

# **THE UNCHANGING WORD BIBLE BROADCAST**

**WOULD LIKE TO PRESENT THIS BRIEF REVIEW OF  
DR. MITCHELL'S BROADCAST MINISTRY**

**THIS REVIEW PROVIDES SOME BACKGROUND  
TO THIS BROADCAST MINISTRY**

**WE TRUST GOD WILL BLESS YOU AS YOU READ  
OF THE FAITHFUL MINISTRY OF**

**DR. JOHN G. MITCHELL  
FOR THE LORD JESUS CHRIST  
1892-1990**

## Chapter Twenty-Two

*Broadcaster*

**L**etters from listeners came daily to the Know Your Bible Hour office after Jack Mitchell's death. A sampling of those that arrived include the following:

**“I have found Dr. Mitchell the best Bible teacher I ever heard on TV or radio. I loved his warm voice. He is one of the few who always made Jesus the center and not himself. His love for his listeners was real. He even wrote a little letter to me himself—not his secretary. He was the only one who ever did that. I got to loving Dr. Mitchell the first week I heard him. He taught me so much about Jesus, and I knew he was telling the truth....”**

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**“I often listened to Know Your Bible Hour over station KGNW. Dr. Mitchell radiated Christ, his love for his Lord and Saviour and his love for people to know the Word and to know and love the Saviour, too....”**

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**“I do miss hearing Dr. Mitchell's voice on Know Your Bible. Even his voice radiated his love for our Saviour, and I feel my life was enriched through his ministry....”**

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**“It is difficult to explain the sense of loss I experienced when Dr. Mitchell no longer joined me in my kitchen at 9 a.m. over KBBO for a time of refreshment and challenge. Jesus Christ was always exalted as Dr. Mitchell reverently led us into a deeper appreciation and greater understanding of our Wonderful Lord and Saviour...”**

A principle of Jack Mitchell's life was “God rewards faithfulness, not greatness.”

Daily, faithfully for many years, the voice of Multnomah School of the Bible came across the airways of the West via the *Know Your Bible Hour* radio broadcast. Since the early 1930s, Jack had had a radio program as part of the ministry of the Portland Bible Classes and then of Central Bible Church. Morning and evening services were broadcast.

When the *Know Your Bible Hour* went on daily with Con Robinson as the announcer and Frank Eaton as soloist, Dr. Mitchell would have marathon recording sessions in which he would tape five or more broadcast messages at a time.

The response was instantaneous, and letters like the following continued to pour in over the years:

**“The Holy Spirit has used your broadcast to encourage me and to strengthen my faith in times of deep need. More than once the Spirit has awakened me in the early morning to listen to your program and has dealt with my heart from the words which were spoken. For this I thank the Lord! I want to encourage you to keep declaring the Words of Life, because the Lord has, He is, and He will continue to touch hearts through your radio ministry. He always honors His Word!”**

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**“I listen to you almost daily over KPDQ-FM and delight in two things in particular: 1) Your unabashed love and devotion to our Lord. 2) Your teaching on the grace of God, especially as you contrast and compare grace with law.... Your program is such a blessing to me each day.”**

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**“My thoughts of you are all prayers turned heavenward. Never could I express how many times your prayers and notes of encouragement kept me, as a mother, going.”**

Unlike many radio commentators, Dr. Mitchell took the time to pray himself for those who wrote him with requests. He also responded to every letter and signed each letter himself, often adding a personal note.

His secretary, Marian O’Connor, who served him for 12½ years, says, “He was always punctual. He always took his work seriously. He especially had a real interest in communicating with the radio listeners who would write

to him. He would spend many hours each week acknowledging the gifts that people had sent into the broadcast.

**“He would write a new letter each month that went specifically to the donors that month, and he would sign each letter personally. If there were prayer requests or questions that people had, he would try to acknowledge them at the bottom of his letter. Every day I would give him more letters to sign, and he would take time to pray for those requests. I know he would gather the requests at the end of the week and bring them home to Mary Mitchell, and they would pray through those requests together.”**

He also took the time to see people. He would see students who had questions. He would see radio listeners who would call for an appointment for counseling. People would come in off the street and walk into the office and ask if they could talk to him. And as long as his schedule would allow that, he would welcome them into the office and pray with them about whatever problem or situation they had on their mind.

**“He always had time for people,” Marian says. “It seems that he knew that people were important, and he would make time for them.**

**“I could never hear what he was saying in his office to people. When someone would go into the office, he would generally close the door; but I could sense when people left that it had been a good meeting, a helpful meeting—certainly a time when they had prayed together.”**

Jack and Con Robinson spend many hours together, sharing burdens with each other and bringing them before the Lord and praying. Marian says she would see Con leaving the office, and she could sense that a burden he’d been able to share with Dr. Mitchell had been lifted.

Not all of the letters they received were positive and encouraging. Sometimes, people would take their teacher to task, letting him know what they thought and spelling out in what area they thought he was wrong.

**“I know his feeling was you cannot force someone to believe what you believe,” Marian says. “You know it has to come from the heart. You cannot ever force your faith or opinion on someone else. He handled those**

**letters in different ways. Sometimes he would go into depth and show why he believed what he believed. At other times he would just thank the person for sending the letter and basically say, ‘The Lord bless you in your walk with God.’ He didn’t want to get into an argument that would be futile; but he did want to let the person know that even though there might be some disagreement, ‘we can still both walk with God and we can still have fellowship.’”**

He was always concerned when he got behind in his correspondence. He wanted to acknowledge every letter that came through the office, and he did the best he could with that.

**“I think that was such a unique aspect of his ministry,” Marian says. “People remember him as a great teacher, as a Bible scholar, as a speaker. What I saw was someone who was concerned about individuals who wrote to him. He wanted to let them know that he received their letter. It wasn’t always possible, but he did his best.**

**“Sometimes I just had to laugh because he was so meticulous about keeping up with his correspondence that I would start taking a letter from him only to find we were thanking people for *their* thank you note. And that’s just the way he was. He was so appreciative of their taking time to write him that he wanted to reciprocate.”**

Most of the time he dictated into a machine he had in his office. Generally, each afternoon after teaching, he would go through his letters and dictate several at a time. But when he began to tire near the end, he would ask Marian to come into the office and take dictation because he didn’t have the strength to use the machine.

Marian says:

**“His last day in the office was spent signing letters to radio listeners. And I know he wasn’t feeling well that day, but he came in anyway; and I had a stack of letters on his desk as usual. He signed those letters and it took him quite a while.**

**“I was wondering how he was doing because it was so quiet in there. I was a little concerned because I knew he hadn’t been feeling well. But**

**eventually he came out with the stack of letters all signed. He also had a handwritten letter to some friends he had become acquainted with because of the radio broadcast. They had become close friends so that, in that particular case, he had decided to handwrite a letter to them. But that was his commitment.**

**“I think many listeners felt they knew him personally because of those letters, those little notes,” Marian says. “Every month for some of them there would be a little note that he would write, saying, ‘I’m praying for your family.’”**

At the heart of the Mitchell radio ministry stood its creed: “We are in Christ Jesus. We have a new life experience in the power of the Spirit. We have been brought into forgiveness of sins and into a wonderful joy through what our Lord Jesus did on the cross. We are no longer under condemnation. We have union and communion with Him, and nothing can separate us from the love of God.”

His yearning for sinners to come to the Saviour colored the conclusion of many broadcasts. His yearning for saints to walk in the good of all they have in Christ struck home in many hearts. Listeners wrote such responses as those that follow:

**“What a gentle shepherd Dr. John Mitchell is. Your program is a refreshing for me every weekday morning. Daily, it improves my focus on the Author and Finisher of my faith. What a blessing!”**

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**“I personally am greatly blessed by the teaching of Dr. Mitchell. Having been a Christian for about 5-1/2 years now, it is very difficult to find a source of teaching that is sound, consistent and Christ-centered. I spent many years in drug and alcohol addiction before the Lord graciously saved me.**

**Having never attended church before or read the Bible, I fell into all the current false teaching that is going around today.**

**Dr. Mitchell, if you ever wonder if God is using you mightily, rest assured that there is one new believer right here that will be eternally grateful for your love for Jesus and your faithfulness to His Word.**

**It is because of believers like you that believers like me are no longer tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine. May the Lord Himself express my gratitude—I don't know if I have the words."**

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**"The number of times I am able to listen to your program is no measure of how much I value it. I know of no one who can make the love of our Saviour as real and precious as Dr. Mitchell can. I love to hear him speak.... Once you've heard him, you can never forget that Jesus loves you."**

The letters from listeners brought him great joy, Marian says.

**"How he loved to pray over them and answer them.**

**"When I think of Dr. Mitchell, I think of a man of prayer. That seemed prevalent in his letters to people. He would always bring them back to prayer and to the daily walk with God. He loved to encourage those who wrote him to seek the Lord Himself for the answer to their problems. He loved to call them on to live a godly life 'in daily fellowship with the Lord Jesus.'**

**"He would tell them: 'No matter what your problem, no matter what your situation, no matter what someone else is doing, be sure you are walking daily with the Lord.'"**

Perhaps Dr. Mitchell's principle that "God rewards faithfulness, not greatness" might in his case be modified.

Sometimes, God rewards faithfulness *with* greatness.