

Moments for YOU

Volume 55, Number 1

Theme: Tract Evangelism



TRIED AND TRUE

"In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good" (Ecclesiastes 11:6).

The circulation of tracts as a means of preaching the Gospel is actually older than the art of printing. Wycliffe, the reformer, was a great writer and distributor of tracts, employing his pupils and friends to multiply copies by hand. Martin Luther was a worker through tracts as well, but with the help of the printing press. Two hundred years later, Count Zinzendorf, another devoted reformer, made extensive use of the printing press in the spreading of Gospel tracts.

All these years our God has been watching over these silent messengers, and, no one but the Lord Himself can tell into how many hands they have fallen, and how many hearts have been moved to receive the truth as to God's salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Richard Gibbs wrote a tract entitled, "The Bruised Reed." A tin peddler gave it to a man named Richard Baxter: through reading it he was brought to Christ. He then wrote, "A Call to the Unconverted." Among the thousands saved through it was Phillip Doddridge, who wrote "The Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul." It fell into the hands of William Wilberforce, the emancipator of the slaves in the British Colonies, and led him to Christ. Wilberforce wrote, "A Practical View of Christianity," which fired the heart of Leigh Richmond. He wrote "The Dairyman's

Daughter," of which as many as four million copies were circulated, as it testified for Christ in over fifty different languages.

As with all service for the Lord, we cannot tell what great and wonderful results He will bring when we act in obedience to Him. "Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days" (Ecclesiastes 11:1).

HUDSON TAYLOR: SAVED BY A TRACT

Gospel tracts have the amazing ability to deliver their message to many souls that the distributor of the tract will never even meet. Hudson Taylor, who was used of the Lord to reach countless souls in China, is an excellent example of this.

One day while seeking something to read, Hudson turned over a basket of tracts in his father's library and selected one that looked interesting. While reading it he was struck with the phrase, "The finished work of Christ." Immediately the words attracted his attention. "What was finished?" he asked himself. Reading further, the tract explained the finished work as "a full and perfect atonement and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world."

Then Hudson thought, "If the whole work was finished on the cross of Calvary, and the whole debt of sin paid, what is there left for me to do?" Hudson was thus convinced, as the light of God's truth flashed into his soul by the Holy Spirit, "There was nothing to be done but to fall down on my knees and accept the Saviour and His salvation and praise Him forever."

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Hudson Taylor was seventeen years old at the time. He then went on to faithfully serve His Saviour for 51 years in China, founding the China Inland Mission which employed more than 800 Christian missionaries and established more than 300 local offices in China. What a marvelous harvest God reaped from just one seed sown!

—Dr. and Mrs. Howard Taylor

LIFE IN THE SEED

Do we realize the extraordinary dynamic of the printed page? Dr. Goodell, of the American board of missions, passed through Nicodemia, Turkey, in 1832. Having no time to stop or preach, he left a gospel paper with a stranger along the street. Seventeen years later he visited the area again, and found a Christian community of more than 200 members.

Dr. Griffith John tells of eight churches in China reared by tracts alone. Dr. Bartle Frere, traveling in India, was amazed to find a small town in which the idol shrines and temples were empty because the people professed the Christian faith. He was told that some years earlier one of them had been given an old piece of clothing which contained a Gospel portion and eight or nine tracts.

The life is not in the sower, but in the seed. Divine literature is somewhat like thistledown, precious seed which is blown by the winds of the Spirit, and floats over the world. When this precious seed finds good ground, it produces fruit.

The printed page is deathless: you can destroy one copy, but the press will produce millions more. Its very mutilation can be its sowing. Discarded tracts have been used to save many lost souls. Even torn and shredded tracts—fragments contain-

ing only two words—have been used by the Lord.

The printed page never flinches, never shows cowardice. It is never tempted to compromise. It never tires and never grows disheartened. It travels cheaply, requires no stage, and works while we sleep. It never loses its temper and it works long after we have passed on. The printed page is a visitor which gets inside the home and stays there. It always catches a person in the right mood, for it speaks only when it is being read. It always sticks to what it has said, and never answers back.

Regarding our tract distribution:

- We should as much as possible ask God's blessing.
- We should confidently expect God's blessing upon it.
- We should labor on in this service—prayerfully and believingly labor on—even though for a long time we should see little or no fruit.

We should continue on as if everything depended on our labors, while, in reality, we ought not to put the least confidence in our exertions, but alone in God's ability and willingness to bless, by His Holy Spirit, our efforts for the sake of the Lord Jesus.

NONE IN HELL

"Tracts everywhere!" said a young man with a sneer as a Christian handed him a gospel tract one afternoon. "No," said the tract distributor quietly, "there will be none in hell," and passed on. God fastened that single sentence in that young man's mind and he could not get rid of it. "None in hell!" seemed to echo in his ears every time he saw a tract, and ultimately he was converted.

WHAT A TRACT CAN DO FOR SOME, THE ONLY WAY

“I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase” (1 Corinthians 3:6).

While waiting to see a patient, John Scudder, a successful surgeon living in New York, picked up and read a tract on missions. Spurred by what he read, he and his wife became medical missionaries—first to Sri Lanka, and then to India.

For thirty years John and his wife labored together, helping the sick and preaching the Gospel by the spoken word and printed page. After his wife passed into glory, John continued six additional years before joining her. But that was not the end; when you include their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, 42 members of the family have given a combined total of more than 1,100 years of service to the Lord in India.

Who can calculate the world-changing blessing brought by the Lord through just this one tract?

SOWING THE SEED

One person can completely change the character of a country and the eternal destiny of its people by dropping a single seed in the fertile ground of a soul prepared by the Lord. Eternity alone will reveal the results of your efforts. *“And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not” (Galatians 6:9).*

When you give out a tract—don’t forget that God is glorified by every tract you distribute. It remains a fact, whether the offer is received or rejected, that God in His sovereign grace has extended full and eternal salvation by means of that tract to the receiver. He can never say he was not told of God’s loving offer.

It’s a wonderful thing that the story of the grace of God can be compressed into a few hundred words and printed on a piece of paper. It’s even more wonderful when you consider that masses of people will not listen to a Christian broadcast on radio or TV. Neither will they enter a church building or discuss spiritual things with a Christian.

You’ve probably heard the common reply, “I don’t believe in discussing politics or religion.” Did you know that millions of people have this attitude? Multitudes cannot be reached by any other method than gospel tracts. Why? They have closed their hearts and minds to all public gospel approaches. Only the private door is open.

A person sitting in an airport will read the tract they find on their seat, yet they would stubbornly refuse to discuss the same truths with a witnessing Christian. Or a person may find a tract in a hotel lobby or a restaurant booth. In that secret moment the Holy Spirit can deal with them about Christ.

A whole segment of humanity cannot be reached in any other way. This means that the tract ministry is as vital as any form of evangelism. These people can be reached in a private moment with a tract that tells the message of Jesus Christ.

Many people have been deceived into thinking that tract ministry is not that important. Without realizing it, many Christians are despising one of the choicest ministries for our day of hit-and-run living. Once a believer begins to use gospel tracts, he finds how tracts reach people that he will never even meet face to face. Leave one in a public place, and the Holy

Spirit will have someone ready who needs this approach—a person you'll never see until we reach Heaven. There is no substitute for the "hidden treasure" concept of Matthew 13:44. Some people just have to find Christ by themselves.

Arm yourself with these silent evangelists, and you'll contact souls beyond the reach of any public evangelist. For some it's the only way.

—C. S. Lovett

LEAD THEM TO WATER

"Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:14).

There is a saying which emphasizes the difference between leading a horse to water and making him drink when he gets there. It is often repeated and is very true. The one task is simple and even a child can lay hold of the halter and lead the horse to the stream. But, once there, if the horse does not wish to drink, ten men could not make him do so.

As we distribute the Gospel in the printed page, we are well aware that the saying may be easily applied to what we are doing. It is our responsibility to lead lost souls to the water, but we cannot make them drink.

Remember how our Lord Jesus "stood and cried, saying, if any man thirst let him come unto Me, and drink" (John 7:37). Just as the water in a clear mountain stream brings life and refreshment to those who would otherwise die without it, Jesus is the giver of spiritual life and blessing to all who come to Him.

When we present the Gospel, we are making it clear that there are two things which every person needs: for-

givenness and eternal life. The Gospel also makes it clear that these two things are only found in Jesus Christ: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

We need forgiveness because "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). When Jesus, the perfect sinless Son of God, died on Calvary's cross, He endured much more than just the physical agony of crucifixion. During those brutal hours Jesus became our substitute, suffering for our sin at the hands of almighty God. Because He "bare our sins in His own body on the tree" (1 Peter 2:24), God offers true forgiveness to all who seek it in Jesus Christ.

When a sinner turns to God, accepting by faith the perfect atoning work accomplished on their behalf by Jesus Christ, God can righteously forgive their every sin—past, present, and future. In fact, the cleansing is so complete that, in God's eyes, the sinner becomes a saint: "And such [all types of sinners] were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." (1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

But it doesn't stop there. When we are born again by faith in Jesus Christ, God gives us a new life—an eternal, spiritual life which enjoys fellowship with God now, and will enjoy it forever with Him in Heaven.

Have you received forgiveness and eternal life? The "water of life" is there for you, but have you taken it? We can simply point you to Christ, and pray that the Holy Spirit will cause you to turn to Him in repentance and faith today. "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17). —Scattered Seed, adapted

HEART FOR CHRIST: HEART FOR SOULS

The natural spiritual desire of every born-again heart, thankfully rejoicing in the Lord His Saviour, is to be used to win others to the Lord. This begins with the ones closest to us. Andrew brought his own brother Simon Peter to Jesus (John 1:40-42).

Let us not forget that the Lord wants to use *me* to bring those in *my* life to know Jesus as Saviour. Every soul that we come in contact with is a soul for whom Christ died. Oh! that they knew this wonderful Saviour! *“He that winneth souls is wise”* (Proverbs 11:30).

What can I do? One effective witnessing tool is the Gospel tract. Tract distribution is seed sowing, the seed being the Gospel of Jesus Christ. *“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever”* (1 Peter 1:23). God can cause the seed to spring up into life—eternal life. This eternal life or new birth in a soul is brought about by the action of the Word of God and the Spirit of God. It takes but a second or two to drop a seed into a person’s hand or into a place where it can be picked up later, but God can use that seed to bring eternal life by His Spirit. Life is made up of seconds and minutes to be used for Christ. Our lives touch others, sometimes through Christian love shown on a daily basis over a long time, and sometimes through a witness given in a fleeting moment.

The challenges to tract distribution seem greater today than in times past. Some local regulations prohibit the distribution of literature in certain public areas, but the greatest change can be seen in peoples’ attitudes about the Gospel. Today’s world is a

world of “anything goes,” and moral absolutes have been abandoned in favor of personal opinions. But God’s voice in the Scriptures can still be heard today, and needs to be heard as much as ever—if not more. That voice speaks to man’s rebellious heart, showing him to be a sinner in need of a Saviour. True, men’s hearts are hardened against the testimony of the Word of God, but that is where Gospel tracts can play a powerful role. A single tract can be used by the Lord as a voice of testimony to His Word, convicting of sin, and drawing a soul to the Saviour. I thank God that I can have a part in this work by scattering the living seed. It is a joyful service for the Lord.

One thing you can’t do in Heaven is witness.

REACH YOUR WORLD

“Then I said, I will not make mention of Him, nor speak any more in His name. But His word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones” (Jeremiah 20:9).

It seems that many people do not see the tremendous possibilities of reaching souls through Gospel tracts. We need to have within our spiritual lives a holy zeal, an unquenchable passion for the souls of mankind. When Jeremiah the prophet refrained from sharing God’s Word, he felt an undeniable yearning in his heart. We too should have this fire in our bones to win precious souls.

There are thousands, millions, even billions yet to be reached. We can’t all travel to far-off parts of the world to share the message of the Gospel—but we can all reach our world for Christ by using tracts. Do we have an unquenchable thirst for soul-winning?

—P. Daniel

DO YOU REALLY CARE?

A Christian was stopped by a long-time friend, who asked: "How long have we known each other?"

After a moment's thought he replied, "About fifteen years, I guess."

"You are a Christian, right?"

"Yes, I am."

Then his friend asked, "As a Christian, do you really believe I must accept Christ as my Saviour?"

"Yes, I do. It's the truth."

Then came the more significant question: "Do you care whether or not I am saved?"

"Yes, of course I do."

"Well," said the friend, "I don't believe that. As you say, we have been good friends for fifteen years, yet in all those years you have never once mentioned Jesus Christ to me. We have talked about everything else, and if you really cared the least little bit about my soul you would have said something by now."

The Christian was stunned, and after confessing his failure to God, proceeded to share the Gospel with his friend.

Who do you need to tell about Christ? Don't put it off any longer.

YEARS LOST

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." (1 Corinthians 15:58).

A Christian man was passing out Gospel tracts. Among those who received one was a gentleman who remarked as he received it that he feared such efforts did little permanent good. "I am not opposed to such work," he said. "In my younger days I did a good deal of it myself, but I cannot say that

I ever saw any fruit from it."

The tract distributor was somewhat discouraged by that remark, but he instantly remembered how his own conversion was brought about by means of a tract. One night, years before, as he passed the door of a mission hall a young man handed him a tract and asked him to go inside and hear the Gospel. He did go in, and heard words there that awakened him to think of eternity and his state before God. He went home in deep trouble of soul. In his anxiety he turned to the tract he had received, read it, and was saved.

The tract distributor told this story to the gentleman, who listened with evident interest. When it was finished, he said, "May I ask where this most interesting event took place?" The man named the city, the street, the hall, and the very night on which he got the tract and was invited inside. The gentleman's eyes filled with tears; he grasped the young man's hand, and said with great emotion: "It was my work for many a night, when I was a young man, newly converted, to stand at that door giving tracts and inviting passers-by to hear the Gospel. But I lost heart soon after that and gave it up, thinking that such work was almost useless. Now after twenty years, God has let me know it was not in vain, and by His grace I will return to the service He gave me long ago, confessing my faithlessness in leaving it."

This remarkable story is a testament to God's saving grace and restoring mercy. But think of the twenty intervening years of service which were lost. How many more golden sheaves might have appeared to that Christian worker's account in the day of Christ had he continued in the work that the Lord gave him to do!

30 WAYS TO USE GOSPEL TRACTS

Hopefully the following list will give you some ideas of how you can put the “silent missionaries” to work. No matter where or how you choose to distribute tracts, seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit for each tract placed, and then pray for the Lord of the harvest to bless the seed sown.

1. Put in greeting cards.
2. Pass out door to door.
3. Share with fellow campers.
4. Tack up on bulletin boards.
5. Put in pockets of used clothing given away.
6. Pass out at parades, festivals, and special events.
7. Hand out at stadium entrances, concerts, etc.
8. Mail out (with your return address) to names in a telephone book.
9. Leave in laundromats.
10. Give to attendants at parking garages, toll booths, etc.
11. Leave in motel rooms (in the drawers, telephone book, etc.).
12. Include in bills paid by mail.
13. Hand to store employees, check-out clerks, valets.
14. Leave in returned library books.
15. Put in magazines in waiting rooms.
16. Get permission to put up tract racks in stores, businesses, etc.
17. Enclose with letters to prisoners, pen-pals, etc.
18. Leave with (generous) tip in restaurants.
19. Give to hospital and nursing home patients while visiting.
20. Hand out at zoos, picnic areas, beaches.
21. Leave on seat in bus, cab, airplane, etc.
22. Leave in locker at health club.
23. Pass out on busy street corners.
24. Give out on college campuses.
25. Leave in break room or cafeteria at work, school.
26. Leave for newspaper boy, mailman, etc.
27. Put in each box or bag of merchandise you sell.
28. Put in airport lounges, bus terminals, etc.
29. Give to students at Vacation Bible School and Sunday School.
30. Rent booths at fairs for tract displays.

10 WAYS NOT TO USE GOSPEL TRACTS

When distributing the Gospel, be sure to do so in a way that brings glory and honor to God. With that in mind, here are some things to avoid.

1. Don't litter—tracts left outdoors can easily blow around and become a nuisance to those who have to clean them up.
2. Don't leave tracts in Post Offices or other places where literature is prohibited.
3. Don't force tracts on people.
4. Don't be rude when someone turns down your tract.
5. Don't trespass.
6. Don't cause damage by sticking tracts to houses, cars, etc.
7. Don't leave a tract in place of a tip—it is a very poor testimony.
8. Don't use bad tracts. Make sure they are attractive and contain the Gospel.
9. Don't forget to take tracts everywhere you go! You can't share what you don't have.
10. Don't do it alone—seek God's guidance and blessing at every turn.