcast in 50 languages.

Now that the Voice of Prophecy seems to be getting its financial house in order, suggestions for the organization from the General Conference Study Committee have focused on the need to test the new format thoroughly before airing it in 1983.

## Faith for Today

In May of this year, the Media Center Board considered totally shutting down Faith for Today, because programming dilemmas were compounding economic problems. Last year, Faith for Today produced a 90-minute feature movie. Its 1982 budget projected spending \$750,000 for a children's television series and newspaper. Finally, in July, Director Dan Matthews made two pilots of a talk show format, which he hosted. On July 25, Matthews showed the

pilots to the General Conference officers in Washington, and reported that their reaction was decidedly positive. Evidently, discussion of closing Faith for Today has subsided.

---

**“Faith for Today’s production budget. . . simply cannot sustain a weekly dramatic series in an industry where even 30-second commercials can cost \$100,000.”**

---

When William and Virginia Fagal launched their live dramatic series in 1950, television technology was in its infancy. The program evolved along with the industry. Filming naturally replaced the live production. A hospital format became the basis for the dramatic settings. An award cabinet in the Faith for Today building lobby holds a collection of plaques and statues, won in film competitions when Faith for Today was producing the *Westbrook Hospital Series*. But the last episode cost approximately \$100,000 in 1979. So, although the old films still circulate, no new episodes are being produced. Faith for Today’s production budget, which has declined from \$1.2 million to \$685,000 within the last year, simply cannot sustain a weekly dramatic series in an industry where even 30-second commercials can cost \$100,000.

Faith for Today has received special General Conference consideration in the past, because of the expense dramatic productions incur. Offerings and church funds make up 41 percent of the budget, which in 1982 will be \$3.4 million.

In 1981, Faith for Today spent its production budget on *The Third Cry*, a 90-minute movie made for television featuring Richard Hatch, Laurie Walters and Mel Ferrer. According to writer Don Davenport, it tells a classic story of the resilience of the human spirit, by chronicling the life of a

family whose children are born with cystic fibrosis.

Recounting the life of the film would make another interesting story. Pre-production work started and stopped at least four times. There were major creative disagreements over the project. New characters were added to the story to please a potential syndicator, but several attempts to market the still uncompleted film have fallen through.

And problems extended past the production department. One anticipated benefit of the film was the possibility of soliciting foundation donations in conjunction with the cystic fibrosis organization. Faith for Today hoped to take in \$100,000 that way, but it never happened.

In a final attempt to salvage the project, another rewriting of the script has been done, this time by an outside consultant. An independent company has expressed interest in distributing the new production through a theatre chain. Obviously, such an arrangement would allow Faith for Today to recoup the money it invested in the project. But no contract has yet been signed.

After its venture with a feature-length film in 1981, Faith for Today announced in early 1982 that a children’s television program ranked as its first priority. Alternately called “Kid’s Court”, “Pathfinders”, “Our Turn”, “Earthwatch”, “Crusader Castle”, and “Hopscotch House”, ideas about the program circulated through the staff for several months. Adventure, animation, health—even science fiction—were discussed. “None of them rang enough bells, though,” Matthews said in March.

Two publications, *Body Wise* and *Project Orion* are already existing parts of Faith for Today’s ministry to children. They are published by Concerned Communications, an independent Adventist advertising agency. Faith for Today’s 1982 budget includes \$240,000 for *Body Wise*, a children’s newspaper on health. That compares with \$500,000 which has been set aside for 13 episodes of the children’s television pro-

gram. *Project Orion*, a series of space oriented Bible games produced several years ago, is the second publication mailed upon requests from viewers and donors.

"The constituency needs to understand we are going ahead with a children's printed ministry right now, but the television program has to be just right," says Director Matthews. "We have set a Fall deadline for production." Faith for Today has signed a nine-month contract with Sunrise Media Productions to develop two pilot programs and market them. It was agreed that Faith for Today's name would not appear on the program, which would be sold commercially. But Faith for Today would retain control over two advertising spots in the program, during which it can market special services for young people such as career counseling or other church projects. Matthews justifies reliance on commercial syndication as a way to gain access to a larger audience than can be reached through typical religious programming time. Additional funding will also be generated by selling the product this way.

Matthews admits that commercial marketing could bring the organization into conflicts, because it would mean Faith for Today would probably have to take its name off the program. Traditionally Adventists measure programming by the amount of denominational doctrine conveyed.

"We've even gone so far as to say, 'Let other people do the basic Christian message. We'll emphasize our unique beliefs,'" Matthew says. "I have some concerns about that. Jesus answered questions people were asking; He reached them where they were. He did not ask them to come to where He was. I'm willing to take the posture that we should make meaningful statements even if we don't get credit. There's an old saying, 'You can do an awful lot of good if you don't care who gets the credit.' I think about that a lot. I think the Holy Spirit could still magnify what we do, even if it didn't have our name on it."

Matthews is not worried about contract-

ing out the program content, because former Faith for Today employee Gary Haynes owns Sunrise Media Productions. And should the program not prove to be a commercial success, Haynes has an understanding with Matthews that Faith for Today will take him back on the staff.

While the Faith for Today staff struggled with their children's program, the General Conference Study Commission struggled with what to do with Faith for Today. Some members of the Commission felt the church did not need a dramatic program or a children's show, and they argued that the Gospel only commissioned Christ's followers to preach the Gospel. They felt a preaching television program totally met the church's needs. Others argued that since only religious people watch a preaching program, if the Gospel Commission was to extend to secular man, a variety of formats was needed.

During the Commission's stay in Thousand Oaks, the Media Center Board of Trustees met in May. The Commission decided to tell the Board about one of its recommendations, before taking the report to the General Conference. A motion was made to phase out Faith for Today.

In his speech defending his organization, Dan Matthews asked the Board whether they had considered the severance pay cost of such an action. He reminded them of the donation and offering dollars they would forfeit. He reiterated Faith's plans for the future. After some discussion the Board members voted to table the motion.

But rather than simply "sitting on the table" until the next meeting, the item went to Washington and was considered by the General Conference officers the following week. Matthews made a detour in his campmeeting travel schedule. For three days, he lobbied in Washington. Since he was not invited to the officers' meeting, he sent a message to the group recognizing

their right and responsibility to make decisions on all matters of church media outreach. His one request was that any decision be thoroughly explained in writing and that Faith for Today be provided with time to make a response.

---

**“The Adventist grapevine quickly spread the story of Faith for Today’s tenuous position. In Thousand Oaks, calls began coming in from across the country.”**

---

A reliable source says that, when the Study Commission reported to the General Conference officers, it suggested an alternative to closing Faith for Today: The General Conference could begin cutting back the church’s appropriations by 25 percent every six months, until Faith for Today was phased out in two years. According to this suggestion, the money which would have gone to Faith for Today would be put in a trust fund for new media projects, administered by the Center administration. As of August 1982, neither the option of termination nor a two-year phase-out had been adopted.

The Adventist grapevine quickly spread the story of Faith for Today’s tenuous position. In Thousand Oaks, calls began coming in from across the country asking if the organization was still functioning. A notice was quickly drafted for the *Adventist Review* stating that Faith for Today was still in operation, that the General Conference was studying the organization, and that a report would be made by the end of the year.

Despite the serious threat to his organization’s existence, Dan Matthews strolled into his Faith for Today office June 1, exuding confidence. “I’m glad that this whole thing’s happened,” Matthews said. “We’re now in the best possible position with the General Conference. Whereas

there were questions on the course Faith was taking, the Study Committee’s suggestions gave us the opportunity to discuss the matter.”

It also raised questions about totally focusing on a children’s program. Faith for Today decided it also needed something to reach the adult population. So, in July, Andrews University professor Roy Nadan helped Matthews develop a new program, “Day One.” Two pilots were quickly made of the talk show program, with a live studio audience asking questions of the guests. Dan Matthews acted as host. On July 25, Matthews showed the pilots of the new program to the General Conference officers and received a favorable response.

Matthews believes that the denomination will continue to support Faith for Today as a program pursuing its original objective of reaching out to secular man—this time with a variety program for young people and the interview show for adults.

### Adventist Media Productions

“I don’t think the church can keep this operation running;” “Everything is video these days, and we have no video;” “I see very little option but to go to the leadership and ask what is to be done.” “What will the leadership learn that we do not already know?” “We owe it to them to take a look at us.”

“That’s what the discussion went like at the last Adventist Media Production Board meeting,” said V. Bailey Gillespie in February. A Loma Linda University professor of religion who serves on the Adventist Media Productions Board, Gillespie concluded, “We made a very creative decision. We decided not to declare bankruptcy and to suggest a revision in the accounting procedures.” Board members had before them a report that showed a loss of over \$150,000 for 1981, an improvement over the \$180,000 of 1980, but still a continuing disaster for the company.

Adventist Media Productions produces films, slide shows, commercials, and tapes for any of the church's organizations. General Conference departments will spend close to \$200,000 there this year. But Adventist Media Productions also holds responsibility for the Media Center's studio, and studio hasn't broken even since Faith for Today stopped production of the Westbrook Hospital series. Consequently, the board meeting seemed grim.

---

**“‘The teleseminar could be a very cost effective evangelistic tool,’ Krogstad says. ‘About 7,000 people attended the 1981 production.’”**

---

To solve the problem, the Media Center's administration formed a studio usage committee comprised of the television component managers and treasurers, some Adventists Media Productions staff, plus Media Center President Robert R. Frame and Robert L. Rawson, vice-president for finance.

At the first meeting, we decided to split the losses for the studio at the end of the year according to a formula based on General Conference appropriations,” says Jack Davis, Adventist Media Productions director of research and development. That should help the ending balance statement for the production component.

The suggestion is also often made that the Adventist Media Productions should rent the studio out for commercial use. “Discussion about renting the studio out to other production companies always bogs down over what regulations would need to be imposed. Would we be willing to have McDonald's or Coca Cola, Jordache or George Burns working here?” asks Davis.

“My suggestion for next year is to have the General Conference make a direct appropriation to the Adventist Media Pro-

ductions' production areas and to finance the purchase of needed video equipment (currently the Adventist Media Productions only owns 16 mm camera equipment). Then Adventist Media Productions could offer the production facilities to the components and other church organizations free, instead of renting them out. Users would only be charged for supplies. That would solve a lot of problems. After all, we're here to work for the church. When you start talking about commercialization, then our purpose for being here gets muddy.”

The Study Committee's recommendation to the General Conference is to put an immediate freeze on the purchase of equipment by Adventist Media Productions and to terminate it as a separate component. The committee suggested quality considerations be made paramount, so the center's administration should take over the operation.

### It Is Written

The library-like set sprawls across the Media Center sound stage at odd angles to simulate rooms. There is a short staircase, a large globe, several windows overlooking the stage scrim, and a wingback chair in front of a bookcase. All stand idly waiting for George Vandeman, speaker for It Is Written, to wander through, lecturing on the Bible while the tape rolls. It Is Written produces 30-36 programs here each year, more than any of the other components.

After almost 25 years on television, Vandeman shows no sign of slowing down, in spite of the fact that he is now on sustentation. The General Conference Study Committee primarily praised It Is Written for success, particularly in the past five years.

Special weekend fundraising campaigns have helped to escalate income. Board member Shirley Burton calls Partnerships Unlimited the smartest thing Vandeman has ever done. It Is Written invites a select

group of people to a weekend retreat each Fall. Religious programs fill the Sabbath hours. Entertainment on Saturday night has included such celebrities as Lowell Thomas and Maria Von Trapp. Finally, *It Is Written* requests the financial support of the people. As a result the program's annual donations now double the amount generated by Faith for Today.

In 1982, *It Is Written* will operate on a budget of approximately \$5 million, with station time consuming 40 percent of that amount. "We're the most self-supporting of the components," says Manager Arnt E. Krogstad. "Our General Conference appropriation supplies about four percent of the budget and half of that goes to the Canadian *It Is Written* for their quota of programs which must be produced in Canada. So the General Conference funds only about two percent of the *It Is Written* budget. We don't have an annual offering, either. However, the local conferences do pick up 25 percent of the actual air time."

Dependence on the local conference is also heavy for the 20-30 all-day Bible seminar programs which *It Is Written* produces each year. In March 1981, *It Is Written* tried a teleseminar, originating from Los Angeles, beamed via satellite across the country. Given a broad base of support over which to spread the high cost of the satellite, the teleseminar could be a very cost effective evangelistic tool, Krogstad says. About 7,000 people attended the 1981 production.

A General Conference report estimates that 700 people were baptised from that series. It cost the church \$40 per attendee (the conferences picked up \$12.50 of that, *It Is Written* \$27.50), and the attendees paid \$25 each, so the total cost per person was approximately \$65. The cost to the church per baptism ran \$400.

Krogstad says *It Is Written* planned on larger numbers attending and had anticipated the total cost would be only \$40 per person. *It Is Written* would like to try the teleseminar again in 1983, when it would en-

deavor to attract 75,000 people. Following the same ratio of baptisms per attendees as 1981, the 1983 seminar would yeild 7,500 baptisms at a cost to the church of \$250 each.

"We stand ready to conduct another teleseminar if the church wants one," Krogstad says. "But we have to have the cooperation of the church."

"*It Is Written* is neither a complete ministry nor an electronic church," according to publicity materials prepared for conference administrators. "It is a seed-sowing, interest-generating agency working hand-in-hand with the local conference, the local pastor, and interested lay workers to discover and introduce to the church those who are seeking a closer walk with the Lord."

## Breath of Life

It is Friday night in downtown Los Angeles. At the corner of Grand and Washington Avenues, people are gathering for two events. At the Olympic Auditorium they are lining up to see a wrestling match. Catercorner across the parking lot, they are starting to arrive for a *Breath of Life* evangelistic crusade where gracious lady ushers, snappy in their black and white capes and white gloves, greet people with "Happy Sabbath."

Backstage, Walter Arties, the manager and producer of *Breath of Life*, talks about the difficulty of doing evangelism in Los Angeles. "People are so secularly oriented," he says. "It's really different from our previous experiences in the West Indies and other places. But the commission hasn't changed. We still have to go to all the world. Nobody ever said the message would be popular, but it still has to be told. We have to do our work."

Part of Arties' work this evening includes trying to help the electrician with the heater for the baptismal tank standing behind the curtains on the auditorium's large stage. The right outlets just don't appear to be avail-

able. Meanwhile, pianist Shelton Kilby tells one of the baptismal candidates just what he needs to bring and where he should be for the ceremony the next day, the closing program in a month of nightly meetings.

At 7:30 p.m. a line of preachers passes the cross which stands at one end of the stage as the program begins. There is music, prayer, questions and answers, a dramatic reading and preaching—an old fashioned kind of presentation, punctuated with “Amens” from the audience.

C.D. Brooks, the speaker for the Breath of Life, carries the people through the sermon with questions. “Are you listening?” he says after explaining a passage of Scripture. “Can I hear amen to that?” His strong voice soars, then whispers; the emotion is there, but controlled, always controlled.

Arties hops between the electronic console at the edge of the stage and the sidelines, directing the electrician, answering questions, finally strolling onto the stage to sing. His mellow voice fills the auditorium, and the audience responds with applause.

---

**“To make up the Media Center’s \$2.5 million. . . deficit for 1981, the Media Center’s administration has had to ask the General Conference for more money.”**

---

The month-long Los Angeles crusade cost between \$30,000 and \$40,000, or \$333 per baptism. That cost does not include the manpower from the Southern California Conference, whose personnel handled advertising, personal visitations, and Bible studies. One conference official said the crusade was not the smoothest production. But there was over 120 baptisms. And the baptism record helps justify the television broadcast for the select black audience.

Today, Breath of Life prides itself on being a General Conference entity. The program operates on a budget of about \$500,000, and employ four persons fulltime.

Media Center literature claims 2,700 baptisms have resulted from the Breath of Life telecast since 1974, and several churches owe their beginning to the broadcast. Suggestions from the General Conference Study Commission include putting a “trailer,” featuring a local pastor on the end of each program, and trying to find public service time for the broadcast.

## Media Center Administration

Robert R. Frame comes to the outer office of the president’s suite and officially welcomes his visitor to the Adventist Media Center. Inside, opposite his desk, 14 chairs line the walls, seemingly waiting for a committee meeting to begin. Those are bypassed as he points to the easy chairs in front of the huge corner windows, a pleasant place to talk about his responsibilities. He sees himself as an administrator, not a creative person. He leaves the creative business up to the staff, an attitude which generates respect from the staff, who generally praise his performance.

His goals for the center involve helping with church programs such as the 1,000 Days of Reaping currently being planned. “We took an action asking the General Conference how they want us to be involved,” he says.

“We’re an evangelistic organization. There is such a lot of trash available in the media today. We need to offset that material and introduce people to Christ through the use of electronic media.”

Frame’s comment points to two byproducts of media work which end up costing as much as programming. The evangelistic element has led the components into other activities such as Bible schools and evangelistic crusades. Organizationally, the center’s existence has added a new dimension to the old programs. There are some centralized services such as mailing, computers, printing, and accounting. But there is also a

new layer of management, because the center's components all still maintain their own boards, treasurers, managers, and public relations staffs. The Media Center administration, overarching all, has an annual budget of approximately \$300,000.

And which aspect of these organizations is the most important? Media programming? Evangelism? Institutional cohesiveness? Can the church meet its needs for an outreach program and meet the needs of secular man at the same time?

Harry Hartsock, president of the Voice of Prophecy Lay Advisory Committee, says, to fulfill the Gospel Commission, the church needs to consider what tools are at its disposal. "Radio and television are all part of it. What role can the Media Center play? Well, you're only as good as the talent you have. The Richards, the Fagals, the Vandemans have made an enormous contribution. It's the individuals that reach people—not the institutions. Anyone who thinks an institution can reach people is sadly mistaken." But what does the organization do when it loses star talents, such as the Fagals who retired this year? What effect do losses at one component have on the others? When the Voice of Prophecy

announced its budget crunch, gifts poured into the Voice of Prophecy, while *It Is Written* and *Faith for Today* recorded their lowest donation figures for the year.

Financial problems force long thoughts about financial priorities. To make up the Media Center's \$2.5 million total operating deficit for 1981, the Media Center's administration has had to ask the General Conference for more money. Looking to the future, the Media Center must cut back or eliminate programs, increase revenues from greater commercial use of the Media Center facilities, particularly the film studio, or ask the denomination for continued heavy appropriations. The decisions that must be made have to do with good management, but they extend to choices about how Adventism appropriately expresses itself in the media. Whether the General Conference's consolidation of programs into a single media center contributed to financial difficulties, the present economic realities and dependence of the Media Center on denominational appropriations means that, in the future, the General Conference will be even more directly involved in deciding what kind of Adventist programs appear on radio or television.