

WHITE PAPER:
Optimize Your
Christmas Outreach Using
Direct Mail

content

- 2** Introduction
- 3** The Case for Christian “Marketing”
- 3** Section One: Your Christmas Outreach—Direct Mail is Not Dead
- 4** Section Two: How to Use Direct Mail Postcards Effectively in Your Christmas Outreach
- 7** Section Three: How to Make a Great First Impression on Your Guests
- 8** Conclusion
- 9** Creating the Perfect Postcard

Introduction

Hi! I’m Hal Seed, Founding Pastor of New Song Community Church. My wife and I planted New Song in 1992. Since then, we’ve seen over 19,000 come to Christ, planted 7 daughter churches and created 4 local campuses. For the past 14 years, I’ve been mentoring pastors at www.pastormentor.com. With the Christmas season fast upon us, I’d like to share what we’ve learned about reaching out to our community through direct mail and welcoming visitors into your church once they come. As Christmas Day approaches, more and more people who don’t regularly attend services will be seeking out a church, giving you the opportunity to connect and hopefully, become their new faith “home”.



HAL SEED
Founding Pastor of
New Song Community Church



*“Christians have been using **“word-of-mouth” marketing** to invite people to their churches for a long, long time.”*

The Case for Christian “Marketing”

Before we begin, I’d like to take a moment to address an issue that often comes up when discussing the idea of “marketing” one’s church. I’m sure you’ve encountered a few well-meaning Christians that believe that any type of “marketing” is wrong or sinful. So let me help you with this: Christians have been using “word-of-mouth” marketing to invite people to their churches for a long, long time.

Today’s tools are just a modern version of time-tested ministry practices for getting the Word out in your community. In fact, the Holy Spirit conducted one of the most effective church-marketing campaigns in Acts 2, when He launched the very first church in downtown Jerusalem by sending fire from the sky onto the heads of the believers. So many people were talking about it that 3,000 became believers that very first day.

Section One: Your Christmas Outreach— Direct Mail is Not Dead

Recently I’ve been hearing more young pastors say they think using direct mail is a poor use of time and money. There’s a belief that the medium is the message and sending a postcard says that your church is old and out-of-date. That’s short-sighted and shallow thinking. Research shows that direct mail is still a VERY effective piece of an overall outreach strategy for a lot of solid reasons.*

- 1. Direct mail is memorable.** When I get a postcard from a church, or a dentist, or a realtor, the time it takes me to glance at the card leaves an impression on me. You can make your church top of mind the next time a recipient is thinking about attending a service through a physical reminder of your presence in the community.
- 2. Repeated mailings build credibility.** The first time I get a postcard from a company, I don’t think much of them, but after receiving a few postcards, I look and think, “Oh yeah, I’ve seen this before. I know this company.”
- 3. Competition is low.** A lot of churches have given up on their direct mail strategy, so the field is less crowded, making direct mail more effective than it was just 5 or 10 years ago.

*10 Print Marketing Statistics You Should Know | <http://expandedramblings.com>

*Direct Mail Statistics - Direct Mail Stats - Direct Mail Facts | <https://thedma.org>

*Printisbig.com | <http://printisbig.com/>



85% of people check their mail daily. Not only that, 75% are careful to review every piece to ensure they aren't throwing away a bargain or an important reminder.

4. 85% of people check their mail daily. Not only that, 75% are careful to review every piece to ensure they aren't throwing away a bargain or an important reminder. Your postcards will be scanned and your church and events will be noticed.

5. Effective mailers pay for themselves. Direct mail postcards remain the most cost-effective means of mass marketing today—as much as 40% of people have tried a new business after viewing a direct mail piece. If one family gets a postcard from us, comes to church and begins tithing, that one family pays for our entire 5,000-piece mailing. Every penny of an effective mailer will return to you within 6 months to a year through the tithes of that one family.

6. Reach more people with less work. Direct mail is a powerful way to reach a broad audience without a lot of footwork. My friends at Outreach specialize in direct mail for churches and provide free consulting around outreach campaigns. They can handle your entire direct mail initiative for you.

Now that you understand the benefits of direct mail, you're probably wondering where to begin. Knowing a few simple principles will enable you to use this amazing tool to reach a lot of people for Christ this Christmas.

Section Two: How to Use Direct Mail Postcards Effectively in Your Christmas Outreach

Done well, a direct mail postcard should be the centerpiece of your invite strategy for Christmas. In this section you'll find:

- **3 Steps for Developing an Effective Christmas Outreach Strategy**
- **4 More Tools to Use in Your Invitational Strategy**
- **5 Things You Must Know When Designing or Choosing a Great Postcard**

3 Steps for Developing an Effective Christmas Outreach Strategy

So what's the most effective invitational strategy for reaching the people who live near your church this Christmas? You really have two goals for your outreach strategy. The first is to raise awareness and get people to know you exist. The second is to get them to check out your church—you cannot have the second without the first. Fortunately, the Christmas season is an excellent opportunity to do both! Here are three simple steps for developing your church's Christmas outreach strategy.

1. Create an Exciting Event

Invite guests to an event at your church that would interest them, such as Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services, a special December Christmas sermon series, or a unique



Personal invitation cards



Door Hangers



Social Media

screening of films about the birth of Christ. Outreach offers great, affordable kits to help you plan your Christmas program that make planning easy and stress-free.

2. Make Your Postcard the Centerpiece of Your Invitational Tools

When it comes to an outreach campaign strategy, postcards are your easiest, largest reach for the dollar. For Christmas, your postcard should include information on your event or events, along with benefits the recipient will get from visiting. Think of what would motivate you to attend and then talk about it. Outreach postcards have suggested messages that you can use or modify.

3. Utilize Several Complementary Methods for Inviting Your Neighbors

The Law of Invitation says that, on average, people need to receive six invitations before attending your church, party or event. Using multiple forms of mass marketing will accelerate the response by providing multiple invitations in a short period of time.

4 More Tools to Use in Your Invitational Strategy

As I said before, it takes around six invitations to encourage someone to attend your event. Spreading those invites out among several different channels will keep recipients from feeling overwhelmed and ensure that you reach them in at least one area of their daily activities. For most churches, the best combination of invitation tools is:

- [Personal invitation cards](#)
- [Door Hangers](#)
- [Social Media](#)
- [Signs and Banners](#)

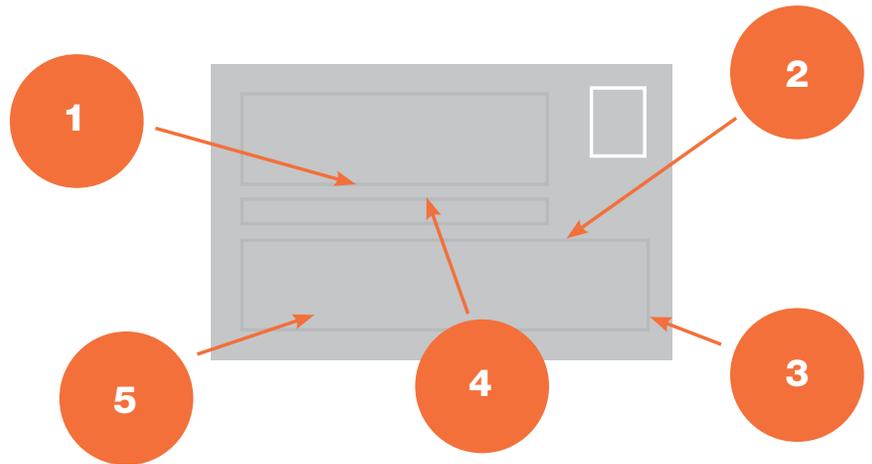
Each has a different approach and will touch your neighbors in a different way. Let's examine them more closely below.

1. Personal Invitations — Your members want to invite their friends to attend church, and it's easier to invite them if you provide them with personal invitations they can carry in their wallets or purses. These cards are so inexpensive that you might consider printing up a new invitation not just for big events, but for every sermon series.

2. DoorHangers — DoorHangers should be designed at the same time as your direct mail postcard to keep a cohesive message and look. Pay to have them hung or assemble volunteers within the church to canvas nearby neighborhoods.

3. Social Media — Over 80% of your neighbors are on Facebook. If you can have a graphic designer develop a suite of 3 or 4 ads, videos, and memes that invite people to your event for very few dollars, you can gain exposure to a big number

Your postcard will likely be the first contact you have with a potential attendee.



of your neighbors. Web graphics and videos come in most Church Campaign Kits such as [The God Questions](#) and [The Gifts of Christmas](#).

4. Signs and Banners — Well-placed banners outside your church building attract attention and add to the effectiveness of your strategy!

Remember to maintain the same look and feel across your different materials and keep them clean and professional. Next, let's take a look at some best practices for designing a Christmas postcard.



Outdoor banners

5 Things You Must Know When Designing a Christmas Postcard

Your postcard will likely be the first contact you have with a potential attendee. Over the years, I've learned what works—and what doesn't. Here are a few tips for maximizing your direct mail reach and success:

- 1. Invite people to a specific event.** Invite guests to an intriguing or popular event such as a Christmas Eve sermon or a month-long series.
- 2. Invite people within your natural footprint.** Notice where your current attendees are coming from and mail into those neighborhoods.
- 3. Design for women.** Most of the time, it's the female who persuades the family to go to church. Design your card to attract women.
- 4. Invite people more than once.** The virtue of postcards is the name recognition and credibility they will bring you over time. A series of postcards over time will bring you both.
- 5. Make everything look consistent.** Use the same designs and the same language on your other forms of communication.

Once you've chosen your Christmas event, designed your cards and contacted your Outreach specialist to set up your mailing, it's time to prepare for the guests you will soon be meeting!



“At New Song, we encourage our people to welcome newcomers into the church like they would welcome guests into their homes.”

Section Three: How to Make a Great First Impression on Your Guests

You’ve launched a successful campaign and you’ve begun to see new faces in your church. That’s when the real work of fellowship begins. At New Song, we encourage our people to welcome newcomers into the church like they would welcome guests into their homes. You want to make your guest feel welcome and not just point them to the auditorium door.

Preparing for Visitors

There are six factors that bring people back to your church: friendliness, cleanliness, quality of the worship service, quality of your childcare, finding someone like them, and personable and impressive post-service contact.

Friendliness: A friendly greeting is one that’s genuine, but not over the top. People want to be welcomed, but not accosted. One thing that immediately increases a church’s likeability factor is if they offer a free gift to their guests. We offer every guests a copy of the gift edition of [The God Questions](#). For just \$2 a piece, they significantly increase the first impression factor for every guest.

Cleanliness: This one is quite simple! Keep the bathrooms in top condition and always ensure that the church is tidy and decluttered.

Quality of Service: The first thing they’ll experience in terms of your formal service is your worship leader. Is he prepared and eager to lead? Does the sermon raise a need and meet it? Relevant sermons and positive personal contact will create return visitors and future members.

Quality of Childcare: Parents want to know three things about their children: Were they safe? Did they have fun? Is there evidence they learned something?

Finding Someone Like Them: On their way in, without realizing it, every newcomer is unconsciously asking, “Did I dress okay?” and “Are there people here like me?” Help them by putting pictures of people at church on your website to give them an idea of dress, ages, etc. Put every kind of person at your doors and on your stage.

Post-service Contact: It’s really important to have a system and plan for continuing the conversation with your guests once they’ve left the service on Sunday. Let’s take a look at some of our most successful tips for turning visitors into members and followers of Christ.

Turning Visitors into Members

The goal of your direct mail piece is to get people to visit. But once they visit, you want them to keep visiting, until they come to Christ and become members of your church. What will induce them to come back and become part of your church?



“...most importantly, your new members will experience a new or renewed relationship with Christ, which is the greatest gift of all.”

Here's what we've done:

- Coffee and donuts are available after the service.
- Every guest gets a gift before they leave the church. At New Song, we give them a book that answers major questions people have about God (Is God real? Is the Bible true? Don't all religions lead to the same place? And if God is so good, how come there is so much suffering in this world?)
- Every newcomer should receive a welcome call by Monday night.
- Every newcomer receives an email from the pastor between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. on Monday.
- Everyone who checks a need-based box on their Connection Card gets a call from someone in that ministry by Tuesday night.
- Every newcomer gets a hand-written note in the mail by Wednesday.
- Every newcomer gets entered into the church's database.
- Everyone in the database gets an email on Friday about the weekend service.
- Every second-time guest gets a hand-written note from a volunteer.
- Every newcomer gets a call for our Catch the Vision luncheon, inviting them to attend.
- Every newcomer gets a check-up phone call 30 days after they visit.

Conclusion

The Christmas season is an excellent opportunity to reach out to your community and begin building lasting relationships. Christmas is a time of year where hearts and minds are open to eternal hope found in the truth of Christ's love—and you can be a part of helping them find their way.

Get the word out about your church through strategic out-reach planning. Use your regular Christmas season events to promote your church through direct mail postcards, doorhangers, personal cards and other ministry tools. This will help your community know you're out there and ready to serve them. Create a positive, welcoming environment that makes your church feel like a place they can attend every Sunday. And never forget the personal touches that show them that they will be valued and cherished as members.

Following these steps will help you develop an effective campaign that leaves a lasting first impression. But, most importantly, you will be helping others experience a new (or renewed) relationship with Christ, which is the greatest gift of all.

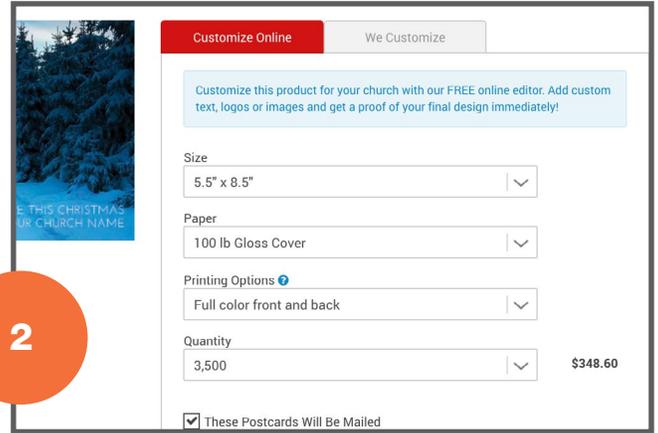


Steps to Creating the Perfect Postcard on Outreach.com



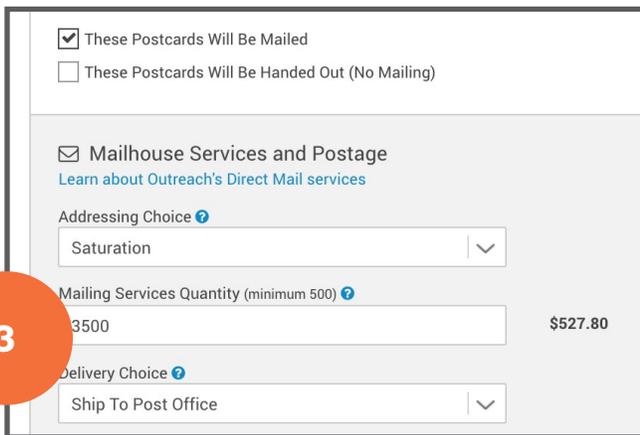
1

Visit Outreach.com/Postcards and choose from over 140 Christmas designs that can be customized just for your church.



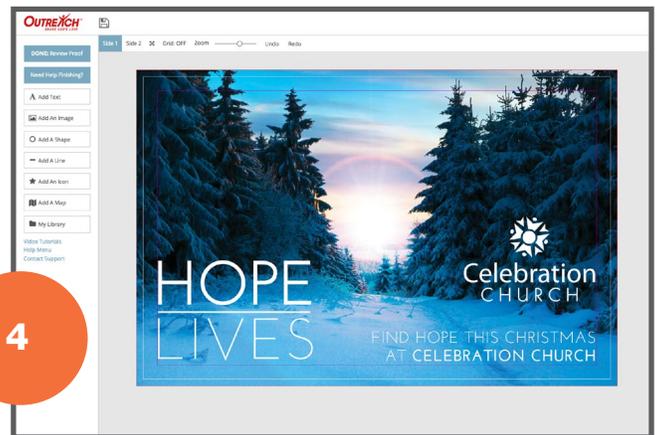
2

Click the **"Customize Online"** tab, choose Postcard size and quantity and if you are having them mailed.



3

On the Addressing Choice dropdown, select **"Saturation"** to send your postcards with the lowest postage rate. And then choose the Postage Classification – if your church is already authorized by the Post Office to send a non-profit leave that as the default. If not, Outreach can help you get non-profit status, call us! Now, click **"Next: Customize Online"** to enter the online editor.



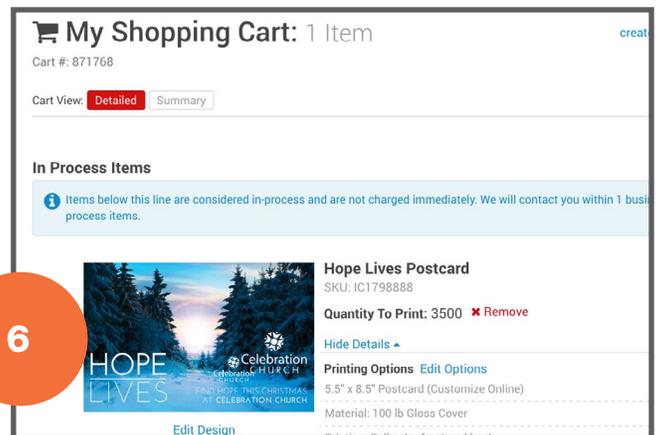
4

The online editor will take a moment to load your design. Customize the front with your church logo, service information, etc. Click **"Side 2"** at top to customize the reverse side of the postcard. Click the **"Done: Review Proof"** button when finished editing.



5

Review your proof. If correct, agree to terms and click **"Approve & Print (Add to Cart)"**



6

Your custom postcard will appear in the shopping cart. Click **"Checkout"** to proceed. Once your order is complete, an Outreach Specialist will call you to confirm your mailing list and finalize your order.