

You Can Be a Rescuer

by Scott Hinkle

Have you ever felt as if you were standing in the middle of a forest watching a rapidly spreading fire consume everything in the vicinity? I feel that way watching the flames of sin seemingly overtake our country. At times it feels nothing less than overwhelming. After leading an evangelism team to Mardi Gras in New Orleans, as well as constantly ministering in towns and cities across the country during the last year, I had opportunities to gaze often into the flames. What “flames” am I talking about? They include the fires of murder, same-sex marriage, political mudslinging, all kinds of crimes—even terrorism—that are spreading from coast to coast.

As a Christian, I have wondered how I can stop the fires before they destroy everything. Fortunately, there is an answer. The Holy Spirit speaks to this very question.

“Rescue those being led away to death; hold back those staggering toward slaughter” (Prov. 24:11, NIV).

The other morning as I was thinking about this verse, the meaning of it hit me like a gale-force wind. It altered my perspective about what my primary role as a follower of Jesus should be.

As a Christian, my main purpose is not as much to put out the flames of hell as to pull people out of those flames.

Make no mistake—as opportunities arise, believers should be involved in dealing with the social and political issues that tend to fan these flames. There is much good to be accomplished by Christians' working in these realms of society.

Nonetheless, Proverbs 24:11 tells us that, as Christians, we should be focusing more on rescuing those being led away to death than on quenching the flames that would destroy them.

Throughout the 20-plus years we at Scott Hinkle Outreach Ministries have gone to New Orleans to tell people about Jesus, I've seen the rampant sin, immorality and perversion of Mardi Gras stun many a Christian worker. Unfortunately, the character of our nation as a whole isn't that much different from the character we witness at Mardi Gras. Yet instead of being distracted by the intensity of the fires of sin, let's concentrate on what any and every one of us can do as Christians to pull others from the flames.

I will never forget the man during Mardi Gras who was on his way to the Mississippi River to take his life because he had been diagnosed with cancer and AIDS. Simply put, he felt hopeless.

By the grace of God, one of our workers intercepted him, led him to Christ and aborted the man's personal suicide mission. This man

was pulled from the flames.

Every time you or I pray with someone to receive Christ, whether it is during a Bible-study class, on a street corner, or at a coffee shop or church altar, that person is pulled from hell's flames of eternal destruction.

The Bible says all of heaven rejoices when one person repents! "'There will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety nine righteous persons who do not need to repent'" (Luke 15:7). I want to rejoice with heaven, don't you?

Don't give up on trying to make your community a better place to live, but at the same time don't become frustrated by trying to quench all of America's unholy fires. Remember to snatch people out of the flames one at a time.

Introduce them to the same Jesus who has changed your life. Then you will become a real-life, Holy Ghost "flame-puller"—pulling people out of destruction and into life.

By the way, during the last day or two of our Mardi Gras outreach, New Orleans was drenched with heavy rains. It most definitely had a diminishing effect on the partying crowd.

Since that happened, I have realized that if I do my part of Proverbs 24:11 by pulling people from the flames, then God will do what I cannot do. He will dampen the flames.