

Bible Correspondence Course Uses Internet to Share Gospel

The Bible Correspondence Course (BCC) in Turkey has seen its 50-year ministry transformed through harnessing the power of the Internet to share the gospel with Muslim Turks.

The Internet has changed almost every aspect of our lives, from how we shop to how we view communication and community. Christians all over the world are harnessing this powerful tool for the gospel, and many in Operation Mobilization are enthusiastic about the use of the Internet for evangelism.

For 30 years the BCC advertised its course through mail and door-to-door distribution. Then in the early 1990s, the BCC began advertising in newspapers, which more than quadrupled the number of contacts. After launching BCC's first websites in the late 1990s, the number of applicants skyrocketed, especially after using GoogleAds to advertise the websites. This past year, more than a quarter of a million unique visitors found BCC websites.

The course provides seekers an introduction to the life of Christ, a New Testament, literature and a connection with local fellowships. The goal is not that people complete the course, but that believers are added to existing churches or begin new churches.

By advertising through both newspaper and the Internet, people in rural areas containing no resident witness have access to the connection with Christians and the course.

In addition to using the Internet to advertise the course specifically, OM in Turkey has used Facebook to reach people with the Good News. More than 32 million Turks have Facebook profiles, making Turkey the fifth largest user of Facebook internationally.

The BCC's Facebook page, titled , launched in 2010 with eight fans. But in just a few months, the page had more than 6,000 fans, and now the site is approaching 24,000 "likes".

"Facebook ads have been key to the rise in this number," says Paul, the Internet ministries coordinator at the BCC. "Posts are also updated frequently and include offers of Christian materials, announcements, encouragement, Scriptures and links. The amazing thing is that more than 24,000 people are prepared to identify themselves as 'liking' a Christian site, when there are only 5,000 Christians in Turkey!

"We know of at least half a dozen who have come to faith as a result of the articles and thought-provoking, respectful posts by the Turkish staff who monitor our Facebook page."

A survey done several years ago revealed that almost half the believers in Turkey had traced their spiritual journey through the Bible Correspondence Course, and many provincial churches outside of the major cities have been planted as a result of BCC contacts.

But Turkey is not the only place where Internet evangelism is making a difference. Sunday was celebrated as Internet Evangelism Day. The website provides yearround resources for churches and individuals to get involved in using the Internet strategically for sharing God's Word.

Interested in sharing your faith online? Here are some ideas of how you can get started:

- Post a link to a Christian website on your Facebook page.
- Video yourself giving your testimony or presenting the gospel and upload it to YouTube.
- Tweet John 3:16 from your Twitter account. Use HootSuite and schedule a different verse every hour!

- Video some friends having a discussion about the gospel and upload it to Vimeo.
- Offer free New Testaments in the 'free' section on Craigslist.
- Visit Internet cafés and put shortcuts to Christian websites on the desktops of the computers.

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