

Using Gospel Tracts (Broadsides) as a Means of Personal Evangelism

Steve Cohen, Founder of The Apple of His Eye, USA

My very first encounter with the Gospel was in 1971 when I was living in Seattle, Washington. I was on my way to an event at the Science Center and had parked my car in a lot. As I headed towards my destination, I noticed a rack hanging from the window on a vehicle near mine. The sign said, “Free, take one.” It turned out to be a gospel tract written by Jacob Gartenhaus from Chattanooga, Tennessee. This little tract presented the unimaginable idea that one could be Jewish and believe in Jesus at the same time. My initial reaction was to immediately dismiss the tract out of hand. But here I am forty years later remembering that incident and the impact that tract had on my life as I came to faith in Y’shua two years later.

What was it about that incident that stirred my thoughts? I spoke with no one, no one was forcing literature on me, no one was haranguing me to turn from hell and receive Jesus, it was just a piece of literature in a rack on a car. *That literature became an invitation to engage in a process of serious consideration of the person of Jesus.*

Since that time, I have distributed literally hundreds of thousands of Gospel tracts over my 35 years as a missionary. I have trained dozens of people to do the same and along the way we have received thousands of contacts – Jewish and gentile – to engage in further personal evangelistic dialogues. *Broadsides are really pre-evangelistic invitations to discuss personal faith in Jesus.* And along the way we have seen some patterns emerge.

First, going out to public places with the Gospel is a form of spiritual warfare. The enemy wants us to do little in terms of reaching the lost. Fears are raised as to what might happen, as to how opposition might rear its ugly head and how the efforts would simply be wasted time and money. But the stories of people who have received literature and in turn reconsidered their lives abound.

I recall my very first sortie (going out to hand out literature) as a volunteer with Jews For Jesus. We went to the North Beach area in San Francisco. This is where all the strip joints were. My team leader prepared me by giving me three instructions: 1) hand one flyer to each person who passes by 2) be polite and friendly and 3) do not leave the corner and wander to another part of the area so we can find each other after we are finished. Simple enough. After we prayed, I started to distribute my literature and to my surprise, people took them. Some read them, some mocked us, others were indifferent – but they took the literature.

I was placed on a busy corner in front of an establishment called The Garden Of Eden. They had some “barkers” or bouncers, oversized football type folk whose task it was to get passersby to come into the establishment. Because I was on the corner they felt that I was interfering with their “business” and confronted me asking me to go half a block up the street so that they could hawk their wares. I remembered my instructions, “Do not leave the corner!” So I informed this fellow twice my size that I was under orders to stay there. He went and got another barker and the two of them insisted that I leave. Well, I went to fetch the team leader who brought the rest of the team to that corner where we

stood our ground for the Gospel. Fast forward to 1991 ish. We were handing out literature at the Santa Monica Pier and someone approached Tuvya informing him that he and his girl friend were working at The Garden of Eden on stage. One of the tracts somehow landed inside the establishment and in their hands. They read it and reconsidered their lives and now they are married out of the business but have a ministry to those still in that business.

We never had a conversation with them. We were just available to distribute the literature in a way to make it possible for others to hear a bit of the message and think through what is going on in their lives. In effect we are the literal sowers of Gospel seed some of which yields a harvest. That parable, by the way, is a great example for those who take to the streets. It is not us who brings in the harvest, it is the Lord. As such, we have the privilege and mandate under the Great Commission to go and scatter seed. When we do that, we are simply fulfilling our duty as disciples of Y'shua.

I have learned over the years that the more generic the literature is in a given outing that the lower the take rate is for literature and the higher the dropping to the ground rate is. With the development of computers and Risographs, we have found we can economically and quickly develop short runs of tracts that are more specialized to a given scenario.

9/11

On September 11th, 2001, I was informed by my son, Noah, that something major was happening in New York City. I turned on CNN and watched as we all did in horror as the second tower was struck and then a little later how the towers fell. Sitting at my computer, I wrote a broadside entitled, *Are we under Attack?* I sent it electronically to our office. Ninety minutes later 1,500 broadsides had been printed on two sides folded and bundled so that by 11:30 we were downtown in St. Louis distributing the literature to people on the streets. Some wondered if we had fore-knowledge of the attack to have had something so current. But people took them and read.

We have written tracts for all sorts of events, specific concerts, parades, ball games, economic struggles, outdoor theater events, food and art festivals, wherever there are large gatherings of people in public places, we want to be there. Chicago has an annual food festival that attracts hundreds of thousands of people each summer. We trained a team of people and during one week distributed nearly 65,000 broadsides and received about 200 contacts for more information.

It is not just that we want to distribute our literature, but the literature stands as an invitation to discuss more about Jesus. To that end we ask the question, "What do YOU think of Jesus?" as we go out to the streets. That narrows the focus of the conversation and excludes politics, the wavering economy, the weather, sports, etc to discuss Jesus. Those who wish to talk will engage with us, those who don't, won't. It does not mean that we have failed, it is just not yet the right time for them. How to write a broadside...

When I sit down to create a new broadside I am staring at a blank computer screen with six panels. The first panel is the outside cover. This is done in as large a font as will fit the page so that potential readers might see this easily as they approach. Here is an example from a recent musical at the Fox Theater in St. Louis. It is laid out in "print"

order so that when it is folded the information is in the right location. *The reading order is last panel on first page, then bottom three then first two on top page.*

Here are a some samples...

All you need to do is receive God's GIFT of love given through Y'shua (Jesus) the Messiah...

6 We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood.

7 Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.

8 Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

The Bible - I John 4:6-8

We have a free gift we would like to send you - a booklet called

God's Word of Encouragement.

To receive your free copy write, call or e-mail:

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Hey STOMP fans,
please don't litter!



What do these things have in common?

30 brooms
8 lids
5 short bins
10 6 foot 6 in poles
15 pounds of sand
4 blocks of athletes chalk
12 pairs of drumsticks
200 litres of water
8 bananas
12 boxes of matches

These are just some of the "instruments" that are used in one week of performances of the internationally acclaimed show

STOMP!

Most of us consider music as performed by a highly trained orchestra or band.



At this performance of STOMP your pre-suppositions will be challenged and your world view as to what is "music" might be changed forever!



We hope that you will enjoy tonight's show. But after the performance we invite you to take a look around you and ask if some of your pre-suppositions about

LIFE

need to be challenged by
GOD's word -

THE BIBLE.

You do not have to stumble about thumping on garbage can lids or clack broomsticks on the ground to know that we are desperately in need of being restored to a proper relationship with our creator...

So after the musical is over and we have all watched the wanderers wandering once more, we pray that you will find yourself held in the palm of God's hand, safe and secure for eternity.

How lovely is your dwelling place, O LORD Almighty! My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God. Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may have her young— a place near your altar, O LORD Almighty, my King and my God. -Psalm 84:1-3

OK, I have circled at least five songs in this flyer, please send my free gift to:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

e-mail _____

E-MAIL THE ANSWERS

or mail this to:
Steve Cohen c/o
The Apple of His Eye
PO Box 6977
St. Louis MO 63123
steve.cohen@appleofhiseye.org
www.appleofhiseye.org

PLEASE DO NOT LITTER!

FREE GIFT
IF YOU CAN FIND AT LEAST **FIVE** FIDDLER ON THE ROOF SONGS IN THIS FLYER...



Have you ever tried to break with *tradition* and found it like *Tevye's dream*?



Or maybe in the loneliness of life you have been seeking a *matchmaker; matchmaker* who will fulfill your life with a *miracle of miracles*?



Day by day we could celebrate *to life*, to life, I'chaim as the world turns from *sunrise, sunset* throughout the storms we weather.



As we schlep through life, it is not hard to think, "I am *far from the home I love.*"



There is One who does care and is asking each of us, "*Do you love Me?*"



This is none other than the God of Abraham, Isaac & Jacob. And He makes it possible for us to know, "*Now I have everything!*" based on His fulfilled promise of sending the answer to all our *Sabbath prayers*: the Messiah - Y'shua.



קוראים לו ישוע
(ולא ישו)
זאת התקנה היחידה לשלום
בשכילי, בשכילך ובשכיל כל העולם כולו

ישוע שילם את המחיר השלם
כדי לעשות שלום ביניך לבין אלוהים.

השלום של ישוע זמין בשכילך הימני
השלום שלו נותן את היכולת להתקבר
על כל מצבי החיים, מכיון שזה
השלום המושלם של אלוהים.

ישוע כבר עשה בשכילך את הכל.
כל מה שעשאר לך לעשות הוא רק
לפתוח את הלב ולהסיר לישוע שלום.

ישוע אמר:
**"אמרתו לכם את הדברים האלה כדי שבי
יהיה לכם שלום. בעולם צרה לכם,
אך התעודו - אני נצחתי את העולם"**
(יוח' 16:33)

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החזר סכום לקראת סוף כל בעולה
לא למסור על נקניק ותעביה

עד כמה שהדבר נשמע מפתיע,
הוא לא היה אומר להרוב את האירים שלנו,
אלא דווקא להחרב בעצמו
כדי לבסר על האויב.
**"זאת מחולל מפשעים, מדוכא מעונותיך,
מוסר שלומנו עליו ובחבורתו נרפא לנו"**
(ישע' 53:5)



והא גם לא אמר היה להישאר "עליו השלום"
אלא לחזור לחיים לאחר שלושה ימים



אז איפה אנחנו יכולים למצוא שלום
שבאותו מחירק ממנו ושמו בשכיל כלום?



שלום אמיתי
לא מתקיים כשדברים טובים נעלמים
אלא דווקא כשדבר טוב מגיע.

נבואת התנ"ך אומרת
שהמשוח הוא שר השלום:



אבל כיצד היה אמור אותו "שר שלום"
להביא את השלום?

אנשים אומרים שהם רוצים "שלום"
באשר הם מחכים לתשובה מבדיקה רפואית.



... מה שהם בעצם רוצים זה בריאות.

באשר אין לנו את מה שאנחנו רוצים,
אנחנו אומרים שאנחנו רוצים "שלום"
אבל מבנה של שלום נעלם
מיד באשר צצה בעיה חדשה,
ובכיוון מה שנתן שלום לבן אדם אחד.
גורם בדרך כלל בעיה לשישה אחרים!



כולם רוצים שלום.
אך אחד לא באמת מתנדב לשלום.

אבל אנשים שונים מתכוונים לדברים
שונים באשר הם אומרים "שלום".

אנשים אומרים שהם רוצים "שלום"
כשהשכנים שלהם עושים מסיבה
בדיוק כשהם מנסים ללכת לישון.



... מה שהם בעצם רוצים זה שקט.

אנשים אומרים שהם רוצים "שלום"
באשר הם דאגים למצב הכלכלי שלהם.



... מה שהם בעצם רוצים זה כסף.

This broadside courtesy of Jews For Jesus and used in our outreach in Israel in 2009.

Literature distribution has been used for Gospel propagation for centuries. Billions of tracts from various mission societies have been developed and handed out in a myriad of languages. The written track is "on duty" 24/7/365 and can be a force for good in times of hardship.

Recently at a Bible study my wife Nancy heard this story. A timid member of her Bible study was giving a friend a ride to church. That friend asked her the question we all would love to be asked, “What happens when we die? What hope is there?” The lady was uncertain as to how to best answer and she shared this with some of the ladies on the class. Janet Peterson, the wife of our retired Executive Assistant reached into her purse and handed her two tracts. “Next time you see her, give her these,” she said. A couple of days later the exchange took place and literature was placed in her hands to help answer that important question. Three days later the lady who asked the question died. Now we do not know if she confessed Jesus as her Messiah, but she did have the opportunity to discover more.

We do not know how long anyone has to be on this side of eternity. That means our message is really an urgent one. We do not need to put off the sharing of the Gospel because so much is at stake. Literature is just another way to engage people so that we might move closer to have one-on-one discussions in meaningful ways to share the Gospel. I am sure that you can think of many practical ways that literature might be used to reach people. Yes, even a lowly tract reached this hard-hearted Jew who is now for Jesus.

I recall a conversation many years ago with a messianic leader who asked me frankly if I could see myself at age 60 standing out on street corners distributing Gospel tracts. Hasn't that method become old and passé? Isn't this out of step with the culture we find ourselves in? Well, here I stand, in public places now over age 60 still finding people who take the literature, give us their names and addresses for follow-up and finding some who ultimately confess Christ. When did reaching the lost go out of style?

Literature still stands as a great vehicle for telling the Good News of Jesus!

I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for this is God's power for salvation – for all who will believe – to the Jew first and also to the Greek. The Apostle Paul – Romans 1:16

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