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Editorial on Evangelism

How many people do you know who have been saved in the last year? Having said that, thousands are being saved across the world! Maybe you have had the privilege of leading someone to Christ! If that is the case, that is wonderful; praise the Lord!

Being a Christian is brilliant, but not always easy, but you could be enjoying yourself so much that you forget that one of your basic tasks as a Christian is to witness to unsaved people. Evangelism should be part of the routine activity of every believer, and we must not relegate it to being the specialist activity of a select group of individuals, i.e., evangelists. I know that in the New Testament we have the specific gift of the evangelist, Acts 21. 8, Eph. 4. 11, 2 Tim. 4. 5, but the example of the early church, Acts 8. 4, would lead me to believe that all believers were involved in this work, as a natural consequence of enjoying their own salvation.

One of the motivations for reaching out with the gospel could be summarized in the words of the Samaritan lepers who discovered the deserted camp of the Syrian Army. On arriving at the camp it looked to them like the Syrians had fled in a hurry, leaving everything behind. All the food and provisions that the people of Samaria needed so badly were there for the taking. How selfish it would have been if they had just sat down and enjoyed the free food, while their fellow countrymen were starving and dying just a short distance away! Listen to what they said, 'We do not well: this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace', 2 Kgs. 7. 9. Generally speaking, it looks as if most Christians are enjoying the free grace of God, but failing to recognize that there is a world of people out there who are desperately in need of what we have.

Imagine the impact on our society if we were so thrilled with the joy of our salvation that we were consistently driven to tell our friends, neighbours, and colleagues about it, because we did not want them to miss out. The recent 'ice bucket challenge' spread like wildfire across the world. Christians and non-Christians alike got involved, raising millions for worthy charities. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we, as Christians, got just as excited about the Lord Jesus, heaven, and eternal life?

Let me ask you another serious question – will you be embarrassed when

YOUNG PRECIOUS SEED is a supplement of *Precious Seed International* designed for those young in faith. Its purpose is to restate timeless truths from the word of God for a new generation of Christians and to kindle a biblical approach to current issues in the world in which we live. YPS is published by *Precious Seed International*, Pitcot Farm, Pitcot Lane, Stratton-on-the-Fosse, Radstock BA3 4SX, UK, and is available separately from the main magazine.

you stand before the Lord Jesus at the judgement seat of Christ, Rom. 14. 10. Are you in danger of being reminded that you lived a life of ease, and ignored your responsibilities to witness? Maybe you spend a lot of time studying and discussing the Bible, that's good. Don't forget to plan time, and activities, to tell people about Jesus. If you read the life stories of men like C T Studd and Jim Elliott, which is a great habit to get into, you will find the common thread of an infectious desire to know God more intimately, and to reach people with the love of God.

The Prime Motivator

The prime reason, but not the only reason, for spreading the good news of salvation is because the Lord Jesus told us to. Matthew and Mark record that the Lord told 'the eleven' to go and teach and preach, Matt. 28. 19; Mark 16. 15. Mark describes the occasion: Jesus appeared to them while they were having a meal. He reprimands them for not believing what their friends had told them about the resurrection. And, immediately, He

instructs them to go to everyone in the world with the good news. There are a number of lessons that we can learn from this passage.

1. Outreach is not dependent on the strong faith of the individual, but on their obedience to the Master's command to get out with the message.
2. The Lord can deal with our doubts and fears.
3. The gospel message has no 'no go' zones, geographically, or socially, i.e., the gospel spans all cultural barriers, all social distinctions, and is for every person living on planet earth.

Can I give you an 'Ice Bucket Challenge'? A wake up call! Time is short! The world is heading for disaster! The Lord Jesus could come again sooner than you think! Get out with the good news of Jesus Christ. It's all we have to offer!

(To be continued).

Stephen Baker

PREACHING WITH A TABLET

Part 4: Best e-book Apps for Preaching



BY R. SCOTT THOMSON USA

'Of making many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh', Eccles. 12. 12b ESV.

Preaching requires a significant amount of time dedicated to preparation, and much of that time is spent reading. This is yet another area where a tablet computer can play a significant role as an aid to preaching.

There are numerous apps available for this purpose – even better, most of the apps are free! Therefore, you can experiment with different ones to find the one (or more) that you like best.

However, there is something else to consider that is arguably more important than the app itself. And that is the 'e-book ecosystem' in which the app operates.

If, for example, you commit to using the Kindle app as your primary app, you will find yourself operating in the Kindle ecosystem. Therefore, you will be primarily purchasing e-books from Amazon.

Will Amazon still be around in 5 to 10 years? Does Amazon offer the authors and publishers that you are most interested in? Can you access your Kindle e-books on a range of devices? (The answer

to this last question is Yes.) These are some of the questions that you should keep in mind when considering various app(s).

Here are some of the best tablet e-reader apps to consider:

- **iBooks** – This is Apple’s own e-reader that comes preinstalled with an iPad. This is an excellent app to start with, if you have an iPad. It is easy to use, looks beautiful, and has a large selection of titles available.
- **Kindle** – Amazon is perhaps the best-known company in the world of e-books. It is also a large, successful company likely to be around for a long time to come. Their app does not disappoint; it is worth downloading, and experimenting with. Also, most public library systems loan Kindle supported e-books for free! Why buy that brand new book you want to read when you can borrow it free without leaving your home? The Kindle ecosystem is also accessible from numerous devices including Amazon’s popular line of dedicated e-readers.
- **GoodReader** – Of the six apps reviewed this is the only one that is not free. However, do not let the price tag deter you from considering it. GoodReader is my favorite for reading popular file types, including pdf, MS Office files, iWork, HTML, and many more. GoodReader also allows you to annotate your documents. You can highlight text, and draw, or handwrite in multiple colours, add sticky notes, etc. GoodReader also handles very large files with ease.
- **Google Play Books** – Google’s e-reading app offers all of the basic features you would expect, however what really makes this app stand out is the large number of books that are available for free. Google has built an extensive library of free e-books from works that are freely available in the public domain. Many excellent Christian books are available for free, including *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* by ALFRED EDERSHEIM, and *The Book of Leviticus* by SAMUEL HENRY KELLOGG.
- **Vyrso by Logos Bible Software** – Logos is perhaps the best-known name in computer-aided Bible study. Logos also offer the most extensive collection of Christian titles in



electronic format. If you use Logos as your primary tool to study the scriptures, then the Vyrso app is a natural choice for your tablet. One word of caution: Logos tends to be expensive. Many of the older titles that are sold by Logos can be found for free (legally) elsewhere, with a little bit of searching.

- **Bible+ by Olive Tree** – Although Olive Tree does not offer as extensive a library of books as Logos does, Olive Tree still deserves to be mentioned in this listing. The best aspect of their app is how it seamlessly integrates e-books with the scriptures. You can quickly navigate from a Bible reference, and then back again to the e-book.

So, there you are! Six excellent apps to consider for all of your electronic literary endeavours! Enjoy!

PS. Although beyond the scope of this article, if you spend a significant amount of time reading electronic books (an hour or more a day), I would suggest that you seriously consider purchasing a dedicated e-reader that uses electronic paper technology. Such devices feature screens that are not backlit, and therefore result in significantly less strain on one’s eyes. Amazon’s Kindle is one example of such a device; however, the Kindle Fire is not!

EGO (1)



BY **STEPHEN GRANT** BRIDGE OF WEIR, SCOTLAND

'But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come:

For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy',

2 Tim. 3. 1, 2 NKJV.

It is a dangerous time to be a Christian in many parts of the world today. A knock at the door or news of an approaching convoy of trucks can be the precursor of torture and death for those who confess their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The majority of Christians in the world live with the threat of violent persecution.

For Christians in the West our spiritual warfare involves a method of attack that is subtler than for those who live in parts of Africa, North Korea, or the Middle East. The biggest threat that we face is not violence from religious extremists, or even the spiralling moral decline of our society. Paul identified the greatest peril we face when he told Timothy that dangerous times would come when men would be lovers of themselves. This danger lies dormant within us all, and is fanned to a furnace by a world shaped by Satan, who is the master of temptation.

Paul identifies the menace of selfish, egotistical idolatry, and its manifestations in pride, covetousness, ingratitude, rebellion against parents, and a lack of holiness. The nurturing, or acceptance, of this character in any Christian is dangerous for them, and for anyone in a relationship with them.

When Paul speaks about being lovers of themselves as being a bad thing, he is contradicting the current ethos of our world. We constantly hear that unhappiness comes from low self-esteem. We are taught that we

need to be proud of ourselves to be happy; that we should think highly of ourselves and realize that in our own way we are special and wonderful. The problem is that when we are in love with ourselves it is hard to form meaningful relationships. The only agenda you have is yourself, and your happiness, which the Bible identifies as sin and selfishness. It sounds like 'I am offended, I am hurt, you didn't do this for me. How dare you speak to me like that? You don't respect me. I am not going to accept that'. It is all 'me, myself and I'.

If I love myself, then I will be indignant if others do not love me as much as I love myself. Others do not value me as much as I think they should. Others do not treat me as well as I think I should be treated. I measure everything in terms of me. I live for myself, my own agenda, my own goals, my own plans, my own achievements, my own success, my own enterprises and that just devastates relationships.

Self-will was at the root of Satan's downfall before he brought his conflict with God into the Garden of Eden. Isaiah refers to the fall of Lucifer (Satan), and records the thoughts of his heart as he rebelled against God.

'How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: "**I will** ascend into heaven, **I will** exalt my throne above the

stars of God; **I will** also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, **I will** be like the Most High', Isa. 14. 12-14.

When Satan approached Eve, he focused her thoughts on herself. 'Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil"', Gen. 3. 4-5.

When Adam was confronted with his sin, his first thoughts were not about the Lord, or the impact of his conduct on anyone other than himself. He was only interested in self-preservation. 'So he said, "**I heard** Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because **I was naked; and I hid myself**"', Gen. 3. 10.

The unfolding story of humanity is punctuated by selfishness manifested in different ways. For example, Nebuchadnezzar exalted himself, Dan. 4.28-33; Ahab felt sorry for himself, and displayed childish self-pity, 1 Kgs. 21. 1-4; Abraham was more interested in self-preservation than the purity of his wife, Gen. 12. 10-13. These are just a few examples of many.

In stark contrast to the Lord Jesus, the disciples displayed blatant self-interest as they walked towards Jerusalem. He was going to die for others and all they could think to argue about was who was going to be the greatest among them, Mark 9. 33-34. Self-interest makes us lose perspective on what is actually important, to the extent that we are out of step with the Lord.

It is a dangerous time
to be a Christian.
We are our own
worst enemy.





ADVENTURES IN ACTS

Pivot Point

BY JEREMY SINGER BRIDGE OF WEIR, SCOTLAND

We have reached the pivotal section in Luke's account of the early Church. The Gentiles are included at last; the gospel is going global. The cues for this narrative transition are clear, in terms of changing emphasis on both character and location. Until this point *Peter* has been the most prominent person. However, now *Paul* is receiving more coverage. Until this point *Jerusalem* has been the centre of action. However, now *Antioch* becomes increasingly relevant. In this study, we will show how the narrative focus shifts, although the underlying practice remains constant.

Changing Times

At the start of Acts chapter 11, we see Peter discussing his evangelistic experiences with the Jerusalem church. By the end of Acts chapter 12, we are concentrating on Barnabas and Saul in the Antioch church. This miniature change of emphasis in the section is actually the turning point of the whole book. From this point, the narrative follows Paul closely. We only return to Jerusalem and Peter whenever Paul does, e.g., Acts 15. 7; 21. 17.

As a practical point, we know that God has many servants. Elijah was unaware of 7000 faithful servants of God, 1 Kgs. 19. 18. Perhaps Peter was largely unaware of Paul's progress. Some servants are named – like Peter and Paul. Others remain anonymous, like the original missionaries to Antioch, Acts 11. 20. Whether or not the spotlight of earthly attention shines on you, be assured that your name, Luke 10. 20, and your service, 1 Cor. 4. 5, are recorded in heaven.

We also notice the unstoppable growth of the Church. The Lord Jesus had promised to build the Church, Matt. 16. 18. In this section we see that more and more people are hearing the gospel message, Acts 11. 19, and as a result more and more people are getting saved, vv. 21, 24. This is the result of the word of God having an increasing effect in people's lives. 12. 24.

Constant Truth

Local church practice is becoming established. We can learn from Jerusalem and Antioch what Christians do when they meet as local churches. Why do they gather together? We should have similar kinds of gatherings today in the local churches we attend.

Report meetings: Peter reports on his visit to Cornelius, Acts 11. 4. The believers hear of new converts, v. 22. The 'ears of the church' is a quaint term that conjures up thoughts of a pair of flappy ears on the side of a brick building. Of course, we know the church consists of people, all of whom have ears. What are they listening to? The subject is accurate, first-hand reports of God at work in salvation. Report meetings about gospel outreach and missionary activity are vital for encouragement, clarification, and relevant prayer.

Gospel Activity: Gospel witness is essentially in the community. We often use buildings to preach in but the aim should be to go out into the world with the message. In verses 19 & 20 the circumstances forced the Christians to travel and as they moved from place to place to stay safe, they preached 'the word' about the Lord



WHAT JOB DOES THE LORD WANT ME TO DO?

A question to consider

BY **STEPHEN ARBUTHNOT** GLASGOW, SCOTLAND

There is no doubt that we are here on this earth to work. Even before the fall, man was given useful things to do, Gen. 2. 15. A consequence of Adam's sin was the introduction of hard work in order to earn a living, Gen. 3. 19. So, daily toil is basic to a fallen human race under the judgement of God. Christians are not exempt from this, 2 Thess. 3. 10-12. However, a great dignity is added to work for the Christian, as it is done unto the Lord, Col. 3. 23, 24. In addition to earning money, this gives a great incentive for the believer to secure useful employment.

But what should we work at? How do we know what the Lord wants us to do? There are some people who seem to know from their earliest years what they should be, but for many others it can be quite a struggle to know. Scripture gives clear instructions about how we should do our work, but seems to give no directions about the specific work we should do. Maybe that's because such directions are not really necessary. Consider the following:

[1] Natural considerations

God is our creator. What we are physically and mentally, sin apart, is the result of how He has made us. So, it follows that He wants us to work at what He has made us able to work at. Therefore, we have to discover our divinely given abilities, which will also be developed through our experiences as we grow up. Through our school years we get to know if we're good at numbers or words, talking or writing, practical work or academic work, and so on. So we should start thinking of types of work that utilize what we are best at. This itself implies researching information about careers, and what they involve.

Then again, we have our likes and dislikes. You might say, it's not what I like that matters but what God would like me to do! However, it is God who has created us as individuals with our differing likes and dislikes. Our individual interests are down to how God has made us, and the experiences He has brought us through. There are a whole lot of different forms of work that need doing, and God has made people different to match the variety of needs that there are.

[2] Moral considerations

There will be some jobs, which, though legal, we shouldn't do, because of our biblically based beliefs. God has left us in the world, and we won't be able (especially in business) to avoid all contact with what we'd rather not have anything to do with. For example, you may work as a delivery driver for a water cooler company, one of whose customers is a casino. Your responsibility to deliver water bottles to the casino is quite different to being an employee of it, engaged in the sinful activity of gambling. To avoid all contact with sinful things would mean us going out of the world completely, which is not God's purpose for us until the rapture!

[3] Spiritual considerations

As we consider the type of work we might do, we must also consider the effect different types of work could have on our spiritual development, and opportunities for service in the assembly. Unbelievers talk about their work/life balance, and Christians should consider it even more so.

Where we have the choice, we should ensure that the convictions we have about the role we should be fulfilling in assembly service are not nullified by the time and energy needed for the job we choose! The Lord taught that we can't serve two masters, so a career has never to take over from our primary duty to Christ and His interests.

[4] Final considerations

Firstly, as we do have to work at something, we are responsible, through education and training, to make ourselves fit and ready for such work. Secondly, God knows the end from the beginning of our lives but wants us to be utterly dependent on Him each step of the way. We make decisions responsibly in the fear of God, but we must also constantly cast ourselves upon Him for His wisdom and guidance.

Summary: Look for the type of work you are fitted to do, and have a liking for, and which is morally and spiritually appropriate. Then, wait on the Lord to open the right doors!