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Gospel Tract Work (May 1956)

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The importance of tract distributing cannot be stressed too highly, for this work has been greatly blessed of God through the years. Today more tracts than ever before are being placed in the hands of the unsaved. About 120 millions of tracts, it is estimated, went forth on this continent last year; one large firm being responsible for over forty millions.

The Purpose Of Tract Work

It is not enough that large quantities of leaflets should be printed and broadcast. The work must be carried on with a definite purpose in mind, namely, that the Lord may be glorified in souls being won for Him. With this end in view, we would seek to stimulate a greater interest on the part of young Christians, many of whom have not yet discovered the joy and blessing that comes with the distributing of the Word of Life in tract form.

The Value Of Tract Work

Tracts can go anywhere; they travel at small expense; they never tire; they know no fear; they ask no gifts or favours; they can talk to one or a crowd, and need no platform to proclaim their message. They can speak in the kitchen or the store, the broad highway or the quiet room; they take no note of scoffs or jeers. When they tell their story, they are not betrayed into making hasty remarks; they will not answer silly questions, and do not change to suit any individual. They can be made to teach the truth on any subject; they often succeed when

sermons fail, and they get to persons who would not be spoken to personally.

Opportunities For Tract Work

We should be ready for any opportunity that occurs. Every child of God should carry at all times a few gospel tracts, which may be given to individuals or left in streetcars, coaches, waiting-rooms, and countless other places. Inside the door of many homes is a Tract Holder, containing a selection of booklets to pass out to those who call. Canvassers, milkmen, bakers, postmen, and others usually will accept gladly a message given in a friendly way. A holder with pockets may be made from wood or imitation leather; some depots sell them complete with tracts at a small cost. Young converts may engage in useful service for the Lord by going in bands to cover a locality or village with tracts. This provides a gainful outlet for their youthful energy. People who are sick or sorrowing often are cheered through receiving an appropriate message delivered to them personally or through the mails.

Diligence In Tract Work

Tract work should never be done in a haphazard way. A good tradesman first plans his work and later has pleasure in a job well done. Likewise, with God’s help, the distributor will use wisdom in the choice of the tracts he passes out. Admittedly, there are some individuals specially adapted for this work. Their personality enables them to approach strangers with such a pleasing manner that the offered gospel paper almost invariably is received. Christians who do not

possess this faculty, may develop it to a degree by thoughtfulness and perseverance.

Wisdom In Tract Work

Always remember that you are in the work of a King; never give out your tract as though you were apologizing for it. Be pleasant; if you give out your gospel paper with a smile it will be received more readily and will be read. Be tactful; do not give out your tract at an inopportune time. Wait until you feel sure the paper will be accepted, but be careful not to let the opportunity slip away. If giving a tract to a busy clerk, wait until you get your change, then suggest that he read the booklet at a leisure moment. Do not force your tracts upon anyone. By cultivating a tactful manner, you will find real happiness and joy in this profitable service for the Lord.

Prayer For Tract Work

Good seed needs water if it is to bring forth fruit. The printed word must be watered by prayer, whether the tracts are mailed, given away at open air meetings, or distributed individually. Whenever you make special contacts, or have an opportunity for personal witness, be sure to remember at the Throne of Grace the person whom you have contacted.

The Harvest For Tract Work

Tract work is not all sunshine. In spite of all the tact, courtesy, and wisdom that may be used, we may occasionally be ridiculed, scorned or even abused. Take courage, young believer. The reaction on the part of the unsaved person may be an outcome of his inward

conviction. In any case, the experience will do you no harm, perhaps much good. Dark clouds and rain are not pleasant, but a little shower now and then is refreshing. A well-known speaker once said, “I had a real spiritual uplift by being publicly ridiculed in a bus when passing out a few tracts; a little reproach for Christ, of which I felt utterly unworthy.”

The sower of the Living Seed should not be easily discouraged; he should remember that the harvest is sure. “Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh the harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth… gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together” (John 4:35-36). Let us, then, occupy ourselves in this fruitful field of harvesting while we may. “He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him” (Psa. 126:6).

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“Whatever makes Christ more precious to us is of God. Whatever comes between us and Christ is of the devil.

—E.D.

Tract Distribution (Oct 1962)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 8 No. 10, Oct 1962.

Jimmy Morrison is not a fictitious name for the hero of a story, for he actually was a tract distributor in one of our large cities. He sold papers, so would be found at an early hour on the main street; then, later in the day, he would appear again with the evening editions, tucked into which many of his customers would find good Gospel messages.

The important part of Jimmy's time was between rush hours when he stood on busy corners handing out evangelical tracts. If there is such a thing as an expert in this work, he was that one. Jimmy was a happy Christian with a pleasant smile who, in an almost irresistible manner, with his broad Scotch accent requested that his tracts be read. Few refused; on the contrary, many enquired about his salvation and his Lord, subjects he talked about with joy. What a gift was his! How God used this humble servant to win souls to the Saviour!

Occasionally, certain persons offered Jimmy financial help for his tract work, but unless he knew that they were Christians, this he gracefully refused, taking the opportunity to explain the way of life. Others supplied him with packages of tracts, but he was particular, and would use only those having a clear Gospel message. Furthermore, he always insisted that the leaflets be well printed on good quality paper, this, of course, was most commendable. In one shop where he obtained many of his tracts, he spent time prayerfully selecting suitable material.

Today, Jimmy is missed on the streets. Not too many months ago this faithful servant who had distributed many thousands of tracts went home to be with the Lord. His works do follow him, and he rests from his labours. The name Jimmy Morrison is a fragrant memory to those who knew him. He was an excellent workman in this almost lost art. One wonders who will rise up to follow his splendid example.

Alas, it would appear that the important business of spreading the printed word is on the wane in English speaking lands. One consolation lies in the fact that large quanties are still being distributed in foreign countries. Some publishers state that the demand is greater than the supply.

The power of the printed message has not decreased, that is why Russia spends five billion dollars a year on books and literature in the countries they have won to Communism. From reliable sources we are informed that they distribute a billion tracts a year. These are not shoddy folders, but are printed in colours on fine quality paper. Samples of these were on display recently at a Chicago convention. This alone should arouse us to our responsibility.

Many tract bands which cover their districts either by door to door distribution or by mail have continued faithful, but the numbers appear to be decreasing. Many evangelists who formerly gave out tracts in visitation and at the close of Gospel services have stopped this practice. May we all renew our energy and return to the days when this work was considered of vital importance among the assemblies.

Prominent preachers of the past used tracts in abundance. They realized that many persons would not go into a Gospel meeting but would read a message in print, and through it be convicted by the Holy Spirit, and eventually be converted. This was the attitude and exercise of Mr. Spurgeon who was responsible for the printing and distribution of over two hundred million leaflets.

Many notable men were led to Christ through reading the Gospel in print; men like Bunyan, Wilberforce, Dodderidge, Richmond, Lorimer, and a host of others. All of these were used of God to bring many to know their sins forgiven. Are we thinking in smaller terms today?

Soon the doors may be closed to tract work. This has already happened in some countries. In some Canadian and American cities it is illegal to distribute leaflets on the public streets.

Let us learn from Jimmy Morrison to use every opportunity to pass out prayerfully the best story in the world: “Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; … He was buried, and … He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures” (1 Cor. 15:4). In writing to the Galatians the Apostle Paul stated: “Though we, or an angel from Heaven preach any other Gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed… I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ” (Gal. 1:9-12).

The Lord notices every message of the Gospel, and will reward every messenger. Let us also remember the

divine assertion, “So shall My word be that goeth forth out of My mouth: it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it” (Isa. 55:11). Moreover, the promise of the Word of God is, “They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him” (Psa. 126:5-6).