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The Ministry of The Gideons

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THE CHRISTIAN
COMMERCIAL MEN'S
ASSOCIATION
OF AMERICA
International



*"And they stood every
man in his place round
about the camp."*

—Judges 7:21.

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202 South State Street
CHICAGO • ILLINOIS

The Origin of the Gideons

IN THE AUTUMN of the year 1898, John H. Nicholson of Janesville, Wis., came to the Central Hotel at Boscobel, Wis., for the night. The hotel being crowded, he was requested to take a bed in a double room with S. E. Hill of Beloit, Wis., where each discovered the other to be a Christian. They had their evening devotions together and on their knees before God were given the thoughts afterwards worked out. On May 31, they met at Beaver Dam, Wis., concluded to band the Christian commercial travelers together for mutual recognition and united service for the Master, and decided to call a meeting at Janesville, Wis., July 1, 1899, in the Y. M. C. A. Building. Only three men were present, John H. Nicholson, W. J. Knights, and S. E. Hill. They organized with S. E. Hill, President; W. J. Knights, Vice President; John H. Nicholson, Secretary and Treasurer. Much thought was given to what the name of the Association should be, and after special prayer that God might lead them to select the proper one, Mr. Knights arose from his knees and said, "We will be called Gideons." He read the sixth and seventh chapters of Judges and showed the reason for adopting the name: "The Gideons, the Christian Commercial Travelers Association." Gideon was a man who was willing to do exactly what God wanted him to do, irrespective of his own judgment as to the plans or results. Humility, faith, and obedience were his great elements of character. This is the standard that the Gideon association is trying to establish in all its members, each to be a man ready to do God's will at any time, at any place and in any way that His spirit leads.

Our Object

THE object of The Gideons is to win men and women for the Lord Jesus Christ and particularly the traveling public, and as a means to this end they place Bibles in hotel guest rooms.

Our Vision World Wide

NOT until the organization of The Gideons was any concerted effort ever made for the moral uplift and salvation of the traveling man. It is now the only Association that is trying directly to bring the Gospel of Christ and his salvation to commercial travelers, as such, and to those who travel.

It is estimated that there are over 500,000 commercial travelers in the United States and Canada, of whom probably not more than a small percentage are avowedly Christian.

Only an insignificant portion of this number have so far been persuaded to join in this needed and specific effort in Christian service. We are using our best endeavors to bring them to active co-operation and urge all Christian forces to help us to this end.

No other class of men has such great opportunities for good or evil, and no occupation for men requires more positive qualities of character to bring success than theirs. As the commercial traveler has often been called "the spinal column of commerce" because he is a power in the commercial world, so is he, when a Christian, a most persistent, aggressive force in the church.

Resources

OUR Association is financed by our regular and associate membership dues and by donations from those who take an interest in our work. We are raising an endowment fund from Gideons, and friends, the income from which is to be used for the expense of the work.

We need both large and small donations from all interested, or who have been blessed by reading Gideon Hotel Bibles. One Bible Class in the South alone supplied funds for 6,000 Bibles and is continuing its financial assistance. They do not wish their name mentioned.

Hotel Bibles Placed

OVER one and a quarter million Bibles have been placed in hotel bedrooms, hospitals, jails and institutions of the world and large numbers are added each month as funds may be procured.

The work is being aided by the Christian forces in each city and town. They help provide the funds from which we can furnish Bibles, at a price lower than such a fine edition can be obtained from any other source. These funds are raised by individual donations, or after a personal presentation and appeal is made by some one or more Gideons locally at a church service. Any money left above the cost of Bibles for the local hotels goes into a general fund. **One dollar will place a Gideon Bible in any hotel the world around.**

Our experience shows conclusively that the effect is more definite and results much larger when placed in the name of The Gideons only, than by some local church organization or other agency.

The commercial traveler honors any good work done by his fellow travelers and is therefore more easily influenced by it, and the landlords cannot consistently refuse permission to place the Bibles to those upon whom they depend for patronage.

The first Bibles placed were 25 in the Superior Hotel, Iron Mountain, Montana, November, 1908. The largest shipment of Bibles was made to California, 1911, 25,250. The next largest was to Old Orchard, Maine, 15,000, for New England. The next largest was to Atlantic City, New Jersey, June, 1921, 10,000. May we not have your subscription for this great Bible distribution which is proving to be such a blessing to mankind?

Our Foreign Work

BIBLES have been placed in the hotels and inns of Palestine (completed), India, Egypt, China, Korea, Java, Siam, Philippines, Japan and South America in English and native languages. Great results!

THIS SHOULD APPEAL TO YOU

Was a Great Kindness

A FEW weeks ago I was in an automobile accident near the city of Ft. Wayne, Ind., and was taken to the Methodist Hospital in that city, and in my room, for my use, was a Gideon Bible. This impressed me very much as being a great kindness. Is this Organization for traveling men alone, or can anyone belong? Wish you would please send me information on how to join.

Mrs. A. W., Greenville, Ohio.

Her Opportunity to Repay

IT gives me a great joy to send this dollar: it is only a small amount in comparison with the good that has come to me through one of your Bibles. I am grateful for this opportunity to repay in a very small measure the debt I owe.

Mrs. L. D. J.

Solaced by Gideon Bibles

I HAVE often read your Bibles in hotels, but I have never appreciated them quite so much as this summer, while convalescing at Rex Hospital in Raleigh, N. C. I found great comfort and solace in reading one of your Bibles. Enclosed is a very small token of my appreciation of your Organization.

L. J.

There is Nothing Greater

THE following note was written upon a collection envelope at a Gideon service in Minneapolis. "I will pray for you often, at present I can do no more; I could do nothing greater."

I. C.

Long Unopened, But Finally Effective

FOR thirteen years I had been rooming in a Jacksonville, Fla., hotel where a Gideon Bible has been all these years, and I never once opened it; but one night I did open it and began reading, and through its reading was led to Christ. I am now married, my wife and I are bringing up our children for God in the Presbyterian Church.

Capt. W., C. of Ga. R. R.

Former Governor Commends Gideon Bible Work

I MISS the Gideon Bible whenever it is not in a hotel where I register. Most of them have your Bibles and they are a comfort. As indicated by the name of your Association, your first concern is commercial travelers, but thousands of others are helped and are interested. It is a beautiful, helpful and magnificent work that you are doing. I must owe more than the enclosed check. Best wishes.

C. S. O., Former Governor of Michigan.

"Prevents a Murder"

A GIDEON stopped at a gas station in Beverly Hills, Calif., and the operator, noticing his Gideon emblem, remarked that he was glad to see it. When asked why, he related how a few years ago in New York City he had gone to a hotel, sat down to write his father that when he would read in the newspaper that his son had committed murder that he should know that he was quite aware of what he was doing. His wife had been unfaithful to him, and he intended shooting both her and her lover. As he drew out the writing paper on the desk, he had to remove a Gideon Bible. Interested, he opened it and read John 8:32, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." He read on, and became convinced of the awful sin he contemplated doing, gave his heart to the Lord Jesus Christ, and today is rejoicing in salvation because of the Gideon Bible placed in his way when in need of such a message.

Pleased With Gideon Bibles

THANK you so much! I am indeed pleased that you placed the Bibles in this hotel, and so are the others. I received them at 5 p.m. and a traveling man came in at 1 a.m. and next morning said, "I was glad to find a Gideon Bible. I read several chapters. How did you get them?" Others speak of them too. Thank you!

Mrs. R. A. J., Clinton, Ky.