

Servant Evangelism The Laundromat

What is it? Patrick Quinn our new pastor at Frazer brought this idea with him from his previous appointment. Patrick had been using this method to build a new church and called a group of Sunday School teachers and leaders together back in February of this year and challenged us to step out and try something different from our normal way of evangelizing. Truly, I am not sure that many of us had a normal way. If the truth were known, I am not sure that we were reaching out at all.

In our first meeting, Patrick shared the concept and a book from Steve Sjogren, "Conspiracy of Kindness". In this book, Steve defines servant evangelism as projects designed to "show God's love in practical ways with no strings attached." Patrick asked each of us to read the book and plan to meet again in a month if we were interested in trying something different. As you can guess, the second meeting had fewer attendees than the first. The enthusiasm had already begun to wear off. During the second meeting, we formed groups and planned our first adventure into this unknown new assignment, being intentionally nice and sharing with others that we did not even know.

The group that I was a part of decided to tackle a Laundromat for our first adventure. I contacted the owner of a facility close by and began making plans. The first thing that God used to get my attention was the willingness and desire of the owner to participate. He thought it was great idea and wanted to help with the cost. We made a plan and six of us showed that day with donuts and quarters. Can you imagine a group of men that do not even wash clothes at home trying to help others wash theirs! What an adventure!

The day started very quietly as we begin to feed the quarters into the machines. The patrons were nice enough not to laugh at our stupidity and they assisted us in our effort. We all had a chance to share and visit with others. The real excitement began as we started handing out the Bibles that we had taken to share with those who wanted them. The thing that was obvious immediately was their eagerness to read God's Word. Every person that we gave a Bible immediately sat down and began to read. Now I began to understand what Jesus had said two thousand years when He said that people were thirsty for the Word of God. Each person seemed to have a different question about what they were reading, "Living Scripture". Each of us was standing in awe as we watched God begin His work in the Laundromat.

A woman from another church came in to wash her clothes because her washer was not working. At first, she did not want us to pay for her washing but the charm of the group won her over. She probably felt sorry for us or just wanted us to leave her alone. When she saw the Bibles, she asked if she could purchase some from us to use later. I took her money and as I was counting the Bibles out when something told me to ask what she was going to do with the Bibles. She began explaining how her Sunday school class of women had taken on a project to help the women that were being released from prison to get a new start in life. They were purchasing purses for all the women and she thought the Bibles would fit perfectly into their purses. Needless to say after God had hit me up side the head, we gave her a whole case of Bibles to use and the tears of joy began to flow for all of us. Just another coincidence!

Later that morning one of the young men that was reading one of the Bibles began to ask questions about what he was reading. He began to share with us that he was new in town and things were just not going well for him. He was not making a lot of money and after he paid, his rent there he had very little left for food. While some of the people were talking with him, I went next door to the pizza place and purchased coupons for him. When I returned he and the people were discussing his joining us at church on Sunday and they were giving him directions and collecting information from him. I gave him the coupons for the pizza buffet located next door to the Laundromat and the tears of joy began to flow again.

All of this happened on the Saturday before Easter Sunday. Sure enough, the young man showed up in church on Sunday and after attending two worship services with Patrick, he gave his life to Christ and joined the

church. He has continued to attend church every Sunday and Sunday School most of the time. He has now joined us in our weekly men's Bible study.

It never ceases to amaze me as to just what God can and will do if we make ourselves available to be used by Him. "A little is much when God is in it."

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