

# Cross Current



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## Tuning Into Faith

William Lear and Elmer Wavering got a lot of mileage out of their favourite music — they invented the car radio!

One night in 1929 they took their girlfriends to watch the sunset from a lookout high above Quincy, Illinois. It was romantic but one of the girls said it would be even better if they could listen to music.

Intrigued, the two men took apart a home radio and tried to make it work in a car. But switches, generators and other electrical equipment generated lots of static interference, making it almost impossible to hear the radio while the engine was running.

Over time, the determined inventors eliminated each source of interference, perfected their radio, and took it to a radio convention in Chicago where they met businessman Paul Gavin. Soon after, they set up shop in Gavin's factory.

To secure a loan, Gavin contacted a banker and put a radio in the man's Packard. Nice try but, a half-hour after the installation, the banker's car caught fire! Loan denied.

Undeterred, Gavin drove 800 miles to a radio convention in Atlantic City. Unable to afford a booth, he parked outside and cranked the radio volume so everyone could hear. That got him enough orders to put the car radio into production.

In 1930, most of the big radio and record companies used the suffix *ola* in their names, including Victrola, which made phonograph players. Copying them, Gavin called his motor car radio the Motorola. But despite the catchy names, there were problems. The radio cost \$110 at a time when a new car \$650, which is like paying \$3,000 for a radio



A bowed heart  
means more  
than a bowed knee!

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today. Not only that, installation took two men several days and holes had to be cut in the roof and floor boards — and the Great Depression was well underway.

But in 1933, Ford began to offer the car radio pre-installed and Gavin's company was all set. He changed its name to Motorola and, over the years, the firm introduced a series of breakthroughs including the walkie-talkie, the pager, and — in 1973 — the first handheld cell phone. As for Elmer Wavering, he invented the automotive alternator, paving the way for power windows and air-conditioning. Bill Lear invented, among other things, the Lear Jet, the first affordable, mass-produced business aircraft.

There are lots of parallels in this saga of these intrepid inventors to the pursuit of faith, which begins for most of us when — even if things are going well — we sense something is missing. But when we try to make the spiritual perspective work in our lives, we encounter all kinds of interference, including the noise and demands of daily life, discouragement, feelings of inadequacy stemming from the persistence of our human desires, and the static we get from those who want us to stay the same.

All we can do is eliminate each source of interference by letting the grace and power of God act upon our commitment to change. There will be setbacks, of course, and sometimes our efforts to model the Christian way will go up in flames.

The key is to keep going. We must form partnerships with those who share our vision, pool our spiritual resources to achieve our goals, and share what we have to offer. The best way to do that is simply to demonstrate that faith works. We must open the doors and windows of our lives and let people experience the love-infused music of faith that floods from a grateful, strong and fulfilled heart.

As in the early days of the car radio, some people will be scared off by the high cost of faith or the intrusive changes that must be made in the heart to accommodate it. But the Great Designer knows what he's doing. *"I know the plans I have for you,"* he says. *"Plans to prosper you, and not to harm you. Plans to give you hope and a future."* (Jeremiah 29:11) A bold, confident future full of personal breakthroughs and powerful blessings. Stay tuned.

