

Charisma Meets the Digital Age

When I felt led to start a small church magazine, I barely knew what God had in store. That magazine released 36 years ago today, so I thought it was appropriate to reflect on what's happened, and more importantly what is on the verge of happening as we move boldly into the digital world.

Many of you know *Charisma* started at a megachurch in central Florida. I was working full time as a newspaper reporter then. My, how the media world has changed! The staff found this in the archives: a black-and-white photo of me holding a copy of *The Rock*, a youth newspaper that I published before *Charisma*. They had me hold an iPad to show the contrast. Back then I could have never imagined today's iPad! Yet I dreamed that maybe somehow we'd reach a million people. Do you know how many trees you'd have to cut down to print that many magazines?

So from 1975—before the personal computer was invented and a time when the electric typewriter I used was considered high-tech—fast-forward more than three decades and now *Charisma* (and our other magazines) are available in digital format that's almost beyond belief.

This is your invitation to be a charter subscriber to *Charisma Digital*. In mid-September it's available on the iPad; in mid-October it's on the Android. About the same time it will be available as single issues on the Nook and Kindle.

I got an iPad a few months ago and I enjoy reading magazines on it. It's a pleasant experience—a lot nicer than sitting in front of a computer screen. (I'm reading The One Year Bible every day on my iPhone!) Of course *Charisma Digital* has been available online for more than a year and still will be. We

sent it as an attachment to an email, and we sent it for free. Many of you like it. Most of you have never seen it. We developed a horizontal format to make it easy to read, and people in the industry even complimented and copied the way we did things (the sincerest form of flattery).

But most of the magazines available digitally are almost  all secular and many are nasty. We will be one of the first Christian magazines out there, and our voice is needed. In the last month Al-Jazeera and the *New York Times* have quoted us on controversial spiritual issues such as spiritual warfare or Christian Zionism. This shows that our voice is being heard.

But to move ahead we need your support. In fact our vision is to get 100,000 subscribers right away. Then we'll have the momentum to grow and reach out even overseas and make not only *Charisma* available, but many other specialty magazines. The possibilities are endless.

We're devoting our October issue to highlighting how ministries are now using digital technologies in new and exciting ways. For example, TBN is launching iTBN, which is like Hulu with every TBN show ever aired. When Paul and Jan Crouch started two years before *Charisma* did, they could have never imagined such a thing. I remember how they almost didn't make it until people caught a vision for the need for Christian TV and its potential to reach the world.

Magazines like *Charisma*—and *Christian Life* before us, going back to the '40s—have been limited by the need to print on paper and pay the post office to deliver. It's costly and time consuming. Now the Postal Service wants to cut back post offices, days of delivery and also go up on rates. But now our day has come! We can go around the world instantly via the Internet and Wi-Fi and be delivered to your computer, Nook, Kindle, iPad, etc. and soon the iPhone too.

We put our digital version on hiatus for a few months until we

could work out a better way to deliver it to you. We're finalizing our app called "Charisma Media," which is how we'll deliver all our magazines to you. The cost is about the same as print. When you subscribe you get access to all the platforms so you can read it when you want to, where you want to. And the experience includes videos, links, music and ways to order things that aren't available with ink on paper.

Now it's available and I'm asking you for a show of support by subscribing now. Our vision is to reach 1 million people with the message of the power of the Holy Spirit, to stand for righteousness and to encourage people to radically change their world. If this resonates with you, go ahead and subscribe early. It's a show of support. We'll notify you as soon as these new platforms are available. And if you're not happy you know you can trust us to give your money back.

Think of the ways we can advance the gospel. Think of the witness we can be in a marketplace that barely hears the name of the Lord, let alone the power of the Holy Spirit. I know you support many ministries. We are not asking you to support us with a donation, but your subscription is a huge blessing and for me personally it will be a show of support.

A month or so ago I sent out a tweet saying we planned to launch the digital issue and asked who was interested. Five people actually subscribed sight unseen. (They are a part of our beta test as we perfect the product.) So you can't literally be the first, but you can be a charter member by subscribing before Dec. 31. You can also help us by subscribing for friends or by forwarding this to others you think love *Charisma* and want to see it on the iPad and these other platforms.

The technology is changing fast. Sometimes our supplier delays or Apple will toss a curve ball, so it's possible these dates will be off. But we've worked hard and we feel confident we can deliver a good product. We need you to be flexible though,

and help us and even give feedback. We can't wait to offer subscriptions until every bug is worked out.

Is this appealing to you? Do you want to be among the first? Do you want to support our vision to provide spirit-filled journalism not only to the body of Christ but also to the world? If so, sign up today.