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sting, and becomes a new form of entertainment... "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret." (Ephesians 5:11-12) ... "Finally brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things." (Philippians 4:8).

- ◆ Avoid tracts that may contain lies or unverifiable claims about people or things. For example, there is a tract ministry that produces a tract called "Why Is Mary Crying". That tract says that Mary is in Heaven crying about how Catholics are worshipping her. Mary is in Heaven in glory with the Lord where there is perfect peace. She's not crying and since she is not God she cannot possibly know what every Catholic is doing.
- ◆ Avoid tracts that contain misleading information about salvation. There is a tract ministry that produces a tract called "Gomez Is Coming" which has a picture on the last page that shows Gomez asking his gang members "Who wants to be saved?". One of the gang members says "we all do" [want to be saved]. Since

when can someone speak for anyone else about wanting to be saved?

- ◆ Avoid tracts that overemphasize end-time events and contain a lot of speculative information like details about a future tribulation period that cannot be proved. For instance, tracts that refer to a World War Three or tracts showing the Pope as the leader of the world during a future tribulation period. We need to tell people that the end of the world for them could be **today**, if they should die today. No one knows how long they will live so it is important to let people know that "Now is the day of Salvation" [2 Cor 6:2], not because they could end up going through some tribulation in the future but because they could die tonight.

**“Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.” [2 Corinthians 4:1-2]**

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# Good Versus Not-So-Good Gospel Tracts

**Choosing biblical God-glorifying evangelistic materials**

What is good evangelistic literature and what is not so good? That is the question we will deal with here. As ambassadors for Christ, it is not a trivial question. In our zeal to win souls and to sell tracts, we should be careful that we do not overlook some things that cheapen and weaken the true Gospel of Christ. The Bible says we are to be holy even as God is holy (1 Peter 1:16), and to be blameless (2 Peter 3:14) and we are to be concerned about the truth (John 18:37).

We are also to be in the world but not of it (John 17:14-15) and we are to hunger and thirst for righteousness (Matthew 5:6). Considering these things, we should want to use only the most accurate and God-glorifying materials when we are sharing the glorious Gospel of salvation with a lost and dying world.

Some criteria for evaluating tracts and other evangelistic literature are listed below. May this information help you and others to expound "the way of God more perfectly" (Acts 18:26).

**CRITERIA FOR CHOOSING GOD-GLORIFYING EVANGELISTIC LITERATURE:**

- ◆ Is the literature made to be funny? Hell and eternal damnation are not funny and the Gospel and Christ's death on the cross are very serious matters.
- ◆ Do the materials commercialize the Gospel? Do they contain advertisements? (as compared to just an address or phone number). When we use literature that has ads and prices, the unsaved think that we are trying to get money from them. Money should never be associated with the Gospel... "freely you have received, freely give" [Matt 10:8]
- ◆ Do the tracts ignore God's holiness and righteousness? Good tracts mention God's law (the ten commandments) and the fact that all mankind are lawbreakers and therefore subject to the penalty for breaking God's law: eternity in hell.
- ◆ Is there wording about what you need to **do** to be saved? In other words, does the literature give people the impression that they are saved just by reading and reciting

a prayer? We can't manipulate God into saving us just because we say a prayer and we dare not give anyone that impression. "Salvation is of the Lord" [Jonah 2:9], so if a person's heart is not broken before the Lord and if they are not truly converted by God, they are still in their sins. Yet many people I've met think that they are saved because they said some prayer, even though there was no change in their attitude about sin - no evidence that they are new creatures in Christ.

- ◆ Tracts that have pictures and sketches of Jesus, God the Father, and the Holy Spirit should be avoided. How can we tell Catholics and other idol worshippers that it is wrong to have statues, images and 'sacred heart of Jesus' pictures if we use literature that contains similar images? "Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry" (1 Corinthians 10:14). "And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?" (2 Corinthians 6:16).
- ◆ Some tracts mislead people into thinking that God loves everyone. Only God knows who He loves. We as Christians cannot truthfully tell some stranger that God loves them because Psalm 5:5 says "thou hatest all workers of iniquity" and Psalm 11:5 says "the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth". Also, we as Christians cannot truthfully tell some stranger that 'Jesus died for you' because only God knows if they are going to be

saved. Jesus did not die for people who are going to be in hell forever paying for their sins themselves. If all the sins of all the people in hell were placed on Christ, then the people in hell would not be in hell. They end up in hell because none of their sins were paid for, not just because they did not believe in Jesus (the solitary sin of unbelief). Any and all of a person's sins separate them from God as mentioned in Isaiah 59 verses 1 and 2 and elsewhere.

- ◆ Do the tracts depict people swearing, mocking God, and depict other kinds of ungodliness such as pictures of men and women that cater to the lust of the eyes? God's holy people should present the Gospel without the use of these things. "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." (1 John 2:16). We dare not be so desperate to make the Gospel appealing to the unsaved that it loses its edge, its

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**The Gospel is only a message of Good News if the hearer understands the bad news, that they are ungodly sinners under the wrath of God, until and unless God grants them a full pardon based solely upon the blood atonement of Christ.**