PODCASTS I FOLLOW

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Some podcasts you might find interesting, informative or amusing while you are out running or stuck in traffic on the morning commute.
Category: Reviews

This isn't going to beÂ a usual Kouyanet post; but if you keep reading to the end, there is something of interest to people involved in cross-cultural or frontier mission (honest).

I'm still not sure that I can call myself a runner, but I do run a lot. Many runners listen to music to keep them motivated, but I tend to listen to podcasts - perhaps the mental activity serves to block out the pain. Here are some of the things I listen to:

In Our Time: broadcaster and writer Melvin Bragg is joined by three experts in their fields to talk about some interesting subject for forty-five minutes. One week it might be Julius Caesar and the next it might be quantum physics. The range of subjects is incredibly broad and the individual programmes are always fascinating. It's worth digging back through the archives if you need to research a particular subject; you won't get a better introduction to The Corn Laws, Leonardo, String Theory...

The Life Scientific: another conversational programme, but with a rather more limited field. Jim Al-Khalili, himself a leading quantum physicist, interviews scientists from a variety of disciplines about their life and work. It's a genial and always interesting programme and having once been a scientist, I love it.

Staying on the science theme, The Infinite Monkey Cage, is altogether more irreverent and downright silly than the Life Scientific. Professor Brian Cox and comedian Robin Ince host a programme which is part conversation; part panel game, in which scientists and comedians attempt to extractÂ clarity and comedyÂ from discussions of scientific issues. It isn't always comfortable listening for those of a religious persuasion, but it can be fascinating and is usually rather funny.

Talking of being funny, The Friday Night Comedy, from the BBC is usually well worth a listen while Simon Mayo's Confessions' Podcast brings a daft smile to my face no matter how far I've run.

Those who know their British radio will realise that everything I've suggested so far, apart from the Confessions Podcast, comes from Radio Four. However, the best podcast of all in my opinion (and there are other opinions, but they are wrong) comes from Radio Five. Kermode and Mayo's Film Review, better known to its fans as Wittertainment, is a cross between a film review programme and a secret society. If you enjoy movies; it provides excellent reviews and discussion of the latest offerings in the cinema and even if you don't like films, it provides ninety minutes of excellent entertainment. It can take a while to get used to the bickering, the catch phrases and the running jokes and some people never grow to love it. However, in my view, Wittertainment is what radio and podcasts were created for.

Switching away from the BBC, brings me to a recent discovery; The British History Podcast. Surprisingly, perhaps, this podcast originates from the US, not the UK. However, don't let that put you off because it is fantastic. I a series of half hour episodes, it is working through British history from pre-history to the present day; at the time of writing, it is in the ninth century. I'm in the middle

of catching up with the material on seventh century Northumbria (as you do) and I have to see that I am more than impressed. The detail is excellent and as a good historian, Jamie, the presenter distinguishes between good sources, bad sources and his own speculation. The presentation is amusing and fast moving, but also very, very detailed. In those areas where I have any knowledge, I can't fault him (and I've tried).

And now, for the cross-cultural missionaries... Take a listen to this episode from the British History Podcast which describes the conversion of Edwin (great name), the King of Northumbria.Â For my money, this half hour broadcast is one of the best explanations of the social and political implications of mass conversion that you will find anywhere.

All of these podcasts can be found by searching within the podcast apps on your phone or tablet. For one reason or another, I've just stopped using the generic IOS podcast app and have switched to Overcast - so far it works wll.