

THE EXAMINER

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Advertising the Gospel Meeting ---- by By Dorris V. Rader

The fact that it pays to advertise is well known by all successful businessmen in the business world. Could it be that this is one area in which quite often “the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light” (Luke 16:8)? As popular as Coca-Cola is, they still feel that it pays to advertise. Without a doubt this is one reason for the common knowledge of this beverage. One preacher, on a preaching tour of another continent, stated that he found more people who had heard of Coca-Cola than had ever heard of Jesus Christ. Good advertising gets good results.

By the term advertising, I mean publicizing, making an appeal in behalf of what we are endeavoring to do and seeking to encourage people to attend. I do not believe that advertising in the fullest sense is accomplished by merely posting a sign that includes the words “Gospel Meeting,” the date, time and

speaker. That says something to be sure, but does it fully advertise the meeting? How many people who see this statement really have a proper concept of what a gospel meeting is?

One preacher, who preaches in a number of meetings each year, related to me about preaching in a meeting which he felt had been kept a closely guarded secret. It seems that even other congregations in the town were not made aware that the meeting was being held. Announcements had been made only from the local pulpit. Beyond this, nobody had bothered to noise it abroad. Needless to say, the meeting was poorly attended. Most likely, some of the brethren felt that they had selected the wrong man for the meeting. The preacher likely felt that his time would have been better spent somewhere else. I am sorry to say that at times, some brethren appear to feel that we have no responsibility beyond seeing that we have some

preaching in our building from time to time. If people are as interested as they should be, they will find out about this and come. If they don't, then we have done all that is expected of us. After all, we tell ourselves, “you can't make people come “

What to do about advertising a meeting is discussed at least annually in most “men's business meetings.” Frequently, the matter of advertising is passed over with very little thought. The question may be raised as to who will see that the newspapers get an announcement of our meeting. And maybe brother Blank will finally say, “well I guess I can see to that.” Then, someone may ask if it would be agreeable with all to pay the preacher the same amount we paid last year (and the year before that and so on). That sounds good enough to everybody and so we are now ready for our annual big meeting. Admittedly, this may be a somewhat overdrawn picture in many cases, but I strongly suspect that many will hear a familiar note in the above. And frankly, if men in the business world operated with such little forethought and prudence in their secular

business, there would be far more failed businesses than we now see. The consequences of failed spiritual endeavors are far greater than those of our secular affairs. Are you listening?

Surely, it is the part of wisdom to use various media opportunities to let the community know what we are offering through such efforts as our gospel meetings. Attractive newspaper ads and articles may be most helpful. Television and radio spots may be and should be used most effectively. But let us not salve our consciences by relying solely on these as fulfilling our responsibility to let the community know about our efforts. There is much more to really advertising a gospel meeting.

A number of years ago I read an enlightening report in the Eastland News, the bulletin of the Eastland church in Nashville, Tennessee (Aug. 18, 1966). Visitors during their meeting had been given a visitor's card which asked how they came to know about the meeting. The results were tabulated from the cards in order to evaluate the various forms of advertising done prior to that particular meeting. Below you can see the results of that

study.

- Personal invitation from members 56%
- Announcement of other congregations 30%
- Letters and cards from members 22%
- Eastland News (bulletin) 21%
- Daily newspaper 17%
- Other congregations (bulletins) 4%
- Sign in the yard 3%

The above information should stimulate us to put more on the personal contact method of advertising. Armed with the above evidence, the church where I now preach decided, on one occasion, to rely exclusively on the personal contact method. The membership was informed that all the advertising would be done on that basis. Cooperation was truly outstanding. The results were most gratifying. We had the best attended meeting ever, with more visitors than any previous effort. The personal aspect had been the difference. We all know this to be the case, but we do not always make proper use of it. Am I advocating that congregations abandon the use of news-paper, radio, television, and other forms of advertising? Not at all. By all means, make full use of

these with attractive, carefully worded messages. But we all know what works best. Even realtors will tell you that their best advertisement comes through personal contacts with satisfied customers. Without the personal advertisements, we lose so much that could otherwise be gained.

While writing this article, I received an invitation to a “special sale” of new and used automobiles. It caught my attention and I found myself seriously considering attending this sale. Now, I had known for some time that I really needed to consider replacing my present “experienced car.” I asked myself just why I had considered this sale, when every day I see car dealers advertisements in the paper and “for sale” signs on individual cars and pay very little attention to them? The answer hit me. This one was a “personal invitation” from the dealer. He had called me by name, and stated that he was not placing any ads about this sale in the papers or on the air waves. It was all by personal invitation. A few of us who had been invited were requested to bring our “invitations” with us to get in for

“WE ALL CAN DO OUR PART IN THIS MEETING”

this special sale. Ah, that was it! These people were taking an interest in me. Now, of course I know they had something to profit from it. But, it didn’t hurt at all to know that I had been personally invited. You see how it works when people show an interest in the individual. Examples of the importance of recognizing the value of the individual could be multiplied from the Scriptures.

Last, but not least, let each of us realize that our daily life is an advertisement of all our efforts as the people of God. Let us so live that others can truly see that we have “been with Jesus” (**Acts 4:13**). They must see that what we are offering to others is truly the rule in our own life (**Phil. 1:27**). That, dear brethren, will be effective advertisement of all our gospel efforts. Without this, little will be accomplished by any other type of advertisement. May God help us that what we are daily will magnify Christ and work in conjunction with other efforts to effectively advertise all our meetings, special and any other efforts. ---via **Guardian of Truth XXXVII: 16, p. 14-15 August 19, 1993**

WITH OUT THE BLOOD --- THE LOST REMAINS LOST AND THE BLOOD SHED IS MADE OF NO EFFECT ON THEIR LIVES --- LET’S RESOLVE NOT TO ALLOW THIS --- PARTICIPATE