
CROSS TALK

Volume 2, Issue 1

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The CrossPuzzle becomes a Ministry

The saga continues...

It's been 1-1/2 years since I wrote the first newsletter about the CrossPuzzle. So much has happened since then. Where do I begin? Of course, all ministries have a beginning. It is often just not obvious until much later. But the beginning for this one was in the form of a question...from the mouth of a Chinese girl over 2 years ago. Let me explain...

My job as a medical engineer often took me to China for numerous two week stints consulting with the engineering department of a large medical device manufacture in Beijing.

When are you...just going to do the Lord's work?

On my visit there in December 2013, the Chinese girl who was translating for me (no, I speak no Chinese!) was accompanying me back to my hotel on the subway. Along the way I found out that she attended a house church in Beijing. That sparked a lively discussion about our Christian faith. In the midst of the discussion, she looked at me and asked, "You have been an

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The CrossPuzzle gets Pocketed

Getting smaller to spread wider...

One of my main goals for this puzzle was to get it into the hands of evangelistic workers around the world. These people do not generally have a lot of money. So the puzzle had to be made inexpensively so that they could use them with, and hopefully give them to, the people that they might meet in on the street. But the original 8-1/2 inch high version was just too costly to allow for this. Enter Tyler, a young man from my church. He said, "Yes, this is a cool puzzle, but it is just too big. Why not make it half this size?" I informed him that there was just too much mechanism inside this little puzzle to allow for that possibility. But then I went down to my shop and made one! The Pocket CrossPuzzle was born, the little brother of the original one!



But it still cost too much to produce! Now enter Andy, a wonderful Chinese man from Qingdao in Eastern China. He loved the concept and wondered if he might take it

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engineer all your life and you've probably made a lot of money. When are you going to stop worrying about making money and just do the Lord's work?"

I wish I would have made a movie showing the expressions on everyone's faces to whom I have related this story. It stunned me as well, and all I could think to reply was, "Well, we don't talk that way in America, but let's sit down and talk about it!"

And that is what we did. Over two bowls of porridge, there on Chang'an Avenue, the Street of Eternal Peace that runs past Tian'anmen Square in central Beijing, we sat down and talked about what "the Lord's work" might look like for me. I theorized that it might have three main components. First, I wanted to work with Transport for Christ to get this puzzle into the hands of truck drivers who could spread them across the nation. Secondly, I would like to get them produced inexpensively enough that people could feel free to give them away to their contacts. And thirdly, it would be great to travel around and speak about these puzzles since they are great fodder for sermon illustrations and present the very core message of the Gospel.

Now fast forward 6 months to June, 2015. My boss called me into his office and told me I was being laid off effective July 1. Suddenly, what would have been the devastation of the floor dropping out became a door that was opening. That question on the subway had really changed everything!

Sorry, you can't get this puzzle apart by your own effort!

Hardly anyone can resist trying to get this puzzle apart when they are told that they can't. So it acts as

A Spiritual Conversation Starter!

That is why I created this little tool. It allows people to break through the barrier of fear of sharing with others about the importance of Jesus in their lives.

And when they learn the secret of the CrossPuzzle, they will also be learning

The Plan of Salvation!

So how do you use this Thing?

Breaking the ice...

One of the most primal of human fears is the fear of embarrassment. So how can you break through that barrier and be able to enter into a conversation with that other person that allows you to share your faith without either party feeling embarrassed or intimidated?

I will typically just show the CrossPuzzle to someone and say, "You might find this little puzzle interesting. It comes apart, but you can't do it by your own efforts!" That will usually perk their interest enough for them to take the cross and start to try to prove me wrong. I let them know that there is no embarrassment to if they need to break the seal and read the clues. There are really very few people who have ever gotten it apart without reading the clues.



If they do get frustrated with it and hand it back, I will hold up the cross and tell them that the cross represents our lives. There is a part of us that always seems to want to do the right thing and to fly above the temptations of life. But there is another part of us that is firmly planted in the ground, always tempted to have things our own way and be our own boss. Those two tendencies are locked together in our hearts, and there does not seem to be any way to separate them. Our parents will try; our teachers, our pastors, our friends; but there is only one person who can unlock that conflict within us. His name is Jesus.

At that point, I will go through the clues listed in the pamphlet. Here is where you can often segway into some questions about whether they have ever experienced the joy of accepting the sacrifice that Jesus made. It is also the time to ask if they would like to take one of the CrossPuzzles along with them to share with their friends. Give them your contact info and encourage them to read through the inside pamphlet, and look up the scripture verses that they find there.❖

A NEW RIDDLE

In January 2015, I arrived in Qingdao, China with Tyler and Lu to take a look at the newly prototyped Pocket CrossPuzzle. It looked great! Except it didn't work right! They had copied everything except the most important part; the counterweight! Now what to do? Getting them to make it correctly was going to cause an unacceptable increase in the quoted price. As I wrestled with this in my bed that night, God seemed to provide the answer. "You don't need to change the product," He said. "All you need to do is change the instructions!" So now in the instructions you will find the new version of the riddle to get it apart. It is easier, it explains better what Jesus did on the cross for us, and it provides a cost reduction to boot! You can check out the video on my website. This is definitely God's project! ❖



AND A NEW DISPLAY

Now there is a new way to display the CrossPuzzle in your display area. It attractively holds up to six of the CrossPuzzles in their packaging and provides a demo CrossPuzzle to be played with as well prior to the purchase!



back to China with him and get them made there so that he could also sell them in Chinese bookstores. In November, 2015, this high-quality Christian company in China made up the first production order of 10,000 of the Pocket CrossPuzzles.

With the advent of the Pocket CrossPuzzle, the puzzle is now inexpensive enough that mission organizations can pick them up in large quantities and put them into the hands of their workers in the field. This allows it to extend its reach around the world, from China to Singapore, from Pakistan to Kenya, from Canada to Venezuela.

This allows it to extend its reach around the world!

On January 22, 2016 the church in Singapore gave out CrossPuzzles to each of their members to commemorate the 122nd anniversary of their church. The smiles on the faces of the young and old warmed my heart! ❖



Visit my website at www.thecrosspuzzle.com to find more information about the crosses as well as ordering information for more crosses. Or email me at ken@thecrosspuzzle.com.

I am interested in hearing your stories. This whole project is creating a community of creativity. Everyone who touches it seems to have their own personal best ways of working with it. Sharing our stories is a great way to encourage each other in our faith walks. So I welcome your stories from your perspectives!

Now that large scale production is available, I welcome inquires from mission organizations that wish to use these as a tool for their workers to distribute on the streets. Contact me at ken@thecrosspuzzle.com or on my cell at 215-350-3529 to discuss how this might be used as a tool for your organization.

THE CROSSPUZZLE SPREADS



TRAVELING DOWN THE WATER COURSE

The verse Proverbs 21:1 had been floating around in my head for some weeks about God determining the course of the rivers. And then a business man called to ask if I wanted to accompany him of a trip to China June of 2015. So that became my Proverbs 21:1 trip, floating down God's river course! And that seems to be what God has in mind with this puzzle. He continues to direct its reach into new and surprising areas.

MULTI-LINGUAL

As the CrossPuzzle spreads out from America, it is picked up by other cultures and people of other languages. This creates the need for instructions that are in a number of different languages. So far we have English, Chinese, Spanish, Turkish, Arabic, Urdu and Maasai. ❖



KR Creations
751 Lower Road
Souderton, PA 18964
Written by Ken Rutt



Editing by Kate Phillips, Karisa Torres and Lu Liao
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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

On the Road with the CrossPuzzle

Giving bait to "fishers of men"...

One of the components of this ministry was to be able to travel and share about it with other groups of people. This has become a reality as I have traveled in eastern and central United States and have spoken in many different forums. This journey has provided me with many stories and spiritual applications that I have enjoyed sharing with audiences, both young and old. From a very hot night spent in the brand new Chapel in Ocala (before the A/C was hooked up!) to the idyllic setting of a church camp in the hollers of Kentucky.



It resonated with the retired folks at a local retirement home as well as with over a hundred kids at a church for a VBS program; from the Boardwalk in New Jersey to the boardroom Georgia, and in churches of multiple denominations. It provided challenges to the manager of Sea World as well as to the kids on the streets of Philadelphia.



Everywhere it seems like people are enthralled to see this visual representation of God's grace that they can hold in their hands, as well amazed with the stories of His grace that they can treasure in their hearts. The CrossPuzzle is going from being fishing bait to becoming a fishing net! It is truly networking people together around the world! ❖

Email: ken@thecrosspuzzle.com
Website: www.thecrosspuzzle.com

BUILD RATE
US POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO.

Mailing Address
Street Number and Name
City, State 98765-4321