

STEWARDS OF THE GOSPEL

Rev. Thomas Soltis, SELC Stewardship Director

Gospel Responsibilities

The word, steward, means caretaker, manager. Christian stewardship involves the management of all things to God's glory - including the Gospel Good News of Salvation. As stewards of the Gospel, we are entrusted to keep it pure from error - especially the incursion of salvation via good works. (Eph. 2:8-9) But keeping the Gospel pure is not enough. It must also be shared. Personal evangelism is a mandate of Christ. (Matt. 28:10)



Personal Evangelism

Recently, I noticed a dollar bill in my wallet with writing on it. (above photo) It was an effort to witness the Word. However, what was written did not specifically convey the Gospel. In addition, the witness effort was impersonal. Like religious car bumper stickers, it lacked person-to-person contact - **personal evangelism**. If the Church is to grow effectively, church members must become personable disciples, personally witnessing the Gospel of Christ.

Disciples Producing Disciples

In a book, "Change the Church Culture from Churchianity to Christianity - from Church Members to Disciples of Jesus", Dr. Waldo Werning makes the following observations:

- > 60% of church members are marginal in worship and not witnessing.
- > 15% to 40% of "inactives" are not certain of their salvation (the lost in the Church).
- > 21st century church members must be revitalized to have 1st century faith.
- > Church members must be transformed from "pew sitters" to Christian disciples actively living and sharing their faith.

Thinking Outside the Box

Pastor Stephen Shrum of St. Mark Lutheran Church, Cleveland, is encouraging members into a

discipleship of evangelism. In a monthly newsletter article, "Win as Many as Possible", he wrote, "For many churches, church growth has become a wait at the front door to see if anyone new enters . . . we need to look beyond the walls of our church and think *community*. No longer should we wait and see who walks in the door, but we must take the Gospel to them - where they are." Avenues being contemplated at St. Mark:

- > A Christian coffee house for relationships
- > Student outreach via their Christian day school
- > Inviting the community to small groups
- > Special events & programs for the community
- > Blended & contemporary worship services
- > Members individually reaching out to others
- > Prayer groups

Personally Share the Gospel

Years ago, thousands of religious tracts were dropped from a plane over China. Many of the Chinese could not read. Others did not know the dialect used. Some used the pamphlets for cigarette paper. There is a better way: **person-to-person sharing**. Here are some tips:

- > Become a friend first.
- > Establish points of mutual interest.
- > Engage in a lot of active listening.
- > When the conversation centers on religion, share your faith in Christ's salvation with "I" messages ("I personally believe . . .etc."). Avoid the word, "you".
- > Don't be pushy. Honor another's personhood.
- > Should genuine interest occur, offer the gift of a New Testament as a token of friendship.
- > Privately pray.

RESOURCES

Give-away New Testaments

One case (50 copies) may be purchased for \$54.50 (\$1.09 each) from "Biblica". Contact www.BiblicaDirect.com or 1-800-524-1588.

Bible Bookmarks

Bible bookmarks for insertion into Bibles may be downloaded and printed free six at a time on photo paper from page two below.

CHRIST'S GREAT COMMISSION

"Go and make disciples ... !"

(Matthew 28:19)



Bible Verse

Selections

John 3:5-7
John 3:16-18
John 20:28-31
Rom. 3:21-24
Rom. 6:23
Eph. 2:8-9
1 John 1:7-10

The Three Keys of Salvation

1. A Repentant Confession of Sins
2. Faith in Christ's Forgiveness
3. A Loving Intention to Amend One's Life

THE BIBLE

"The Holy Scriptures are able to make you wise for salvation thru faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness."
(2 Tim. 3:15b-16)



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