

Winning Souls With Tracts

"He who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully" (2 Cor. 9:6)

The Need For The Seed

Do we have a responsibility to the unsaved? Can we look at the unconverted around us, heading unconsciously toward destruction, without being moved? Can we think of the doom that awaits an ungodly world and not weep? If Jesus wept over *one city*, shouldn't we have compassion for a *whole world* that lies in wickedness and is rushing to judgment? Shouldn't we use every opportunity to warn unbelievers and earnestly persuade them, as Paul did, to be reconciled to God?

God tells us that he is "not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9). The same grace of God that saved us is extended to them (Eph. 2:8,9). Without the gospel they are doomed to eternal damnation by God (Jn. 3:18).

Is It possible to selfishly enjoy our own security and leave the Father's love and grace unproclaimed, not warning sinners of impending judgment? "He who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death" (Jas. 5:20). God expects us to carry the seed to others, and even holds us responsible (see Ezek. 3:18,20). May we be stirred to pray, watch and labor for Christ and for souls!

Sowing The Seed

Anyone may spread the good news of Christ by tract distribution. A Christian who does not habitually use sound, scriptural tracts is constantly missing wonderful opportunities of increasing his usefulness toward man and his fruitfulness toward God.

Tracts can be tactfully given to fellow workers or travelers, enclosed in letters and bills, and left on counters, seats and windshields. They can be displayed on bulletin boards, inserted in newspapers, magazines and books. Tracts can be distributed at parades, fairs, and other public events where permitted.

Do you know a less expensive method of spreading the gospel of Christ? Many tracts are free while others can be purchased for a few cents apiece. Do you know of a surer way of "sowing bountifully" and "reaping bountifully"?

The Desire To Sow

The Lord graciously saved a man named Tom Olson shortly after he entered his teens. He prayed for the privilege of handing out a million tracts in his life-time. By distributing 1000 tracts each week, he could reach one million in 20 years!

After giving himself to the Lord for "full-time service," he began working many towns from door to door, placing up to 500 tracts per day. His yearning to distribute a million tracts was soon realized. Praise the Lord!

Results Of Sowing

There are those who object to tract work because they have seen discarded tracts on the sidewalks. True, some tracts may be wasted, but the work is abundantly worthwhile, even if some are thrown away (Luke 8:5-8).

A tract on the ground is not necessarily wasted. A man from New Jersey, while walking to work one morning, picked up a wet, dirty tract from the sidewalk. "As I read it," he wrote, "I thought of ten persons to whom I would like to give a copy. Would you please send me some extra copies?" That discarded tract led to an increased circulation of itself.

Another person may say, "I saw tracts torn to pieces and scattered by the wind." Maybe so-- but if you think the tract distributor's effort was wasted, think again! A man wrote to say he found part of a tract, but the title was missing. "There was enough left to show me my condition, my Savior, and where I could get more literature. So I am asking you for samples of your literature, as I would love to read the missing part of this tract."

The Life Is In The Seed

Do we realize the extraordinary dynamic of the printed page? Dr. Goodell, of the American Board of Missions, passing through Nicodemia in 1832, gave a stranger a tract in the Armenian-Turkish language. Seventeen years later he returned to Nicodemia, and found a church of more than forty members and a Protestant community of more than two hundred, all from the seed sown by tracts.

Dr. Griffith John tells of eight churches in China resulting from tracts alone. Sir Bartle Frere, traveling in India, was amazed to find a small town in which the idol temples were empty, but the townsfolk professed Christianity. Some years earlier, one of the townsfolk had been given an old garment, the pocket of which contained several tracts in their language. *The life is not in the sower, but in the seed!*

The Tract At Work

The gospel tract never flinches and never become cowardly; it is never tempted to compromise; it neither tires nor gets discouraged; it travels cheaply, and requires no rented auditorium; it works while we sleep; it never loses its temper; and it works long after we are dead. The tract is a visitor which gets inside the home and stays there; it always catches a man in the right mood, because it speaks to him only when he is reading it; it always sticks to what it has said and never answers back; it is bait left permanently in the pool.

A powerful reason for using tracts is that they will reach those utterly unreached with the hope of eternal life. Someone gave copies of H. L. Hasting's lecture on the inspiration of the Bible to four unbelievers. Not only were all four saved, but they all became ministers of the gospel!

No limit can be put on the possible influence of a tract. Martin Luther wrote a pamphlet on Galatians which fell into John Bunyan's hands and led to his conversion. As a result, today over 135 translations of Bunyan's famous *Pilgrim's Progress* have been published.

A young Frenchman wounded at the siege of Saint Quentin was lying in the hospital when he noticed a tract on his bedside table. He read it and was converted. Today, a monument of him holding his Bible may be seen before the Church of the Consistory in Paris. The man was Admiral Coligny, the leader of the Reformation in France.

That tract had not yet finished its work! It was read by Coligny's nurse, a Sister of Mercy. She passed it on to Lady Abess, who was converted through it and later fled from France to the Palatinate. There she met and married a young Dutchman. Her influence on that man was felt by all of Europe, for he was William of Orange, the champion of Protestantism in the Netherlands.

The printed page is deathless: you can destroy one, but printing presses can reproduce millions. Its very mutilation can be its sowing. When Leigh Richmond was once traveling, he gave a tract to every person he met. One fellow-traveler smiled scornfully as he saw a tract treated contemptuously by the receiver, torn in two, and thrown down on the road. A gust of wind carried it over a hedge into a hay field where a number of workers were seated. Soon they were listening to the tract read by one of the workers who had found it and had carefully pieced it together. The reader was moved to reflection and prayer, and soon became an earnest Christian and tract distributor himself. Of the other workers, within a year three had become active Christians.

God's Power Behind Our Efforts

Let us not forget the enormous power of prayer in tract distribution. On every tract or copy of the Holy Scriptures which we give, we should ask God's Blessing, confidently expect it, and labor on prayerfully, even though we may see little or no fruit. We should labor on as if everything depended on our labors: yet we should not put the least confidence in our efforts, but only in God's ability to bless our efforts for the sake of the Lord Jesus.

Above all, don't forget that God is glorified by every tract you give out. 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.

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