

## “CHRISTIAN OUTREACH”

Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." (Acts 1:6-8 NKJV)

Diana Ross and Aretha Franklin and other singers have recordings of a song by Nicholas Ashford and Valerie Simpson, "Reach Out and Touch (Somebody's Hand)".

“Reach out and touch Somebody’s hand  
 Make this world a better place If you can.  
 Reach out and touch Somebody’s hand  
 Make this world a better place If you can.

(Just try) Take a little time out of your busy day To give encouragement  
 To someone who’s lost the way  
 (Just try) Or would I be talking to a stone If I asked you  
 To share a problem that’s not your own  
 We can change things if we start giving Why don’t you

Reach out and touch Somebody’s hand  
 Make this world a better place If you can.  
 Reach out and touch Somebody’s hand  
 Make this world a better place If you can.

(Just try) If you see an old friend on the street And he’s down  
 Remember his shoes could fit your feet  
 (Just try) Try a little kindness you’ll see  
 It’s something that comes very naturally  
 We can change things if we start giving

Why don’t you Reach out and touch  
 Why don’t you (why don’t you) Reach out and touch somebody’s hand.”

The word evangelism for most people means something the church does or an evangelist who comes to town and sets up a tent or even preachers on television. Too often Christians think that their only role

in this is to pray or send money. Christian outreach is what you and I are commanded by Jesus to be doing. Charles H. Spurgeon said that the gospel command "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel." is so little obeyed that one would imagine it was "Go into your own place of worship and preach the gospel to the few creatures who will come inside." How can you personally preach the gospel in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth?

### 1.) Reaching out to touch hands in Jerusalem

On Seniors Sunday in the McGehee church there were six boys, I think, who started coming to church because the pastor's son was on a sport's team with them in school. They started going to his house and later started coming to church with him. You may not run track or play basketball but there are clubs you attend – bridge club, book club, genealogy society, archaeology society. Wherever you meet people, you have a chance to reach out and talk to someone about a problem they are having, loan them a book with a Christian message, and eventually bring that someone to church.

Mr. Ed Holt was telling about a church he sometimes attends. They pass out slips of paper with room for three names. The idea is to pray for these three people that they would come to Jesus Christ and be saved. Also to pray that God would give them a chance to witness to these three and invite them to church. I know of another church that passes out slips called Jesus' Ten Most Wanted List.

The word "witness" frightens a lot of people. They think that there is some certain list of Scripture verses that you have to memorize and recite in a certain order. If you were a witness in a court and started

reciting some rehearsed testimony, you would be discredited. The same is true in witnessing about Jesus. Tell how you came to believe in Him as your Savior and Lord; how you know He is with you each day.

2.) Reach out and touch all Judea and Samaria.

These are people who are strangers and people who are outside your comfort zone. Every survey that is taken finds 50% of the people in any given location are not affiliated with any church. If you stop and think probably everyone you know is affiliated with some church. The other 50% are people who are currently invisible to you. You don't associate with them, you have nothing in common with them. Frankly, you would feel uncomfortable with them.

You might be separated by race, economic status. Some are homeless, others are single parents, others are crippled or bedridden. Are you willing to allow them to go on through life, not knowing Christ? Would you think in the secret place of your heart that you really wouldn't want people like that going to heaven anyway?

You, and others in the church with you, will have to work hard and be creative to discover who they are, where they live, and what all has hindered them from going to church. Finding them and befriending them might come after you set about to discover needs in the community that are not being met and going about addressing those needs. In the course of that you'll meet people who also need to know Christ. Because you are helping them with what they see as their most pressing needs, you will be heard when you talk to them about their need of Christ, the unqualified love He has for them, the Good News that He will forgive their sins and open the way to heaven for them.

### 3. Reach out to the ends of the earth to touch someone.

It has never been easier for you to reach out and touch people who live to the ends of the earth from you. To begin, you can build relationships with missionaries by mail and by email. In their prayer letters they will mention people who are discovering Christ. You can pray for the missionary and pray for the people they mention. You can sponsor a child through World Vision for \$34/month. You will receive a picture of the child each year. You can write to the child and receive letters in reply.

On email you can correspond with people in many foreign countries. They are happy for the opportunity to improve their English language skills. Another way to meet and correspond with people in foreign countries with the aim of including your witness for Jesus Christ in the correspondence is through Facebook and Twitter.

Every college has many foreign students. A person on the college staff will help you to invite several foreign students to come to your home for Thanksgiving, Christmas, or just a Sunday dinner. Some of these students come from countries where it is a prison offense to tell another about Jesus Christ or to own a Bible. Many students from these countries are curious about what Christians believe. They are free to ask questions here that they cannot ask in their own country.

It isn't hard to find out the address of some soldier, sailor, airman, or marine stationed overseas who doesn't get mail from anyone. Write regularly, send a package once in a while. Be faithful at it even if you don't get many replies. Once in a while, tell what Jesus means to you.

**REACH OUT AND TOUCH SOMEBODY'S SOUL.**

