

The Airwaves Are Used for God

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It is one of those things many people take for granted. Of course, the radio carries preaching, singing, and other gospel programs. In addition to local Christian broadcasters, there are nationwide programs. And there is missionary radio.

None of these things would have happened without the pioneers in the field of Christian broadcasting. The idea was to use this new tool for God's glory. In the early days of radio, one man who made good use of the new medium was Paul Rader (1879-1938). His varied background included working as a cowboy and coach. God spoke to him through an illuminated sign while he was walking through Times Square in New York. He rented a room to have time alone and sought God through prayer. Rader served as an evangelist and was pastor of Chicago's Moody Church from 1915-1921.

In the early 1920s Rader began airing programs at a Chicago station located on the roof of City Hall. The mayor of Chicago, who had built the radio station, invited Rader to fill some time. The project took off and Rader broadcast many hours of gospel programming every week. The shows always included music with a large choir, a brass band, and cutting-edge advertising.

As with many new things, Christian radio drew criticism. Some said it was an evil idea. But the early pioneers kept on working. Rader broadcast services drawing large radio audiences.

Today, there are over 1,600 Christian broadcasters in the United States, with others in foreign countries. The presenters carry several types of programs. Many Christian presentations have music. Others offer a talk format. Still others have sermons and teaching. A few still have drama. Most groups are members of the National Religious Broadcasters.

In addition to those who provide solid Bible messages on radio, others put forth slanted or untruthful teaching. It is important to know who is speaking as we drive along listening.

Christian radio became a part of my life as a child. Our large church broadcast its Sunday evening service every week.

Christians should be thankful for those who began using radio to proclaim the gospel. We can use the things God allows people to invent and discover. We have the printing press, automobile, radio, TV, computer, and other tools provided to mankind.

Sources-*The Christian Hall of Fame, Christian History*