

If someone says he wants to pray right then and there, encourage him to do so. You might like to say, "You can pray right now. Confess your sins and turn from them, and then tell God you are placing your trust in Jesus as the Lord and Savior of your life. Surrender your heart to Him. After you've prayed, I'll pray for you."

Then make sure the person has a Bible (get him one if necessary), and encourage him to read it daily and obey what he reads. Also, encourage him to get into a Bible-believing, Christ-centered church.

If the person doesn't ask you to pray with him, let him go on his way, but encourage him to think deeply about your conversation and to get his heart right with the Lord as soon as possible. You can then leave him in the hands of a faithful God, who will continue to speak to him through His Holy Spirit and bring him to genuine repentance in His time.

For a thorough treatment on why we should be very careful about hastily leading someone in a prayer for salvation, visit our website at www.wayofthemaster.com and check out "How to Botch an Altar Call" (under Free Tools / Extras).

Inoculated "Almost-Christians"

If you are dealing with an inoculated churchgoer who knows a few Bible verses (such as John 3:16), you probably have the toughest encounter of all. The person may answer all the questions correctly, but you know he doesn't live like a Christian should. Here are some questions that might reveal his level of understanding:

1. "Are you born again?" If he says he isn't, remind him that Jesus said a man must be born again to enter the Kingdom of God (John 3:5).
2. "When was the last time you read your Bible?" If he says it's been a long time, express your concern by asking, "What would you think if you sent love letters to your wife and she never took the time to read them? You would start to sus-