

New SignTruck Turns Heads at the Hill Cumorah Pageant!

As a result of the CRC Strategic Planning Initiative which began in April this year, the CRC Board of Directors had decided to launch a year-round outdoor advertising campaign in the Palmyra, NY area using the "What Mormons DontTell.com" message to drive people in greater numbers to our web site. But, when we considered the roughly \$9,000 a year cost per sign, a less expensive and more practical idea was proposed by Board Member Brad White and adopted—a billboard on wheels that could be rotated to several locations around Palmyra and that we would own and not have to continue paying for on an on-going basis.

Amazing! How it all came together!

by Brad White

This was a long shot

Honestly, I did not think we were going to pull off anything for the 2008 Palmyra outreach. As the pageant dates got closer (aprox. three to four weeks out) Tom began to put out the feelers by e-mail for us to do our best to find a vehicle for the roving billboard idea we had discussed at our retreat. We almost immediately had a couple of leads

on a cargo van or a small caravan but after reviewing these options decided we would rather not invest in anything that might fall short of



Frontline Pageant volunteers (left to right): John Farkas, Ann Jones, Sky Ferguson, Dan Cuevas, Sue Grape, Rosa Cermak, Scott Urbanski, Melissa Field, Mark Merklinger, Sarah Chan, anonymous, anonymous, Bob Kilpper. NOT PICTURED: Brad White, Vern Brown, Jerry Ellison, Calvin Arnt, Nathan & Nicole Calford, Jason Galens, Dan Vacco, & Tom Jones.

our quality and impact targets. If we were going to do it we wanted to do it well.

Shopping and praying

On a Saturday, just two or three weeks before Pageant, I drove out to a strip where several used car dealerships are located, praying that God would show me something we could use as a billboard truck. I prayed specifically that I would either find something that might work or that God would close the door so we would not spend any more energy on it as pageant approached. I went to a small dealership that specializes in cargo and cube vans.

Thank you Lord!

After looking over a few vans near the road I took a look toward the back row of the lot and could hard-

ly believe what I saw. There sat a custom made advertising sign truck complete with flood lights for using after dark. This thing was huge! A 10' x 15' traveling billboard. All I could think was, "I came out looking for a vehicle we could make into a traveling billboard and there sat a traveling billboard." Its not like you see these very often—much less for sale when you need one. My excitement was hardly containable! God seemed to be providing exactly what we were looking for. I started taking pictures on my cell phone and sending them to Tom. Unfortunately it

was Saturday and the dealership was closed. I called and spoke with Tom and we just hoped that maybe the dealer would be a Christian sympathetic to our cause.

The truck dealer is a Christian!

I called the dealer Monday and made an early appointment with the owner. I introduced myself and began to tell him about our ministry. When I told him where I attend church he told me that he was very familiar with my church and that he sent his daughters to North Star Christian academy (the Christian school owned and run by the church I attend) God just kept opening doors here. The owner, Tony, seemed impressed with the outreach of CRC and said he would be willing to help us. He explained that the truck belonged to his twin

brother and that he still owed on the truck loan. He said that he would sell the van to us for whatever the payoff amount was.

Emergency Board Meeting

Tom and I called an emergency board meeting to vote on the purchase of the vehicle. It turned out that another Board Member, Sue Grape, had seen the same truck earlier in the month and thought to herself, "that is just what we are looking for." In spite of the good offer by Tony, however, we still only had about half of the money to purchase the truck. The Board voted to go ahead with the purchase with some time to raise the money.



Brad White on scaffold scraping old vinyl graphics from SignTruck

We didn't have the money

I went back to Tony to tell him we wanted the truck but would need some time to raise the money. He said, "No problem." He would hold the truck for us until we had the funds. I signed a purchase order at 9 am-ish on Wednesday and told Tony we would get busy trying to raise the money.

Thank you Lord!

By 11:00 am—the same morning—Tom called me to tell me a single donor offered to pay whatever we did not currently have for the van purchase. Within only a few hours of telling Tony we would take the van I was able to call him back and



The SignTruck circulated around the village, turning heads during the daylight hours

tell him we had raised the money. God was blowing me away with his provision for this project! Now we had to get it painted and lettered. I have a friend with a large truck repair shop and he was willing to help us get it done in time for Pageant. It took a bit longer than any of us expected to get the truck stripped and ready for paint and graphics but with the help of Tom, Allen Bouwens and other volunteers we got it done just in time. The painters stayed late on Thursday evening and worked a second shift until 11:30 PM and painted the van so we would be able to put graphics on Friday afternoon. Alan Bouwens of Sign of Jonah in Rochester, worked overtime, directing three of us as helpers, to get the job done just in time to drive to Palmyra and get it lit up for the exiting Pageant traffic.

Praise God! . . .

and to Him be all the glory for giving us this great tool for the important ministry of CRC !!!

Results were measurable, immediate, and impressive!

As soon as the SignTruck hit the street the effect was immediately noticeable. We stopped to get a sandwich on the way to the Pageant that first night and, on our way out of the restaurant, there were two teenage girls sitting on the curb who asked, "What's with the truck?" They were Christians so we inoculated them against Mormonism by explaining a couple of easy to grasp points of unbiblical LDS teaching. We then gave them ball point pens to remind them of the web address

where they could get info to educate their church.

First night at the Pageant

When we arrived at the Pageant we used a portable generator to light up both sides and it wasn't hard to tell that the cars exiting the Pageant parking lot were focused on its message. Some

folks honked their horns and some gave hand signals or yelled out the car windows. These reactions were a mix of positive and negative, as one might expect. But the point is, they couldn't ignore the SignTruck.

It was the main attraction!

All during the 9 days of the Pageant outreach, we had local Christians and other non-Mormons stopping to encourage us and Mormon and non-Mormon families stopping to



Mormons were calling the SignTruck the "Cheese Truck." Imagine that.



Local teenagers taking photos of CRC Missionaries with SignTruck. Many stopped for photos of themselves with the truck.

take photos of themselves in front of this huge caution-sign-yellow billboard. It was clear that this spectacle was affecting both LDS and non-LDS Pageant visitors and Palmyra residents.

Chart of hits on "WhatMormonsDontTell.com"

The "Hits per day" chart on page 2 shows the number of hits on (or visits to) the CRC web site for each day of the Hill Cumorah Pageant for the past 3 years—since we've been using "WhatMormonsDontTell.com." This year shows an average increase in hits per day of 35% over 2007. Even more impressive is the increase of hits during the 4 weeks (only half shown) following the Pageant outreach which were up by 42.7%

over last year (This may have something to do with the fact that the SignTruck is still somewhat visible in Palmyra.).

No SignTruck = fewer hits

Notice that there was one day (marked by a yellow dot on the chart) that the truck was not on the road at all, while we were putting the finishing touches on the sign graphics on the front and back. Once it was back in service, the hits climbed again.

SignTruck more effective than newspaper exposure

It's interesting, also, that the number of hits in 2008 is dramatically higher than the day in 2006 that one of our WhatMormonsDontTell.com signs appeared in a local newspaper article (Marked by a red dot on the chart).

EZ-up canopy more effective too

A secondary factor in the increased hits is the 4-sided banner which wrapped around the EZ-up canopy and shouted "WhatMormonsDontTell.com" every night of the Pageant. Folks could see it and read it, along with a sign that said "FREE WATER," from inside the Pageant. The water bottles had a "WhatMormonsDontTell.com" sticker on the lid so that those who did not take literature had a reminder as to where to go to access the same materials on line.

Urgent financial need!

CRC has never been in debt and we have always planned our outreaches based on what we could afford to do with the funds the Lord has already provided.

But, as we already mentioned, the renovation of the SignTruck was a much tougher job than estimated. We ended up with an invoice which, for the first time in our history, we can't pay until donations catch up with it. That invoice is

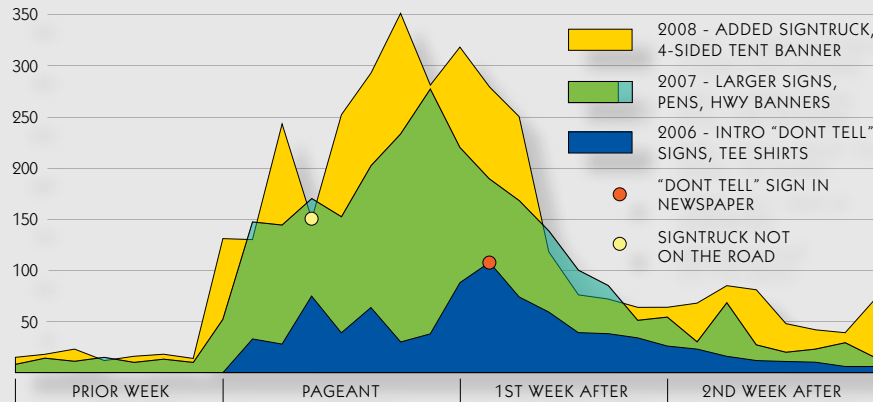
\$3,356.54. In addition, we are going to have ongoing expenses to keep the SignTruck in good condition esthetically and mechanically and to keep it gassed up for mission trips.

Would you pray about whether this would be a good time to help

take long for me to catch on to offering tracts and engaging in conversation. God was good, and He was with us! Looking back at all of the work that was done and that we were able to do on the ground, it is clear to me that it was God working through and in me, I could have never done that myself.

"Twice after arriving home the question was asked if being among the Mormons and going to all of their sites made me question leaving the [Mormon] church or made me want to go back. It is with excitement that you get one big praise report!!! NO,

Hits per day on CRC web site before, during, and after the Hill Cumorah Pageant



CRC with a special gift or a monthly pledge to help us pay for the renovation and ongoing operating expenses of the SignTruck. All CRC operations that will cost additional funds will be on hold now until we can pay our debt.

Reminder of new CRC address

Donation checks should be sent to our New York address: Christian Research & Counsel, P O Box 270, Palmyra, NY 14522.

Testimonies from "The Hill"

Melissa Field

"To my new family on the East Coast;

"I'm so thankful that God called, opened the door, and paid the way for me

to participate in this outreach. I am so humbled by the generosity and spirit of love from all of those working in this ministry. It was a blessing beyond measure! This was quite an adventure for me, as I have NEVER done anything like it before. It didn't



NOT EVEN ONCE, NOT AT ALL!!!! This trip strengthened my resolve to speak the truth about Mormonism and affirmed God's call on my life.

"It is so amazing what God has done. When you are in the dark, you don't really know it. And, when you step into the Light, and view the darkness from within the Light, it becomes clear. As Jesus conforms me more and more to Him, becoming a more mature Christian, the relationship with my biological [Mormon] family becomes weakened. Praise God that He continually gives me an expanded family in Him. I am so blessed to have so many more brothers and sisters in Christ, my heart was so full when I returned home!

"As far as the outreach ministry itself: The quality of information and materials was top notch. At first it was uncomfortable to wear the billboard t-shirt, for a few reasons. One big reason is that I feel sloppily dressed in an oversized tee. But, as we worked, I saw the need, the benefit, and purpose. I brought home a [business] card for our t-shirt [printer] so that I can order some shirts ahead of time, in a ladies cut for a better fit. I will feel more confident and better dressed.

"The fact that we were able to share testimonies from ex Mormons was very beneficial. The worship before we started each day was a beautiful blessing. It is so important to be in worship/prayer/fellowship as much as possible when dealing with the spiritual warfare that we were.

"It would be awesome to have more local churches involved. There is a real need for the sign sitters, it is just as important that we are making a statement of numbers. If we could get more people involved and willing to wear a shirt so that we could just have more t-shirt wearing people outside the pageant, making our presence known in the largest numbers possible.

"Thank you so much to everyone who made this all happen. I am so grateful to the local families that were so willing to give their time, talent, treasure, and hearts to the ministry. God willing, I will return next year, excited to serve!"

Because of Him
Melissa

Rosa Cermak

"This is my second year, participating in the Palmyra Pageant Outreach. I looked forward to this event all year and I am already looking forward to next Year! (Lord willing!)

"I can honestly say that my involvement brings me always so many more blessings than I could ever imagine. I came home loving God more. I also came home with a heart that is broken for the Mormon people and a heart that rejoices for all those who will never get entangled in a false religion because of the information that we were able to provide them, including making people aware of the "WhatMormonsDontTell.com" web page. I see the faces of those who honestly sought to find out why we do what we do and the faces of those with whom God gave us opportunity to share Truth and I am

amazingly filled with love for them to the point of tears. Some of them were Pageant volunteers, others were workers who sat across from where we were standing handing our tracts, others were non-mormons whom God placed in our path. They have been and will be in my prayers constantly and my desire is for their salvation.

"I am so thankful for the Leadership of Christian Research & Counsel which makes it possible for people like me to use the gifts God has given us to fulfill our calling to reach the Mormons, to share the Gospel, and to warn those who otherwise might get entangled in this deceptive religion. I learned so much working alongside of those who have been doing this ministry for a long time and I felt truly challenged to grow in the knowledge of God's word. I am so thankful for this equipping and hope The Lord will give me many opportunities to share year-round.



Sky Ferguson (left) and Rosa Cermak witnessing to a Mormon in front of the Book of Mormon Publication Site

"I need to mention that I was moved as I experienced the Body of Christ at work, each with their gifts, acting as one under God's direction and reveling in His love. I know many seeds were planted and I am

trusting God for their growth!

To Him be The Glory!!"

Rosa

Sue Grape

"This year's pageant was great! More people than usual came to the village park; the majority of them were non-Mormon! The gospel was presented to some, and others



Sue Grape, Sarah Chan, and Dan Cuevas, at the Hill Cumorah Pageant, educating Mormons and non-Mormons about important differences between Mormonism and true, Biblical Christianity.

wanted bumper stickers and even t-shirts. The inoculations were awesome!

"Some nights at the hill, there were so many inquiring visitors that I lost count—amazing since, previous years, we could count those who approached our booth on one hand.

"The team was so well-rounded. 3 people fluent in Spanish, 4 former Mormons, several denominations represented, and different witnessing styles. Missionaries came from 4 states and Canada. God did a fabulous job putting us together.

"Some of the local churches are expressing a greater interest than previous years because of the cohesiveness they saw in this year's pageant outreach. Next year we may be able to implement additional types of outreach we've discussed.

"The truck was the best. It brought forth a lot of giggles and joy. The townsfolk who don't drive by the hill could see our roving billboard everywhere!!! The Mormons seem to have dubbed it the cheese truck! In response to one of the cheese remarks, I said, 'Yes, it does look like

cheese—it's *holy* cheese. We base truth on the *Holy* Bible. Figuratively speaking, it would stand to reason that our truck would look like *holy* cheese—a food that has substance!"

"P.S. I miss my new friends"

Sue Grape, CRC Board Member

Dan Cuevas

"I look forward, with anticipation, to my trip to Palmyra every year. And when I finally arrive there I feel like the Apostle Paul as he journeyed, preaching the Gospel I pray a lot specially just before I leave my house (Mike Holbein residence)

This year was no different, but for me personally I can tell you when I see the actual "seed" sewn in peoples hearts. Let me give you an example. I was witnessing to this family and after showing [the husband] the actual photocopy of Family Home Evening, where it depicts how Jesus came to be? I asked



Jerry Ellison (left) and Dan Cuevas, at the Hill Cumorah, witnessing to members of The Restoration, an offshoot of the RLDS Church which still accepts the Book of Mormon as the word of God.

this head of family, if he could understand that it was very offensive to Christians that the LDS Church teaches that the conception of Jesus took place by God the Father and Mary "coming together (sex). He responded, "it does not say that..." I said please let me read what McConkie says about it—he explains it in more detail. After several attempts, he listened as I read McConkie's explanation—the man lowered his head and responded, "that is just his opinion....." The pausing before making the excuse that it was just

an opinion was an indication of a planted "seed"—thank you Jesus. Some planted, others watered, but God gives the increase (1 Cor 3:6).

Dan

Support from local churches

We had terrific support from several local churches this year, as usual. Calvary Chapel Fingerlakes' radio station, WZXV, aired interviews with



Norma and Al Davis at one of the dinners they organized for the front line CRC volunteers.

CRC spokesmen, revealing some of the hidden beliefs of Mormonism to a huge audience. Members of Calvary Chapel Macedon, organized by Norma Davis, prepared dinner for our missionaries each night of the Pageant. Norma also organized Christian hosts who provided sleeping rooms for out of town missionaries. First Baptist Church of Palmyra hosted our training seminar and daily outreach activities.

Rare worship experience!

Each morning of the Pageant outreach, concert pianist Sarah Chan treated us to an invigorating and uplifting worship experience that we will never forget. Sarah also hit the streets with us to proclaim the genuine gospel of our Lord.

Mail Call



"Thank you Mr. Deemer, Mr. Jones and the CRC Ministry for the materials you sent. Thanks for a way to witness to the world without having to say a word.

I have added a link to your website on all my email [signatures], so anyone who wants to can check things out for themselves. I have added whatmormonsdonttell.com as one of my signatures. [. . .]

God bless you all for the work you're doing, it really does make a difference.— Annette Hemm



"We still have the [What-Mormons-DontTell.com] sign truck in front of our barn here on Rte 21 [in Palmyra]. We hear honking from time to time still.

One day, a car stopped and about 5 people got out and stood by the truck, when I got out there they were jumping back in the car and leaving. They shouted "Thanks!!" They had all posed for a picture in front of it.

A 7th Day Adventist man stopped by one day and talked to Mike about it. He said he drove by often and wanted to let us know he agrees with us on the sign! But then he got into the whole Sabbath thing.

I had a dream this morning that 3 guys were outside dismantling the sign on the truck!! I yelled to them and went in to call 911 and then woke up. I looked out the window and the truck was still safe and secure.— Diana Holbein

Please pray for...

- Donna Rucker - Texas. Married into Mormonism 36 years ago.
- A. F. - SOUTH AFRICA - Married to inactive Mormon who told her, before their marriage that he believes in "Christ." Now, in spite of his inactive LDS status, he defends Mormonism and she's concerned that he will want to introduce the children to Mormonism in the future.