

Radio is Reaching the World

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The number of radio sets in the world today has risen to the astronomical figure of one and one quarter billion! This compares to 250 million sets only 25 years ago – *World Christian Encyclopedia* by Oxford University Press has provided us with facts and figures of the fruits of radio missions.

The number of secret Christians – over six and one-half million in the Arab world alone, and of isolated radio churches – over 40,000 in the world, and rising, have indeed been worth counting. Believers whose sole contact with Christianity has been radio broadcasts form an entirely new group in the tapestry of Christianity.

It is exciting to page through this large volume and see the conclusions of the 12-year research done by the editor, the Rev. Dr. David Barrett, an Anglican missionary based in Nairobi, Kenya, and a team of consultants. The encyclopedia gives a vibrant picture of the state of Christianity in the world today. Radio missions has a paragraph under “Broadcasting” as part of the information relating to each of the 223 nations of the world.

On the same subject in the secular world is a series of articles in *The Christian Science Monitor* dealing with the 50th anniversary of the World Service of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). These articles show more than 80 countries are engaged in overseas broadcasting. Russia leads the way with 2,148 program hours a week in 84 languages! The U.S.A., with its Voice of America on shortwave, is in second place with 1,988 hours and 48 languages.

Meanwhile the BBC, handling only 37 languages and 728 hours, has built up an admirable reputation of quality broadcasting, famed for both balanced and credible radio reporting. It is looked to by an estimated listening audience of 100 million people. For many oppressed persons, the BBC is their only source of reliable news about the very country in which they live. They say the war in Afghanistan “stops at BBC news time each day.”

Balanced and credible news broadcasting is one thing, but systematic and sound Bible teaching is another. The author of the *World Christian Encyclopedia* comments that the Christian message is of such a personal nature to the listener that eventually he finds it demands something of him. Therefore the letters sent to any Christian broadcaster are significant.

What does it mean for us to know that scattered over our globe are fellow Christians, brothers and sisters in the Lord, who are totally dependent upon our generosity to keep radio broadcasts coming to their areas, to keep them supplied with spiritual food?

Something has begun which no force in the world can stop. The Holy Spirit is working in the hearts of men and women everywhere and they are turning to God through the knowledge of Jesus the Messiah. Our age is reminiscent of the early Christian church, though it may not seem to be so in our locality. In those early days the gospel was talked about in the market place and it spread from family to family by word of mouth. This is happening over and over again. Two letters from Turkey illustrate this point.

In the first letter, our Turkish friend explained that at first he began to read our initial book, *The Teachings of the Holy Bible*, in order to know what Christianity was all about (and also to help him improve his Arabic as Turkish is his first language). However, he began to feel the guidance of the Holy Spirit in his life and he asked for our prayers.

Two weeks later he was prompted to write again. He had heard at the end of our broadcast that we had a commentary on the letter of Paul to the Romans. Tamer said: "I have had several difficulties in my reading of the epistle itself since certain texts were hard for me, due to the fact that I am a recent believer in the Redeemer, Jesus the Messiah. . . . Your commentary on Romans will enable me to be better equipped with my newfound faith."

Again, this Turkish convert was saying:

"I would like you also to know that I never fail in spreading the good news among my friends and acquaintances. Be sure that your valuable books which you have sent me in the past will be a great means which I will be using in winning souls to the Lord." He ended his letter with the words: "Glory be to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, world without end. Amen."

Secret Christians are not counted or classified as Christians in any census of their country. But their changed lives are transparent to their friends. In their enthusiasm they spontaneously witness to their new-found faith. Missionaries like that are being reborn every day.

As Paul said in his letter to the Romans: "Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ" (Rom. 10:17 NIV). Thanks to radio missions, millions of persons now are hearing the word of Christ.