

2003 Printer's Row Book Fair

The Chicago Tribune sponsored the 19th annual outdoor book fair. There were a few noticeable changes and in many ways improvements that may have resulted in the larger than normal crowds, estimated at 75,000. Maybe it was the support of the TV and radio media tied to the Tribune that gave this fair more exposure. The number of fair "officials" walking around with radios and clipboards was visibly noticeable. It just felt better run and organized than in the past.

Our booth location was moved about 200' north of where we have been in past years. Instead of a windy area near the corner of a building, we were in one of the calmest areas of the fair where the breeze didn't affect the materials on the table. Not only did we have the shade of the building, but also the additional shade of two beautiful trees, so the sun never was a factor in the literature or videos we displayed (the sun is brutal on videos). The curb in front of our table was bone dry...other booths had water standing in the gutter in front of their table. The neighbors were polite and friendly and the public was, too.

One departure from past fairs was the addition of 7-in-1 books made available through Br. George Wilmot. Last August, he offered these books at \$5 each to Brethren who were interested. (Normally these books sell for \$17.00!) We bought 100. We started to use them at flea markets, but this was the first opportunity to offer them at a fair. Everyone involved was amazed at the results. To offer the *Divine Plan of the Ages* for \$1.00, compare the individual set of volumes for \$15, and then see the 7-in-1 book for \$5...well, how can anyone pass up on a value like that!

Other literature offered included an assortment of booklets, videos and the ever-popular "FREEBIES." The FREEBIES include: "*How to Study the Bible...*," an additional booklet, "Who are the CBS" tract, a calling card and the *coup de grace* ...a piece of candy, all in a plastic baggie. These were not passed out as tracts, but taken by the public and often more than one ("for a friend who would like this...").

You never know how a fair activity will turn out. This year I have been thinking back on a line attributed to Br. Owen Kindig,

***"There is no greater joy than to have your life
Controlled by the over-ruling providence of God."***

With this background in mind, the fair began. The following comments are from brethren who served and co-labored in this activity.

Br. Mark Kandel

Serving at the Printer's Row Book Fair was a real pleasure this year. Not only were there many books placed, but crowds of people at the fair brought many to our booth. Several remembered us from past years. One man recognized our name from our monthly *Sun Times* ads (ironic considering this was a *Tribune* sponsored fair). Several others recognized the book as being that of Br. Russell and bought it for that reason. Most encouraging were those who stopped to discuss the Bible. All did so in a polite manner, making for wonderful witness opportunities. I look forward to next year.

Br. Carl Hagensick

Thank you for all your work for Printer's Row and for the opportunity of serving! I am looking forward to the one at ElmFest.

Please let me know of any future fairs. Do you have the schedule for Milwaukee?

I appreciated very much the opportunity of participating in making the Truth accessible to those searching for it. I sincerely thank God and all those who made this possible—it was a blessing to see and talk to so many interested in studying the Scriptures. A couple of them said that they remember our booth from past years and they were interested if we had anything new for them. Some of them did not like our answers to their questions, but the discussions in itself were profitable for me. Also, it was good seeing Br. Mark and Br. Carl witnessing, and I hope I learned some effective tactics from them.

Overall, I was encouraged through this experience and I am looking forward to other similar ones.

God bless!
Sr. Claudia Tosia

Here is what happened. The rain started 10 minutes before Mark Tabac came. We covered the books immediately, but when he said there was no point to stay any longer because it would continue raining. Therefore, we started packing things as fast as we could so books would not get wet, if possible.

While we were almost done packing, a man came who had asked us awhile before to put aside 2 of the 7-in-1 books because he would come back to buy them later on. We did not think he would get back in time, so the books were already packed when he showed up. Therefore, we looked for the books, we gave them to him and put the money in one of the boxes, but could not locate the notebook to mark the books off.

Sr. Estera Mezera

This was by far the best Printer's Row Book Fair since we started coming four years ago. We had excellent weather for most of the time. (I think it has rained each year on this weekend. One man commented that if they were serious about getting rain in the desert, all they would have to do is schedule a Book Fair!) The neighbors were friendly. The conversations were good. The added feature of the 7-in-1 for \$5 was an added thrill to placing Truth literature. There were a few that looked and wouldn't take even a free booklet, but there were far more who took an added packet of booklets for others. The subjects covered in the Volumes are still appealing to the mind of Truth seekers.

One man has shown up nearly every year. He has the Volumes and prides himself on knowing that we are not Jehovah Witnesses. His booming voice, though, was a distraction. He was speaking with Br. Jeff while I was trying to explain the 7-in-1 to a couple who stopped by. I try to avoid any association with the JW's unless someone else brings up the subject. This was a challenge as the man speaking to Jeff continually mentioned JW's. I thought for sure the couple I was speaking to would walk away. They did...but not until they got their copy of the 7-in-1 to take home. They also wanted to make sure it was OK if they came to the meetings, but not necessarily on a regular basis at first. The high pressure of some churches to "join" and become members has turned them off. Who knows...they may show up in Elmhurst.

As for the man speaking with Br. Jeff, he lingered and I asked him why he never made the effort to meet with us if he agreed on so many points. He avoided an answer, but we continued to press the point. Eventually we did get his name and address and promised to remind him of the public meeting in September in North Lake. There may have been a hesitancy to meet with us because of racial differences. This is an area the Lord will have to control and over-rule.

Br. Mark Kandel

Summary

We appreciate the support of the brethren who volunteered to serve at Printer's Row Book Fair: Br. Carl Hagensick, Sr. Claudia Tosia, Br. Jeff Mezera, Sr. Estera Mezera, Br. Mark Tabac and Sr. Roberta Tabac. One of the hardest tasks of any project is the teardown and clean-up at the end. Our special thanks to Br. Mark and Sr. Roberta for continually volunteering to do this work...all the more when you know rains are coming, parking is scarce and the crowds are dispersing. Added to this was the personal strain of events in their family. They had so many excuses not to serve, but they came. Thank you!

Literature Summary

Booklets

- 15 – Revelation
- 1 – God's Kingdom
- 1 – What Is This World Coming To?
- 1 – Doctrine of Christ
- 3 – Time to Favor Zion
- 5 – Where Are The Dead?

Books

- 21 – Paperback Volume 1
- 1 – Polish Paperback Volume 1
- 14 – 7-in-1 Volume

Videos

- 1 – Can These Bones Live?
- 1 – God's Kingdom
- 1 – Truth About Hell

Approximately 100-150 Free Booklet Packets (counts were not maintained)