

MUSINGS FROM THE MANSE

Tier Four Edition – No.3 – January 24th. 2021.



The older I get the more I realise how the world I live in seems to be going off in a peculiar direction.

There are areas I am losing touch with. Technology being one. I once built and programmed my own computer but now its coding not programming. I thought just secret agents were into coding. I now keep hearing the word pharmer (pertaining to pharmaceutical companies) which sounds too much like farmer. The way words are used grates like the word Literally Used liberally but rarely literally. *“Oh, my word I was literally dying of embarrassment.”* No, you weren't. On social media 'Trending' is another irritating word. We now have so many ways we can communicate our words, thoughts and ideas instantly. I recently read an article headed 'the 95 Social Networking Sites You Need to Know About In 2021' 95!! Yes, Social networks can be very effective in educating and enlightening, but they can also be very dangerous and subversive. Some objectionable people fortunately get banned from using them which is reassuring especially on Twitter.

The power of the Influencer.

This is a new job title to be an online influencer. Anyone can do it apparently. You promote an idea or product. What the influencer says or comments upon changes opinion, even lives. These folks attract incredible amounts of followers. The footballer Cristiano Ronaldo has 244 million followers on Instagram. Selena Gomez comes in second with a mere 124 million followers.

Another more subtle way of getting an idea to spread is through meme. The term **meme** (from the Greek *mimema*, meaning "imitated") was introduced in 1976 by British evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins in his work *The Selfish Gene*. Definition of *meme* - an idea, behaviour, style, or usage that spreads within a modern culture. It can be an amusing or interesting item such as a captioned picture or video it spreads widely online especially through social media. The grumpy cat *meme* for example frowned its way onto the Internet in 2012 the image of the cranky cat has grown so popular amassing 30 million likes in 2020. Ollie has posted a picture of the said grumpy cat (not our cat) top right-hand corner.

Being an influencer for the kingdom of God

As always, the Bible was ahead of the curve. It was talking about the significance of influencing others thousands of years before companies paid internet personalities to speak for them. But instead of being concerned with selling a product, the Bible wanted us to understand that people were watching us and would follow our behaviour if it was attractive. When Jesus called his followers the light of the world and the salt of the earth, He was addressing their influence. By looking at the church (us), people would better understand what God was like. Whether we like it or not, those of us who follow Jesus are influencers. The decisions we make impact those around us. The lives we lead either make us more credible witnesses or they make it more difficult for others to take the gospel seriously. That's why Paul tells Timothy: Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity (1 Timothy 4:12). So we need to reach the world by what we do and say. If we're going to be influencers, we need to be known as people whose words reflect the hope and encouragement found in Christ.

ZOOM BIBLE STUDY REMINDER

There is still time. It begins on Jan 27th. Wednesdays at 7:00pm. Send me an email if you are interested. [andwood@ntlworld.com].

PUZZLE CORNER

Question You may recognise this one!

"A farmer needs to cross the river with his chicken, a sack of corn and a fox. His boat unfortunately can only fit himself and one other thing. The fox and chicken are hungry, so if he leaves the fox with the chicken, the chicken will get eaten, whilst if he leaves the chicken with the corn, the corn will get eaten. How will the man get safely across with all 3?"

Answer to previous quiz – 'L' it's made up of two lines all the others have three lines.

Andrew and Jill