

BACK TO THE BASICS

“This is what the LORD says: “Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths . . . ” (Jer 6:16)

It seems that many American Christians are more interested in modern technology than in the ancient paths. In fact, our dependence upon technology is so pervasive that if the electricity goes off or the computer quits, many “worship services” are basically over. Sometimes even personal evangelism is tied to pushing a button and activating a professional presentation. While pondering the ancient paths it dawned on me that human relationships do not depend upon technology. Our ability to reproduce, for example, is not at all dependent upon electricity and computers. In fact, many believe that when the electricity goes off in a city, 9 months later lots of babies will be born. Be that as it may, it is a fact that world population is accelerating, and often birth rates are highest where there is no modern technology at all. Statisticians tell us that world population in year 1 was approximately 200 million. In A.D. 1,500 it was 450 million, in 1,804 it was 1 billion, in 1927 it was 2 billion, in 1975 it was 4 billion, and world population is projected to reach 8 billion by A.D. 2025. Our accelerating world population is not dependent upon technology. People were even having babies before the wheel was invented. It is sad to say that today when modern technology is introduced, it is often used to prevent little babies from being born.

But now, as we think about the ancient paths, let us turn our attention to evangelism. Isn't it interesting that evangelism seems to be the greatest where there is the least technology? Undeniably, the church is growing much more rapidly in “undeveloped” countries. We all know that technology does not make babies, and we ought to know that it does not make Christians. When we go back to the basics, a baby is born after a seed is planted, and Christians are “born again” in the same way. Babies, as you know, are born from a corruptible seed, and Christians from the incorruptible, but in both instances the power to give life is not in technology, but in the seed.

Perhaps that is why Jesus selected 12 very common men to be foundational to His Church (Eph. 2:20). In fact, the original apostles were considered unlearned and ignorant (Acts 4:13). These men, as you know, were merely seed planters empowered by the Holy Spirit. Evangelism was originally so simple that when the church in Jerusalem was scattered by persecution, they “all” preached the word (Acts 8:4). If evangelism was technical, obviously they “all” could not have done it. The secret to their success was not in technology, education, or intelligence, it was the power of the Holy Spirit and the obedience of faith. Remember, if having babies required technology world population would be in decline. Remember, if evangelism required technology third world countries would not be so successful at it. That's why we need to go back to the basics!

Yes! Some women are barren and need modern technology to conceive. This, however, is the exception rather than the rule. Yes! Some skeptics have come to Christ as the result of technical scientific evidence. This, however, is the exception rather than the rule. Even in these exception cases, however, technology cannot produce life. In some instances it may help provide an environment for a seed to grow, but when we get back to the basic, life still comes from seeds. The late Seth Wilson was a brilliant skeptic who came to Christ at the age of 17. God used an uneducated Iowa farmer named Bill Beadle to help bring him to Christ. When Seth brought up scientific objections the wise farmer simply said: *“Seth, I don't know enough about things like that to settle it for you. But I know about Jesus”*.

True conversion does not come from excellency of speech, or men's wisdom, it comes from the power of God (1 Cor. 2:1 - 5). When we get back to the basics we need good seed and good soil, and without these basics, technology is powerless!

Returning to the ancient paths does not require us to abandon civilization and use stone age tools. Nor does it mean that we cannot use the printing press and other methods of mass communication for the communication of the Gospel. It does require, however, a change of focus. Paul put it like this: **“So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.” (2 Cor 4:18)**