

TO UPLIFT CHRIST AND MAKE HIM KNOWN



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## Signs of the Times newsbox update — 1990-2000 a brief history

Nampa, Idaho (December 13,2000) - The following report was submitted by Gary Grimes and Kurt Johnson

The pastor of the Corvallis, Oregon Seventh-day Adventist Church, had a passion for his congregation to share Jesus Christ with the community of Corvallis. Corvallis also had another intriguing mission field— Oregon State University. Numerous Adventist pastors had tried to "break through" the collegiate circle with an on-site campus ministry. There were successes, but nothing on a long-term basis.

The pastor began to pray for wisdom and direction from God concerning the approach to take when sharing Jesus with the students attending the University. One day in 1990, he telephoned Kurt Johnson, the Personal Ministries and Sabbath School Director for the Oregon Conference. The pastor said, "Kurt, I need you to come to Corvallis and go with me to visit the University administrators. I want to see if they will let us put up a display for the Signs magazine similar to what you have in the Portland International Airport." Kurt responded in the affirmative. A few days later Kurt and the pastor were kneeling in the Pastor's office of the Corvallis Church asking God to guide as they visited the campus leadership.

The administrators were sympathetic, understanding and kind, but the bottom line was that University policy would not allow such a display. There was a student's common area where one could place some magazines, but it was far from ideal. The last person on the list to talk to on campus was the bookstore manager. The manager also said "no" to the inquiry. As Kurt Johnson and the pastor left the bookstore, they noticed that the entire outside wall of the store was lined with about 10 different types of news boxes. Pastor Johnson said, "I wonder if they will give us permission to put a news box outside, along the wall with the other news boxes." The pastor responded, "Lets go see." The two men found themselves standing once again before the store manager. They asked if they could put a news box outside the store. The manager said. "Yes, that would be okay."

Kurt and the pastor returned to the church praising God and fell to their knees with prayers of thanksgiving. It was agreed that Kurt would make the contacts and design a box. Returning to the Oregon Conference Office, Kurt called the Oregonian Newspaper headquarters. He asked the

representative where they purchased their news boxes. He was given the name of a company in Shiner, Texas. A telephone call to the company provided cost information and they agreed to send a catalog by mail.

Kurt looked through the catalog and combined the colors and script from several boxes pictured. He contacted Gary Grimes at Pacific Press Publishing Association about the concept and for input regarding the wording and design. Kurt contacted a graphic artist and within a couple of weeks the first design was completed.

Gary told Kurt that he thought the news box concept was an excellent idea. Others had experimented with various types of displays. A pastor, Don Houghton, in Phoenix, Arizona had experimented with putting Signs magazines in a news box as an outreach for his local church. In addition, some people had made wooden display boxes for giving out magazines. However, no one had ever designed and mass distributed news boxes for Signs. It needed to happen.

The news box art work/design was prepared. When it was ready for production, an order was placed with the SHO-RACK Company in Shiner, Texas and within a few weeks the first two Signs news boxes arrived in Oregon.

It was an exciting day when the first Signs news box was placed along the wall at the campus bookstore in Corvallis. A prayer of dedication was given and the rest is history—God has used the news boxes in remarkable ways.

Shortly after the first news boxes arrived, Kurt had a news box designed for the Vietnamese, Korean and Spanish languages. In addition, one was made for the Message magazine. These boxes were given to the pastors in Portland. The Personal Ministries Department of the Oregon Conference began a plan of subsidizing and mass distributing Signs news boxes across the Oregon Conference. The plan met with such success that Gary Grimes designed a plan to distribute the news boxes across the North American Division.

A few months after the first news box was placed in Oregon, the templates and silk-screening designs for the Signs news boxes that had been designed in Oregon were used for the Division-wide effort. As the program grew, Gary designed a second style of news box and named it "Junior" and continued to develop the program. God blessed the efforts. As we know, God has used this means of witnessing to lead many people into making a decision for Him.

However, the story does not end here. Dave Sturm began working in the pressroom at Pacific Press in June 1988, and one of the first jobs he worked on was Signs of the Times®. He was so impressed with the magazine that he began sending it to all of his friends and relatives. And when they all told him what a wonderful magazine it was, he got a burden to do more.

Day after day, for several years, Dave found a place in the pressroom where he could be alone for a few minutes to pray that God would help him find some way to share Signs more widely. Then one day Dave saw a Signs newsbox in the Pacific Press's main lobby, and he knew he'd found the answer to his prayer.

Dave began to talk to Gary Grimes the Signs Magazine Evangelism Director about his vision of working for Signs full time. One day Dave walked into Gary's office. Gary said, "Dave, why don't you get you a

truck, load it up with Signs newsboxes and go to churches and assist them in setting up newsboxes in their local communities." Dave of course was excited about the possibilities.

Dave made a proposal to Pacific Press: He would go all over the United States explaining the Signs newsbox program to churches and helping them place their boxes. The publishing house agreed, and Dave became a full-time Signs of the Times newsbox evangelist in January 1993. He has placed over 2000 newsboxes across North America!

As you can see, as we team together, God can make a difference!

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