

ELMFEST REPORT—JUNE 13-15, 2003

Elmfest is an annual event in Elmhurst, Illinois. Brethren are reminded of it when they come to the Sunday meeting and are greeted by closed roads and detours. This year the WACC applied for a booth space to “test the waters.” It turned out that it was more economical to apply as a member of the Chamber of Commerce, so this year the Chicago Bible Students are a Chamber of Commerce member. There are a number of added witnessing opportunities available as a Chamber Member that may turn out to be an interesting side benefit later such as added listings of the Chamber websites, access to new names through a “welcome wagon,” advertising and exposure, etc.

Following the Printer’s Row Book Fair witness effort by one week, we followed the same basic approach used regarding literature. An added concern was the extended hours and added day...a 3-day weekend. This presented a greater sacrifice for those Brethren who participated. The booth was to remain open until 11:00 p.m. on Friday and Saturday nights. We supplied lighting and a portable TV for videos since we had access to power. We had a 10’ x 10’ tent provided, but we supplied the tables, chairs and everything used in the booth.

The atmosphere was different from Printer’s Row. While all were strangers to us, they were familiar with the City of Elmhurst. This was their first exposure to the Chicago Bible Students. One person observed, “The Chicago Bible Students may be the best kept secret in Elmhurst!” Another common response, “We might just stop by and see you.” This was not heard very often at Printer’s Row (many were not interested in Elmhurst?). Conversations were fewer and further apart. Crowds were not as heavy. Families and Father’s Day brought many to the small carnival atmosphere. The comparisons probably should not be made with Printer’s Row, but rather with next year’s Elmfest. Will the crowd be different? Will any remember us? Will world events develop dissatisfaction with current church affiliations and encourage searching for better answers? One common area in conversation showed that people are looking for better answers.

With this background, the following comments are from the brethren who served at the fair in Elmfest.

Br. Mark Kandel

My blessing was threefold: just being there, seeing the high quality of the booth, and giving a low-key witness of God’s love to the gentleman selling basement waterproofing in the booth next to ours. Thank you for organizing all the details.

Now is our salvation nearer than when we first believed.

Br. Bob Whittaker

Following is a little account of our experiences at the Elmfest last weekend:

Two young men came by the booth and were looking at the table of booklets. They willingly took the free sample packet, but nothing else. At the end of the night, one of the young men came back and said he recognized some of our books. Turns out he was a JW. He asked us about what we knew of the "split" that took place and the differences. Erwin asked him if he would be willing to read the First Volume if he bought it for him. He willingly said he would be glad to have it and read it.

My sister, Lorraine, sold a 7-in-1 to a man who said it looked like something he could use for his Bible class that he teaches at Willow Creek, the mega church in Barrington. She also talked with a young mother who told her husband this seemed to be something she had been searching for. She received the packet in English, but then asked if she could have one in Polish. Seems she wanted to get away from the Catholic Church and also to have something for her children.

I (Dorothea) talked with a woman who asked who we were. She seemed quite interested, until she mentioned something about hell. I told her our belief and why a loving God would not torture people continually, etc. She said that we can't question God. She was very kind and thanked me, but away she went (with a free packet).

One man bought the video on Hell with no pressure or prompting.

Approximately 18-20 free packets were handed out.

Hope this helps. Lord bless all your efforts to be pleasing to our Heavenly Father,
Sr. Dorothea Kalinski

It was not very busy, but many people looked as they were passing, but did not stop. We did give out approximately 25 free packets.

I had one man stop and talked to him about the 7-in-1 and explained to him that it was like a textbook to study the Bible according to the Plan of the Ages chart that was on the table. He was interested and bought one and then told me he was a Bible Class teacher at Willow Creek Church.

Another woman who stopped by and asked what church we were affiliated with. I told her we were independent Bible Students. She asked again how we were affiliated with other churches. I finally told her we were not. We had Sunday services and weeknight services covering various areas of the suburbs. She seemed more interested. She then noticed the Polish packet and told us she was Polish and was Catholic. I then informed her that the majority of our Ecclesia were former Catholics. She asked what we do when members question Mary or the sacraments. I told her we were beyond all that.

That we were instructed in the Bible to “come out of her my people.” At that point, her husband stopped by with their 2 children. She told him this seemed like what she was looking for. She asked about a children’s camp. I told her we do have one and she asked if we had a brochure. I told her no, it was primarily for the children of the members. She took the free packets both in English and Polish as well as one of our cards. Don’t know, she just may show up one day.

Sr. Lorraine Zuk

It was a joyful experience to be able to witness for the Lord. Although the weather cooperated and the booth was attractive, but sadly the public was not receptive.

Sr. Irene Hayes

We were scheduled to witness at the Chicago Bible Students’ Booth from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., June 14, 2003 at Elmfest Fair.

Already at 9:30 a.m. families were casually strolling, stopping here and there as their young children peeked into the many booths. When an adult passed our table, we smiled and queried, “Do you read the Bible?” Thus, we drew them near. Some accepted our free offering of the booklet, “How to Study the Bible.” When their interest grew, we spoke of our videos, plus English, Spanish and Polish booklets. Although no booklets were sold, it was our delight to witness on the Lord’s Word.

With desire, we wanted the public to stop, view our literature and discuss the Gospel of Good Tidings.” Even though only nine adults received and accepted our free offerings, we learned to have patience.

Let us always be ready and willing to plant the seeds of Truth, knowing our Lord will do the watering.

In Christian love,

Sr. Millie Szatko

Sr. Wanda Jay Phil. 4:4

A retired nurse was concerned with the moral decay of society and the plight of abortion victims. While raised a Catholic, she was not a practicing Catholic. She bought a 1st Volume and knew exactly where we met. She may stop in and see just what it’s like. A few young people stopped and bought a 1st Volume from curiosity. They liked the topical approach and subjects. A Jewish couple stopped when asked if they liked to study the Bible. They responded with, “We study the Talmud.” Sr. Marge gave them a “Time to Favor Zion” booklet with a brief idea of our hopes for Israel. They kept the booklet as they walked away. The rapport with Elmfest Officials was good throughout the fair preparation and the weekend. The demeanor of the Brethren was a good witness. The

booths around us were selling high-priced items...water sealing treatments, windows, vacations, etc. We were offering free booklets and everything was basically \$5 or less. It was quite a contrast. We were there to offer a service, not make money or accumulate names. This was commented on a few times and appeared in itself to be an area of witness.

Br. Mark Kandel

Summary

We appreciate the support of the Brethren who were able to serve at Elmfest:
 Br. Bob Whittaker, Br. Mark Tabac, Sr. Roberta Tabac, Sr. Wanda Jay, Sr. Irene Hayes, Sr. Millie Szatko, Br. Carl Hagensick, Sr. Marge Hagensick, Sr. Cher-El Hagensick, Sr. Claudia Tosia, Sr. Joanna Knox, Br. Erwin Kalinski, Sr. Dorothea Kalinski and Sr. Lorraine Zuk.

Literature Summary

Booklets

- 5 – Revelation
- 1 – What Is This World Coming to?
- 2 – Doctrine of Christ
- 5 – Time to Favor Zion
- 2 – Where are the Dead?

Books

- 7 – Paperback Volume 1
- 3 – 7-in-1 Volume

Videos

- 1 – Can These Bones Live?
- 1 – Truth About Hell

Approximately 50-100 Free Booklet Packets (counts were not maintained on all shifts.)

**ELMFEST 2003
 FRIDAY, SATURDAY, SUNDAY
 JUNE 13-14-15, 2003**

FRI -9:00-1:00	MK
FRI -1:00-4:00	MK – Br. Bob Whittaker
FRI -4:00-7:00	Br. Mark & Sr. Roberta Tabac
FRI -7:00-11:00	
SAT -10:00-1:00	MK – Srs. Wanda Jay – Irene Hayes – Millie Szatko
SAT -1:00-4:00	Br. Carl Hagensick – Sr. Claudia Tosa
SAT -4:00-7:00	Sr. Marge Hagensick – Sr. Joanna Knox
SAT -7:00-11:00	Br. Erwin & Sr. Dorothea Kalinski – Sr. Lorraine Zuk
SUN-10:00-1:00	MK
SUN -1:00-4:00	MK – Srs. Marge Hagensick – Cher-El Hagensick
SUN -4:00-7:00	MK

Kane County Fair

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The Class had a booth at the Kane County Fair on Sept. 29-30 at a cost of approximately \$125. Approximately 20-25 Volumes were sold and a number of booklets were given out free.