



The Printed Page: A Forgotten Tool for Evangelism

By David E. Eckleberger

Everything was fuzzy. Pedro just could not make his feet step in the right places. The ground seemed to slip away. He tried to break his fall, but his hand would not go where he aimed it. The next thing he knew, a sharp pain shot up his arm from his elbow. He did not know how long he lay on the ground. He was on his knees trying desperately to get up when he felt a hand under his arm.

“Nooo neeeeed” he slurred. “I-I ca-an do-o it,” he murmured, but the hand stayed.

He looked up into a strange face, features that he did not recognize. Where did this face come from? Then he recalled the conversations in the bar, the bar he wished he were still in, but all his pesos were gone.

What had they been laughing about? Oh yes. The gringos Juan had seen come up the trail to his pueblo. They’d speculated on what they were doing way up here. Gringos never came this far away from the paved roads.

Later Roberto had come into the bar with a little paper that the gringos were giving out. They threw it away when one of the more sober guys at their table figured out that it was some “religious propaganda.”

“Can I help you?” The young man had pulled him to his feet. Pedro did not understand a word. He shook his arm out of the man’s grasp and tried to go on up the trail. The blond gringo stuck a piece of paper in his hand saying, “At least let me give you this.”

Pedro tried to focus on it, thinking maybe it was money. He quickly realized it was not.

Now he remembered: religious garbage. He exploded with profanity. Although the young man could not understand a word, he fully understood the tone. Pedro took the paper, and began to tear it into pieces and threw them into the air as he struggled up the trail.

Finally he stumbled to his adobe shack, and collapsed onto the floor in a drunken stupor.

It was mid morning the next day that he awoke with a groan, and cautiously sat up, holding his head. Little by little his aching body came to life ...

Later he began to think about heading back to the bar for another liquid “breakfast.” He began to inspect his pockets. As he reached into his shirt pocket, he noticed a small piece of paper. He struggled to focus on the two words on the torn paper.

“*Dios dijo*” was all it said.

His first reaction was to throw it away, but then he paused. *Dios dijo*. God said. “What did God say?” he wondered. He could not get the question out of his mind.

He was soon stumbling as fast as he could down the trail. This time, drink was the last thing on his mind.

When he reached the pueblo he asked about the gringos. “Where are they?” Finally someone told him that they had left

the night before, headed for the next village. Immediately he set out in that direction.

He found two gringos attempting to communicate with a group of children. He rushed up to them and with the scrap of paper in his hand blurted out, “¿Qué dijo Dios?” After some confusion, they finally figured out what he was saying, and through a translator were able to tell him “what God had said.”

That day Pedro came to know Jesus Christ. Some years later, Pedro was pastor of a small congregation in his village.

This is one example of the power of the printed page. This story has taken place over and over again around the world as the printed Good News, in many formats, has been used by the Holy Spirit to draw men and women to the Lord.

I have been involved in publishing and distributing books and tracts in Spanish for more than 40 years. One of my main goals from the beginning was to make evangelistic tools available and encourage their use. At [Editorial Unilit](#), we have a long list of titles that are designed to present the gospel. Two of the most successful are Josh McDowell’s *Más que un carpintero (More Than a Carpenter)* and Luis Palau’s *¿Eres cristiano? ¿Sí o no? (What Is a Real Christian?)* McDowell’s book has been our number one bestseller.

But over the years I have been concerned about the lack of use of these tools, and in general, about how few believers are busy about God’s passion to share the Good News with those who do not know him. If we take the Great Commission seriously, we should all be sharing Christ daily.

Printed evangelistic tools are one of the most effective ways to do so. Here are a few reasons why:

1. Many hold what is written in high esteem. It has credibility.

2. It can be given with little offense. It is easy to say to an acquaintance or relative, “Here is a book I read and found interesting. Would you like to read it?”
3. It can be read and re-read in a private comfortable setting.
4. It has a high success rate. The Holy Spirit has been using the printed page for centuries to draw men to the Lord Jesus.
5. Giving a book can be especially effective. It is something of value, and people rarely throw away a book like they might a tract.

Even though Unilit has sold tens of thousands of the books I mentioned, at the end of last year, the Lord began to convict me that I had lost some of my zeal for publishing and distributing evangelistic tools. I suddenly realized that this had become just another duty. It was no longer the priority it was Unilit first began. I therefore set out to renew our passion and efforts.

Our publishing team at Unilit began to challenge booksellers all over the Spanish-speaking world to share our passion. Then, to back our words with action, we launched a “two-for-one” campaign. We began offering every bookseller a free copy of either of the above-mentioned books for every one they ordered. The intent was that participating booksellers would be able to offer a free copy with each book they sell, encouraging customers, “Buy one for yourself and get a free one for an unsaved friend.”

Unilit is very pleased at how booksellers have responded. In just *four* months we have distributed nearly as many copies as we had in nearly *30 years!*

I hoped to distribute half a million copies of *More Than a Carpenter* in one year. Praise the Lord: to date 400,000 have been sent out!

I challenge you to join the booksellers in utilizing the great evangelistic tools at your disposal. Read a Christian book or tract. Then give a copy to your unsaved neighbor or relative. Tell them, “Here is a life-changing book,” or, “I just read this, and think you will enjoy it.”

I also want to challenge publishers and booksellers. Let’s not forget that we need to do more than just distribute books that build up believers and the church. We must share God’s passion for those who do not know Him, and that means publishing and distributing effective evangelistic books and tracts.

In much of the world today, we do not need to subsidize books and Bibles. But I believe there is one area where we should continue to subsidize our publications: that area is evangelistic tools. Unilit is selling its two most effective books at cost—and God is multiplying our efforts.

Let me share one more story. If this will not motivate you, I do not know what will.

Some years ago, an elderly lady went into a Bible bookstore. She handed the

bookseller on old beat-up book. The book was *El Camino a Dios (The Way to God)*, by D. L. Moody. She told the clerk that she wanted to buy a new copy.

The clerk told her, “Yes, I have the book.” She soon returned with a copy, a new edition with a four-color cover. The customer looked at it and commented on the beautiful cover. But after opening and looking through the book, she blurted out, “It is not the same.” The clerk assured her it was. It just had a more attractive cover.

At this the lady opened her old copy. She showed the clerk, “The new one does not have this page.” The bookseller was amazed. The last page of the old book had 12 lines. Above them was this message: “If you have accepted Jesus as your Savior after reading this book, sign your name and pass the book on to someone else.”

The lady pointed, “See, every line is filled with a signature. I have read it, and have accepted Jesus, but there is no room for me to sign my name. I want a new book with this page so I can sign it and pass it on to someone else.”

I challenge you to pass on the Good News.

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