

NEWS

CRC INTERNATIONAL ■ PROVIDING COMMUNICATION RESOURCES TO MAKE CHRIST KNOWN WORLDWIDE ■ MAY 2009

Finding God on the Internet

This morning I Googled “God on the Internet” and found more than 53,000 references.

Ten years ago those words would have had you scratching your head, wondering what they meant. Perhaps they still do.

Google did not exist fifteen years ago but today it plays a central role in the ongoing search for knowledge and information. Although it is a commercial business, it has an impact on our God-given mission. Together with other internet based tools, it presents an opportunity for evangelism and discipleship throughout the world.

Sunday 26 April was designated Internet Evangelism Day (IED), an initiative that encourages churches and individual Christians to use the internet to reach those who are searching for God.

IED is an internationally recognised event. The organisers use the opportunity to explain how the Web is a God-given tool for outreach and provide help for Christians to use the internet effectively.

“You don’t need to be technical to be an online evangelist,” says Internet Evangelism Day coordinator Tony Whittaker. “There are many ways you can share your faith in your spare time, without any technical knowledge at all.”

CRC supporters have responded favourably to our decision to put more resources into internet related activity. Steve Bell’s Pop Culture radio programme has become popology.net on the Web, while Resonate provides quality Bible teaching to an online mobile generation.

For many years the cost of postage has forced us to turn down most international requests for Library resources, but messages on the Resonate web site will be available to anyone who has internet access.

CRC’s traditional radio partners such as HCJB, Far East Broadcasting and Trans World Radio are also changing their operations. While they still have shortwave and FM broadcasts, they are adding projects that take advantage of the internet.



As HCJB explains on its web site, “One of the significant changes to radio is its recent partnership with the Internet. ‘Podcasting’ (audio programming distributed via the Web) is the hottest broadcast technology of today. Similar to radio, the Internet can be used to spread information to a global audience. Through our podcasts, we hope to reach a new, younger generation of listeners.”

These developments have spawned the term “cybermissions” which is defined as the use of computers and the internet for the cross-cultural communication of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

John Edmiston, an expert in cybermissions, says audio is still a powerful medium for carrying God’s message through the internet. Audio is personal and persuasive, it is better in areas where broadband is not available and it can be delivered as internet radio. He says that short audio presentations (less than ten minutes and preferably under three minutes) can be a powerful witness.

Cybermissions is not restricted to big organisations or professional writers and media producers. It is open to all.

CRC often receives requests from people who have written stories or recorded songs that tell how God has changed them. The internet allows you to tell your story to a global audience, perhaps through a personal online diary (a ‘blog’), on a personal website or in chat rooms.

The number of Christians using the internet to communicate their faith continues to grow. Tell us what you are doing; we may be able to help you.

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New DVDs

V1007 | "If Only I Had A Green Nose"

Life in the quiet village of Wemmicksville turns chaotic when Willie Withit arrives with his paint box and brush. The Wemmicks are soon lining up to join Willie's latest scheme for getting "with it" – a green nose. At first, Punchinello resists the urge to join the crowd, but eventually he succumbs. This story for children exposes the cost of giving up a treasure (our individuality) in an attempt to fit in and be like everyone else.

V1008 | Robber of the Cruel Streets (The Story of George Muller) | 60min

There was little in the young, rebellious George Muller to suggest that he would eventually touch the lives of thousands of orphans in Bristol, England. He was changed when he encountered Jesus Christ and was inspired by the example of an old orphanage in Germany, the land of his birth. Despite early opposition from neighbours, Muller's orphanages became famous for giving shelter and training to children who otherwise were doomed to a desperate fight for life on the streets. A second DVD contains interviews with several of "Muller's Children".

V1009 | The Outbreak of the 1904 Welsh Awakening

This account of the Welsh Revival highlights the role of Evan Roberts, a 26-year-old coal miner and blacksmith's assistant who rose from obscurity in the last few months of 1904. Saved at the age of 13, Roberts spent the next ten years resolutely attending prayer meetings, listening to many messages and studying his Bible. During this time he also prayed for a revival.

The revival began in Loughor at the end of October 1904 and within a few weeks had spread throughout Wales. Some historians say at least 150,000 were saved in a period of six months.

V1010 | Rob Bell | Everything is Spiritual | 78min

Starting at the account of Creation in Genesis chapter 1, Rob Bell builds a picture that puts God at the centre of everything. He removes the distinction we sometimes make between daily life and spiritual life.

Rob's affiliation with the emergent church helps to explain his approach to theology. For example, he suggests that doctrines we think are incompatible may coexist more easily in God's eyes.

You may need to pause this message more than once to allow you to ponder a particular point or discuss it with others. The DVD was recorded in 2006 when Rob took the presentation to more than 20 cities across the USA.

V1011 | Fireproof | 119min

At work, inside burning buildings, fire fighter Caleb Holt lives by the code: Never leave your partner behind. At home, faced with a dying marriage, Caleb lives by his own rules.

This is the story of the struggle to rebuild a marriage; a venture that requires commitment and patience. Caleb's father provides the tools for the marital rescue plan, although his son resists the idea of including God and the Bible in the project. The serious theme at the centre of this movie is relieved by regular glimpses of life as a fire fighter.

The producers have also created "The Love Dare", a devotional book that expands and extends the topics covered in the movie.

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COMMENT

by John Lindsay CRC's Operations Director



'You will never be alone' is a great promise Jesus left His disciples.

This time last year politicians preparing for the elections delivered a stream of promises in halls and on street corners across the country. They talked of tax cuts and spending plans. As we review the economic slide of the past twelve months, many of those promises seem reckless and we are not surprised to see them being modified or shelved. The certainty of God's promises is a foundation of the Christian faith, but many nonbelievers interpret our confidence as arrogance. They doubt that anything can be certain. Sadly, our failings and faults support their view. We claim that through the indwelling Spirit, we have Christ with us at all times. We quote verses that talk about peace, hope, living life to the full and belonging to one body. Yet our words and actions show a different picture.

The promises we proclaim when we are evangelising evaporate in the heat of daily living. Peace is rare in marriages where a husband and wife in full-time employment are also trying to run a home and raise a family. Hope shrivels as relationships fail, redundancy looms, investments disappear and debts grow. The idea of living life to the full seems ridiculous to those grappling with ill health, injury, the frailty of old age or the death of the spouse with whom we have shared most of our life. The fractured state of the Christian community mocks our claim that Christ's death reconciles those who were once enemies.

Electors have learned to be sceptical of the promises of political candidates. Sadly, many of the people we want to reach for Christ are equally sceptical of God's promises because they see little evidence of them in the way we respond to the pressures and demands of life. While the promise of "a mansion in heaven" might satisfy a believer, those who are still considering the claims of the gospel want to see evidence of joy, peace and hope on earth.

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