

This is part of a series of messages I wrote to encourage and equip new Online Missionaries.

Part 1 – Where are the replies?

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I remember how exciting it was the very first time I logged on to ARC and found a new contact waiting for me. It took some effort to sort out how the system worked and then to compose my reply, but I finally got it sent out. Then I responded to another contact. The second time around it wasn't quite as hard to do.

I began to anticipate getting a response back. What would they say? What would they ask? The next day I logged on to ARC and was just a tiny bit disappointed to find that no one had yet responded.

But I wrote to a few more new contacts. And waited...

Later I wrote to some more new contacts. And I waited, and waited....

It probably took two weeks and maybe 20 contacts before I finally got a response from someone. Yes, it was really nice to hear from them. But also I wondered, "Why did so few respond?" "Does it always take this long?" "Am I doing something wrong?"

Perhaps you have felt this way yourself. Let me encourage you with these thoughts.

The parable of the soils (Matthew 13) reminds us that there will be a variety of responses to the Gospel. Not everyone that Jesus began to dialog with continued on with Him. And some may have come along much later after time, thought, study and the Spirit's work in their life convinced them of the truth. We are privileged to have some part in pointing a person towards the Lord and/or to greater commitment. But we will never know, this side of heaven, the extent of the fruit of our efforts.

Even if you never hear back from someone you need to remember that they are still, somewhere, on their spiritual journey. They visited an evangelistic website and chose to give their contact information. They have probably received your reply. If you recommended a web site they may well have visited and explored its content. But for some reason they have chosen to continue their inquiries in other ways and not respond to your offer of dialog.

I am happy to report that my response rate has improved *somewhat* from this early experience. But I still need to trust God for the many silences between those encouraging replies and ongoing dialogs.

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If you are have questions about ARC or about your online ministry:

- Review the ARC TRAINING VIDEOS and MANUAL
- Check the Volunteer Website. (<https://www.gmovolunteers.com>)
- Ask your COMMUNITY LEADER. (In ARC Mail, click on SETTINGS > GENERAL for your Community Leader's name and e-mail address.)

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