

Paper Preachers

“And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region”
(Acts 13:49).

“The former treatise (book) have I made...”
(Acts 1:1).

“And they wrote letters by them after this manner...”
(Acts 15:23).

Oswald J. Smith was a pastor greatly concerned with the task of world evangelism. He wrote, “For more than 30 years I have prayerfully considered the problem: How can we evangelize the world in the space of one generation? Long ago I was convinced that we could never send out enough missionaries. For a while I gave up hope. After travel and study in nearly one hundred countries, I have come to this conclusion – the only way we are going to carry out the Great Commission, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature,” will be the means of the printed page. By the systematic use of the printed page we shall be able to enter into every home and reach every individual with the gospel message.”

“It can be done. It must be done!”
(D. L. Moody)

All Around the World

They are moving throughout the world by the billions and they are realizing millions of converts. How sad that most of them are working for the Communists and various cults. They are able to get access into countries without even a visa. They speak hundreds of different languages. They are able to go further than most missionaries, and able to stay much longer. They are able to take up residence in nations around the world without the high cost of living and housing. They do not require a passport and travel very economically. They bypass language barriers and racial prejudices. They have no problem entering into mansions, palaces, or mud huts in villages. They preach the same message to both the rich and poor. They can preach in large cities or small villages. They can give their message in public or in private. They never lose their temper or get into an argument. They do not react when people mock or ridicule them. They speak without a foreign accent and get a person’s attention right when the person is interested in hearing the message. They speak to one, or can speak to a multitude. They work at any hour of day or night. They never compromise nor do they ever change their message. They can work for hours without getting tired. They never get sick and do not have to worry about taking care of their families. Who are they? They are the paper preachers; tracts, literature, books, bumper stickers, letters; publishing the Word of Life.

Of course, there is the Bible, the best selling book of all times that has been around for centuries. Over half of the New Testament is comprised of letters and books written to individuals.

**It has been said,
"The pen is mightier than the sword."**

God's Word is sharper than any sword (Hebrews 4:12). Thank God for faithful men who wrote as the Holy Ghost moved them. (Hebrews 1:1; 2 Peter 1:21) The Bible was written by both the learned (Moses, Solomon) and unlearned (Peter, Amos); by men from many different walks of life. The writers did not have fancy computers and publishing programs (software). They didn't even have typewriters or printing presses.

They wrote in the wilderness, in captivity in Babylon, on the Island of Patmos, and even from a prison cell.

It is true that God has not called us to continue writing the Bible. It is complete. However, we can write tracts and gospel messages in various languages for the people to understand. Even though God may not have called all of us to be pastors, evangelists, or missionaries; each of us can distribute the paper preachers.

The Psalmist David wrote, "The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it." (Psalm 68:11)

The following story demonstrates the power of the written word:

"Just before China was taken over by the communists, one communist officer, talking to a missionary named John Meadows, made this revealing statement. 'You missionaries have been in China for more than a hundred years, but you have not won China to your cause.

You lament the fact that there are uncounted millions who have never heard the name of your God. Nor do they know anything of your Christianity. But we communists have been in China less than ten years, and there is not a Chinese who does not know...has not heard the name of Stalin...or something about communism.

A grandson of M. Gandhi told an American audience,
"Missionaries taught us to read but the communists
gave us the books!"

What missionaries have failed to do in a hundred years, we communists have done in ten. We have filled China with our doctrine. Now let me tell you why you have failed and we have succeeded.' The officer

continued, 'You have tried to win the attention of masses by building churches, missions, mission hospitals, schools and what not. But we communists have printed our message and

spread our literature all over China. Someday we will drive you missionaries out of the country, and we will do it by means of the printed page.” And that is just what happened.

“I am a missionary and a very good one too! They say that missionary means ‘sent one’ and I am really that in every sense of the word...I travel the world and need no visa. A stamp will take me anywhere I wish to go, even into the so-called closed lands. I turn up in the most unexpected places. Once I found myself in the wastepaper basket in a Brazilian prison and was used in the conversion of many of the prisoners. I reach both high and low with the good news of the gospel. My readers may be anything from peasants to presidents, students to seminary professors. Do I get results? Certainly. Thousands have been brought to Christ through the testimonies I contain...”

(Taken from a book entitled, *Access Without Visa*)

Many times we worry about whether or not people will receive what we have to say; or what we write; or what we pass out to them in written form. I read of a great definition of evangelism in the New Man magazine some time ago: Successful evangelism is “sharing Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit and leaving the results up to God.”

Channels of Communication

R. A. Brott in his booklet, “Principles of Personal Evangelism” suggests three channels of communication.

- ❑ The Public Word
(Church Services, crusades, seminars, and radio programs.)
- ❑ The Personal Word
(One on one evangelism; sharing testimonies, private conversations)
- ❑ The Printed Word
“It is my opinion that in this channel lies the greatest potential of world evangelism.”

Taking the Printed Word To the World . . . A Scriptural Mandate

- ❑ Publish the Word in Your Region
“And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region: (Acts 13:49).
- ❑ Publish the Word Around the World
“And the gospel must first be published among all nations” (Mark 13:10).
- ❑ Everyone Needs to Get Involved
“The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it” (Psalms 68:11).

□ There is a Famine in the Land

“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD:” (Amos 8:11).

Study Questions

1. Who are the “Paper Preachers?” _____

2. What are the three channels of communication? _____

3. Which method of communication has the greatest potential for evangelism? _____

4. What is successful evangelism? _____

5. What method did the communists use to take over China? _____

6. Why did the missionaries to China fail? _____

7. The _____ is mightier than the _____.

8. How did Oswald J. Smith say that we could reach into every home with the Gospel message?

9. What type(s) of people were involved in writing the Bible? _____
