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Herald of Truth International: Heartbeat History

Wayne Gurley

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Heartbeat History

Wayne Gurley

In its three short years of existence, the Herald of Truth daily radio program, "Heartbeat," has grown into a powerful and effective tool for presenting God's word to non-believers ~~through radio.~~

Under the oversight of the Highland elders, "Heartbeat" has caused listeners to question their attitudes about life, and has made them aware that there is someone who is sensitive to their frustration and has something to offer in place of it.

"Heartbeat" began on Jan. 3, 1972 with Landon Saunders as speaker and writer for the program. Saunders has given "Heartbeat" its innovative format by handling most of the production responsibilities himself.

The program's concept had been discussed for several years prior to Saunders joining Herald of Truth. The discussions intensified in 1970 when E. R. Harper made a presentation at the Freed-Hardeman College lectures in Henderson, Tenn.

Harper felt the need for a daily radio program designed to reach the outsider, and his notes were used as a basis in the program's development. Following his recommendations and ~~the~~ ^{those} recommendations of others, Saunders was brought in to begin work on the program.

In the first two years of broadcasting, "Heartbeat" was heard on 112 radio stations. On May 4, 1973, the Highland elders announced that the Pentagon had accepted the program to be heard on the Armed Forces Radio and Television System. At that time,

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AFRTS was broadcasting on over 350 outlets in 24 countries around the world.

"Heartbeat" is designed to reach the busy, non-religious person who has decided that religion no longer has any power and that the Bible cannot answer today's problems. The aim is to gain the attention of the secular world by making contact with an audience not reached by other Herald of Truth programs.

"We are receiving an average of 125 letters a month in response to the program," Landon Saunders, speaker for the program, said. "And the letters show us that what we intended to happen is happening. People who have never allowed God or any religious concept into their lives are now wanting to know how God can help them with their most serious concerns."

In a warm, sensitive manner, the program attempts to gain the attention of a non-religious audience by talking in language and using subjects and illustrations not normally associated with religious broadcasting.

Most ^{letters} mail received in response to the program are urgent requests for counseling, advice and teaching, rather than for copies of the program's script. Each response letter is answered personally by Saunders and then is followed by a series of 12 monthly letters called "Beyond Heartbeat." These letters offer more in-depth teaching than the three-minute broadcast allows.