

## Is FACEBOOK A GRACE BOOK?

(Is the internet heaven sent? Will Twitter recover a quitter?)

Well, there's no question that the internet and other forms of electronic communication are amazing. Churches are currently expounding their use more and more. We hear, *"Why, you can reach hundreds of thousands in just a fraction of time."* And, it's true, but...

While using the internet or any other means to preach the gospel, we cannot allow the methods to justify the end. *"...of making of books (methods) there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh,"* Ecclesiastes 12:12b.

I want to witness everywhere. Write it on a wall, pass out cards; anything, just get the word out there! But, when it comes to **"electronic evangelization,"** I have a couple of points for us to consider.

**First**, are we wasting time - the Lord's time? We all know how time-consuming the internet can be. Other than the time it takes to look up things, the user is always being wooed with commercials, other sites to go to and lots of distractions that move us away from our initial purpose. We have to ask, "Just how much time do church members spend on non-Christian sites?"

The internet is a wealth of research. But, when we "click" on for spiritual truths, we have to remind ourselves why we are there - learning more of the truth. Often, I find myself merely enjoying a site. What happens is, the method takes over and becomes more important than the original purpose of going there in the first place. Gotta stay in focus!!!

We must check our times and block out this minute, or that minute, for being on a site. Then, we must get back to what we are commissioned to do. I know that "door knocking" and working one-on-one isn't nearly as exciting as sitting in our easy chair "clicking."

We have to stop and ask, "Is our intent on witnessing or are we just surfing the web? To put this in some perspective, consider how much time we spend reading God's word. How does it compare to site surfing? How many minutes are spent in prayer, Bible Study and visiting friends who show an interest in church? We cannot forget the local church and its situation in the community. Again, we're talking about balance, here.

**Secondly**, from what I hear, most users are in danger of losing the focus of what they are doing. Just because we are on the internet doesn't mean that we are seeking the kingdom of God. Too many are just a "click" away from worldly

sites and evil communication. Before we "click," ask God if it is the "**right click or a wrong click.**"

Even those with a proper intent of promoting the Lord's work and their local church may also be in danger. The internet, and the enjoyment of using this method, may be more thrilling than the message, itself.

In short, this new method of "**cyberspace evangelization**" may take up all of our free time. If we are not careful, our computer could very well replace the Bible and its principles we learned in church; such as, "**Study to show ourselves approved**" (2Tim 2:15) and "**assembling of ourselves together**" (Heb 10:15).

The main thought of this article is about balance. Certainly, we should use any means available. At the same time, however, we must never forget the Word of God. Whatever method we may employ to preach God's word, let's remember that **Facebook**, etc., like the **GoodNews Letter**, are just methods of evangelization.

Indeed, the internet reaches thousands, but if we think of it as merely door knocking at a rapid pace, we'll be aware that a person is behind the door.

It's this personalization of the gospel that we find in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, as well as Paul's writings. In fact the entire Bible is, really, a **one-on-one experience**. And, when we have that one-on-one meeting, we don't think about anything else but God and His mercy.

Let's remember that the internet is only a method of many methods use to reach the lost and the unchurched. But our goal is people. We are in the people business. And we can never let the method become more important to us than those we are trying to evangelize, no matter what method we use.

So, we must pay attention and stay on course when using the internet. After all, it's such a fun thing. When we're behind that screen and in control, it's like we've transferred ourselves into Captain Action, totally in charge.

And, it's very easy to do - just sit there and click. It becomes like going to the mail box; we have strong anticipation for the time to arrive and we always expect that good news is coming to us.

Yes, the internet is a powerful tool. Let's use it (and other ways) to God's glory. One very fine site that that does a find job is The Mt. Vernon Missionary Baptist Church of Rialto, in southern California. They are on Facebook and Pastor Steve Waters utilizes the internet in a number of other ways; including editing the Old California State Missionary Baptist Association (OCSMBA). From his hours of hard work, I've selected the following that may be in sync with this article, showing how a method can so easily replace the Great Commission.

## 10 Way for a PASTOR to HINDER the work of God

1. Avoid Preaching the Word of God. Preach your opinion, tell stories, sing songs, and preach against what other men believe but by all means DO NOT preach the Word.
2. Be more concerned about what people think than what God thinks. Preach to get the approval of the people. You must be liked!
3. Realize that Pastors are entertainers. People don't go to church to be convicted of sin they go because they want and need entertainment. Practice telling jokes, and smiling, and by all means don't preach too long.
4. Don't share your pulpit or take time off. You don't need a break and they don't need a break from you. Besides, if someone else preaches in your pulpit they may like him better than you.
5. Be aware of the latest "Christian trends." Learn what is new and exciting in Christianity, and learn all of the latest "buzz words" and phrases and use them often.
6. Get a "hobby horse" and ride that thing every week. Find a unique point of view and exhaust it.
7. Don't Study! Studying shows a lack of faith. Expect that God will give you a message as you are walking to the pulpit.
8. Make sure that your "pastor schedule" has plenty of ME time. Don't allow the people of your church to have access to you.
9. When you don't have anything significant to say, then shout and pound the pulpit. This always indicates that you are under the control and influence of the Spirit of God.
10. It's not about truth, it's about making people feel good about themselves. People are under enough pressure at work and by the everyday struggles of life. They don't need you making them feel like God doesn't love them.