

## **Ditch Digging Evangelism**

By: Keith Keyser

Despite the title, I am no authority on excavation projects, large or small. Being afflicted by cerebral palsy, I am no authority on manual labor, or any blue-collar type of work for that matter. Given my physical limitations, my parents urged me early in life to attend to my studies and plan on some career where I would make a living with my mind. I relate the following two anecdotes therefore, as a means of stirring the imagination of Christians on gaining practical opportunities for sharing the gospel with the lost through practical service. It doesn't have to be physical labor, it may be some other sort of service that will open the door for the gospel.

### **He Who Wins Souls Is Wise**

An older brother in the Lord in his late nineties recently related to me the story of a great number of conversions that took place in his town about seventy years ago. He was one of around fifty at that time who were converted through faith in Christ. When I questioned him as how this state of affairs came to pass, he affirmed that his father was one of the chief people in bringing lost folks to hear the gospel. There was a traveling preacher holding gospel meetings nearby and my friends' father determined to win his neighbors to Christ. He used a variety of clever means in inviting them to these meetings. Two of his methods in particular captured my imagination.

When he invited one local man to go to the meeting, the latter demurred on the grounds that he had to work in his garden that evening. This persistent Christian counter-offered that if the man would go to the meeting, then he would work in his garden the next day for him. Accordingly, the neighbor went to the meeting, was confronted with the claims of Christ, and was converted through receiving the Lord Jesus Christ.

As my friends' father worked in the garden, another neighbor who was a general contractor, observed him and asked him if he knew anyone who would dig a ditch for him. The neighbor complained that people wanted too much money for their services and he had been unable to find someone to do it at a reasonable rate. Once again, the clever soul-winner offered to dig the ditch, saying: "For every hour that you go to the gospel meetings, I will spend an hour digging ditches for you." The man found that arrangement to be quite lucrative, for not only did he obtain a ditch, he also met the Savior under the sound of the preaching of the Word of God!

### **Wise As Serpents, Harmless As Doves**

To see people come to the Lord for salvation, one must be wise and diligently provide a hearing for the gospel by doing things to gain our neighbors' attention. The Lord Jesus sat on a well to gain a woman with a checkered past (John 4), he attended to sick people (Mk. 1:32-34), and was even welcoming and kind towards children (Mt. 19:14.) Gardening, giving someone a ride, helping someone with their computer, hospitality, and taking baked goods to a neighbor all may be used to open the door for discussion of the claims of Christ. Any number of other good works can be done to adorn the gospel of God. One is only limited by our imagination and willingness to take the time for such preparatory gospel work. May the Lord grip our hearts with the opportunities that we have in our neighborhoods for His greater glory, and may we prayerfully seek to witness to those who are perishing.