

# **VISITING WITH LITERATURE**

## **Personal Ministries Leaflets**

### **No.**

1. The Missionary Program of the Church
2. Personal Ministries Leader
3. Church Personal Ministries Secretary
4. Church Member Participation in Soul Winning
5. Why Report?
6. Training for Witnessing
7. Visiting With Literature
8. Community Services
9. Prison Ministry
10. Challenge of Unentered Areas
11. Bible Studies
12. Lay Preaching and Adventist Men
13. Discover Bible School
14. Ingathering Evangelism
15. Interest Coordinator
16. An Appeal

## A Challenge

In 1880 the messenger of the Lord in prophetic language presented the situation that would develop as we neared the end, especially in relation to the circulation of pernicious literature. In graphic words she said, "Satan is busy . . . scattering literature which is debasing the morals and poisoning the minds of the young. Infidel publications are scattered broadcast throughout the land."—*Christian Service*, p. 146.

A brief check on the titles and cover illustrations of book displays in newsstands, drugstores, railway and bus terminals, and even in grocery stores, emphasizes that magazines and periodicals certainly represent one of the most powerful agencies utilized by Satan to accomplish his deceptive and nefarious work. Weekly and monthly publications of every size and description are surely "debasing the morals and poisoning the minds of the young."

In 1974 an authoritative source reported that about 10,608 magazines were printed in the United States, with a circulation of about 300 million. But these estimates would have to be enlarged now, and besides, they do not include all the specialized types of magazines. This category alone would increase the total by millions more. It is difficult to estimate what percentage of these magazines would be included in the moral-debasing, faith-blighting category. These statistics, however, present a tremendous challenge to our church.

## The Answer to the Challenge

Our publishing houses are preparing literature that provides a most effective answer to the challenge of pernicious literature. Magazines and leaflets, which cover a wide range of subject matter, touch on every phase of the third angel's message and present our beautiful faith in a forceful and appealing manner.

The products of our printing presses present the story of world events in the light of prophecy, our distinctive doctrines, and also spiritual and inspirational contributions from writers in all parts of the world.

However, no matter how helpful, how educational, or how inspirational our literature is, if the purpose for which our whole publishing organization was set up is to be realized, the literature must be taken to those who need it. "Papers and books are the Lord's means of keeping the message of this time continually before the people."—*Ibid.*, p. 145.

## Organization

In order to accomplish this objective more efficiently and successfully, our churches must be organized and adapted for the distribution of our literature. "Our forces must be organized to do a larger work."—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 27. Specific territorial assignment is a method of organization of the available forces and the territory to guarantee the greatest possible efficiency in visiting every home.

Since our entire membership is to be involved in the effort to "keep the message before the people," the total territory of the field must be divided and assigned so the complete area is covered by some church. Then the church territory is subdivided as evenly as possible among the individual family units of the

church. The personal ministries council of each church, under the guidance of the pastor, can structure the territorial divisions. Some attempt should be made to have approximately the same number of households in each territory. A reasonable subdivision would be between one hundred and two hundred households, or three or four city blocks.

The boundaries of the church territory should be traced on two identical maps. One map should be kept as a permanent wall copy, and the other cut into segments. Each segment should be mounted on cardboard. Names collected and assembled by the interest coordinator, working with the pastor, should be sorted to correspond with these territories. Each church family then should be given its segment of the map and the interest names within that territory. As new interest names come in, they should be divided the same way.

Each church member should dedicate at least two hours each week to working in his assigned territory. Ideally, the territory should be covered once a quarter.

### **Helps**

1. *Training Classes.* Training classes should be set up by the pastor with the help of the interest coordinator to prepare the lay members with better methods of door-to-door work.
2. *Personal Ministries Leaflet*, "The Interest Coordinator," sets forth the work of the interest coordinator in connection with caring for the names of interests that come to the church through various means.
3. *The "Witnessing for Christ Manual,"* which "unfolds a step-by-step plan for leading a person to Jesus Christ," is available through the local Adventist Book Center.
4. *Personal Territory Guide Book*, available through the General Conference Personal Ministries Department, enables workers to keep careful record of all missionary work done. It gives helpful hints on how to do more effective house-to-house work.

### **How to Cover the Territory**

1. *Community religious survey.* (See *Witnessing for Christ Manual*, pp. 35-37, 74, for survey blanks and the method to be used.)
2. *Community Services survey.* (See *Manual for Health and Welfare Services*, pp. 72-74, and the pamphlet, "Care Enough to Help People.") List the community services offered by your church on a survey form. This might include the Five-Day Plan, nutrition classes, weight-control classes, Bible-study groups, et cetera. Record names, addresses, and phone numbers of those who want notification of the time and place for any of these services, and follow up on any such results.
3. *Radio and TV logs.* Present an It Is Written, Faith for Today, or Voice of Prophecy log.
4. *Magazine approach.* Supply a missionary journal—*Signs of the Times*, *Message*, or *These Times*—each month systematically to all who are willing to accept it.

5. *Tract distribution.* Visit weekly or monthly, providing a different tract each time.
6. *Lending library.* Use denominationally approved books or cassettes.
7. *Bible correspondence enrollment.* Carry the enrollment blanks door-to-door, thus making the Bible courses available for any who wish to have them.
8. Hold *neighborhood Bible classes.*

### **Kinds of Literature**

1. *Tracts* such as “An Hour With Your Bible” series or the “Good News” series are good for door-to-door use. Such tracts provide a variety of subjects to use in answering inquiries. They can present the truth in a brief, comprehensive, and forceful way, and can be used to cover the territory with a progressive topical outline.
2. *Magazines.* Inspirational magazines such as *Message* and *Signs of the Times*. These truth-filled magazines are published regularly, and thus provide a continuity in the presentation of truth to the reader, which guarantees the creation of greater interest. Magazines are current in their article content. With the presentation of commentary on items of current appeal, they arrest the attention of the public, challenge serious thought, and make an impression on truth-searching hearts. The publishers of our full-message magazines endeavor to provide a coverage of our message yearly, so a consistent reader may have a well-rounded idea of Seventh-day Adventist teachings.

Magazines covering special topics, such as *Listen*, *Life and Health*, and *Liberty*. *Listen* would be well-accepted in homes where there is a smoking, drinking, or drug problem. Since the magazine is basically beamed toward youth, it is particularly useful where there are young, school-age students or where the special problems of youth need to be studied.

Today’s people are health conscious. *Life and Health* would be well-accepted in most homes, and would be particularly useful where there is little interest in things religious.

*Liberty* might be particularly advisable in the homes of professional men—lawyers and ministers—or to distribute during times of special interest in things political.

3. *Small books.* Books such as *Your Friends the Adventists*, *Steps to Christ*, or one of the Missionary Books of the Year make a good first impression when used in door-to-door distribution. They are colorful and attractive. A small book is one way of covering a subject fully under one cover. The whole subject is then available for review and later reference. They can be used singly or in conjunction with tracts or magazines.

#### 4. *Other Literature.*

- a. Offers for free Bibles or lessons.
- b. Voice of Prophecy, It Is Written, Breath of Life, or Faith for Today Bible-study offers.
- c. Voice of Prophecy, Faith for Today, It Is Written, Breath of Life radio and TV logs .

## Special Places to Use Literature

1. *Schools.* Health literature, *Life and Health* magazines, and *Listen* and *Liberty* magazines may be appealing to teachers of certain classes. *Listen* magazine, for instance, has a whole educational program available for use in schools. Place it in the hands of teachers of health classes and physical-education classes. *Life and Health* would also appeal to teachers of these classes.
2. *Waiting rooms* of doctors, lawyers, dentists, et cetera. Use small books, health literature, magazines such as *Life and Health*, *Listen*.
3. Place *Liberty* with the lawyers and ministers of the area.
4. *Tract racks* placed in bus terminals, train depots, airport waiting rooms, doctors' and dentists' offices, laundromats. Places such as these, where people congregate and have time on their hands, should be supplied with free literature that is easily available for any who want it. Your conference Adventist Book Center may have on hand neat racks that can be used in such a way, and a good supply of literature to fill them. One enterprising retired Christian even places such racks in schools (first securing permission from the school authorities, of course), fills them with literature that is appealing to young people, and finds that a tremendous amount of literature is distributed in this way.
5. *Doorknob evangelism.* One California church covered its territory with a plastic bagful of literature placed in each home. A copy of *Signs of the Times*, a Voice of Prophecy enrollment card, a card identifying the church, and an It Is Written pamphlet were assembled in bags that could be hung on doorknobs. In three successive Sabbath afternoons the hard-working church members covered their territory with nearly 25,000 bags of literature.
6. *Motel and hotel rooms.* Books such as *The Desire of Ages*, *What Jesus Said*, or *Your Bible and You* are usually recommended for this project. Contact the motel or hotel manager for permission to supply literature to all rooms. Be sure that any literature used contains an address for securing more literature. Of course, the supply should be renewed frequently.
7. *Libraries and reading rooms.* Public libraries, and YMCA, YWCA, and other reading rooms constitute a very fruitful field for missionary work with our magazines and tracts from month to month. Those in charge of such places are usually glad to provide space for this type of literature. Neat, durable binders can be secured at a reasonable cost. The use of these binders in public reading rooms not only adds to the dignity and attractiveness of the literature but also protects the magazine from becoming soiled, mutilated, or lost.
8. *Personal distribution.* Other methods employed by many of our members are inserting tracts in letters, leaving tracts on public-transportation vehicles, keeping tracts by the door to give to salesmen or other callers, and sending tracts to bereaved families listed in the obituary section of newspapers. One member followed the practice of sending a tract to the companies that wrote to him about their products.

Notice this admonition: "Carry with you, wherever you go, a package of select tracts."—*Christian Service*, p. 151. Every Christian should be glad to dedicate a pocket or corner of a purse to literature distribu-

tion. Carry tracts with you wherever you go. Keep tracts in your car also, and give them to the people you meet at the gas stations or restaurants. When you ask directions along the way, why not thank your kind benefactor by giving him a tract, which may be just what he needs to show him the right way to take along the highway of life?

Recently, one tract that a man threw down in the street was picked up by a woman who read it, enrolled in the Bible course, and accepted the truth. Seven people have been baptized as the result of that one piece of missionary literature that was thrown away! "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" (Isa. 55:11).

### **Helpful Suggestions for House-to-House Work**

*Be confident.* You are connected with the greatest movement in the world. You are a partner with God in the business of publishing His message. You have satisfied yourself that the magazine contains the message—a message for today. The people need it, many are waiting for it, and you are going to supply their need. You are a benefactor of the human race, so be confident.

*Study people.* As you go from house to house, make a practice of studying people and of deciding quickly how to secure their attention. Watch for indications that will show their interests, and use these interests as a starting point for your presentation.

*Be brief.* Make your presentation short and to the point in order to arouse curiosity and interest. Then stop and let the literature tell the rest. If you go about your work in the power of the Holy Spirit, the interest of the people will be aroused, and they will be convinced that you have something for them.

*Take time for prayer and Bible study.* This is vitally essential to all successful service and will help to fortify you against defeat as you engage in service for your Master. On bended knee, receive from the open Book the assurance of success from the One who is the source of power and victory. Take time to study the literature you plan to use so as to be able to talk about it intelligently with those you meet.

### **In Closing**

About 100 years ago the Seventh-day Adventist Church was given this counsel by the Spirit of Prophecy: "When the church takes up her appointed work, she will go forth 'fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.'"—*Ibid.*, p. 147. But what is this "appointed work"? In the same paragraph is found this emphatic statement: "Church members, awake to the importance of the circulation of our literature, and devote more time to this work. Place in the homes of the people papers, tracts, and books that will preach the gospel in its several lines. There is no time to be lost."—*Ibid.*

"More than one thousand will soon be converted in one day, most of whom will trace their first convictions to the reading of our publications."—*Colporteur Ministry*, p. 151.

“Satan is busy in this department of his work, scattering literature which is debasing the morals and poisoning the minds of the young. Infidel publications are scattered broadcast throughout the land. Why should not every member of the church be as deeply interested in sending forth publications that will elevate the minds of the people, and bring the truth directly before them? These papers and tracts are for the light of the world, and have often been instrumental in converting souls.”—Ellen G. White, in *The Review and Herald*, June 10, 1880.

Yet there is still much indifference and neglect of our duty. It is becoming increasingly apparent that the distribution of the printed page is destined to occupy a large place in the work of world evangelism. We have available a delightful variety of attractive books, magazines, and leaflets—a type of literature that is most convenient to use in the successful conduct of our work of reaching the masses of people everywhere.

It is important to select our message-filled literature so it can be placed in the hands of rich and poor alike, and that it represents the type of literature that can be distributed by all classes of our church membership. And it is important that it be as diversified as the doctrines it presents in its appealing message to everyone.

“Let every Seventh-day Adventist ask himself, ‘What can I do to proclaim the third angel’s message?’ Christ came to this world to give this message to His servant to give to the churches. It is to be proclaimed to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. How are we to give it? The distribution of our literature is one means by which the message is to be proclaimed. Let every believer scatter broadcast tracts and leaflets and books containing the message for this time.”—*Christian Service*, p. 145.