



Mission Moments

Center for U.S. Missions

Following Jesus into the U.S. mission field

To the Jew First?

By Steve Cohen

In September of 2008 we completed our short-term mission outreach on three Chicago-land area campuses. During this event we distributed over 10,000 Gospel tracts and received the names of nearly 100 for more information. Of that number ten were from a Jewish background.

When we present the ministry and the Gospel today, people ask frequently why there is a need to include Jewish people in the mission of the church. If they are "God's chosen people" then don't they already have standing with God apart from faith in Jesus?

This question begs an even more fundamental one... is the Bible still relevant and reliable today? Do we take it literally or should we simply derive good moral lessons from the stories presented?

I grew up surrounded by Christians. For the first 23 years of my life, not one of my friends ever approached me with the message of salvation through faith in Jesus. In 1973 I was prayerfully approached by a layman who took God at His word and introduced me to a Jewish book my rabbi did not want me to read... the New Testament.

My friend took to heart Paul's strong affirmation, "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." Romans 1:16

Paul was saying that since the Jewish people were the ones who had the scriptures, the promises, the priesthood, the Temple, etc. they too were the ones who were promised that Messiah would come. And through the Messiah salvation would be offered to the whole world. But when Paul went on his missionary journeys, he went first to the synagogue because that was where the scriptures were. There was no New Testament in his day, and Gentiles were not looking for a savior, Jewish people were.

Israel was called to be a light to the Gentiles. Those who were the wild olive branches were grafted in. But the Gentiles are called to reciprocate by bringing the Gospel back to the Jewish people (Romans 11). Sadly, this is not happening in large enough numbers. Most Gentiles today do have Jewish friends and acquaintances, but few are taking the initiative to speak the truth to those who are lost.

God invites us to realign our lives. Why? Because eternity hangs in the balance! When Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life and no one comes to the Father but by me." John 14:6 – he was speaking to Jewish people. We must take up the cause of Christ in reaching those who are lost including the Lost Sheep of the House of Israel.

We have the privilege of being in partnership with many churches and individuals in helping them in their witness. Perhaps it is to a colleague at work or a peer in school, perhaps it is to a neighbor or someone in a professional relationship, and to a growing degree today this is to those who are intermarried.

We at the Apple of His Eye have a growing body of materials to assist, and we would like to send you one of my books for free. The book is titled *Beginning From Jerusalem*, 156 pages taken from my 30+ years of missionary service. To receive your free copy, simply send me an e-mail with your name and address and we will return it to you quickly in PDF format. Write me at steve.cohen@appleofhiseye.org.

Your prayers do count as there are nearly 13 million Jewish people around the world, 99% unsaved. We can make a difference for faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God (Romans). Please help through your personal witness.

Steve Cohen is the founder of The Apple of His Eye Mission Society. You can learn more about them at www.appleofhiseye.org.

Questions for Reflection

1. As you look at your friends, acquaintances, and colleagues at work, how many are Jewish?
2. When is the last time you shared the faith with someone?
3. What does your church do to help equip you to share the faith with others including Jewish people?
4. What one thing will you do that will help you be prepared to share the faith with someone?

Links

[Apple of His Eye](#) [web site] - The web site includes resources for individuals and churches to help them share Jesus with Jewish people from a Lutheran perspective. Also, available are Bible studies, FAQs, newsletters, and helpful explanations about Jewish believers, Judaism, and what's happening in the world today in Jewish evangelism.

[Jews For Jesus](#) [web site] - Jews For Jesus is another web site offering resources to help you and your church share the gospel of Jesus with Jewish people.

[Berlin Declaration on Christ's Uniqueness and Jewish Evangelism in Europe Today Aug 29](#) by Dr. Darrell Bock [web site blog] - Bock shares the "Berlin Declaration" on his blog.

[Dictionary of messianic terminology and definitions](#) [web site] - A list of words and their meaning and how Jewish people understand them. Includes words that are acceptable and those that may cause offense and why.

Available From The C4USM

"Stay and Make Disciples" by Joe Burnham - A new look at the Great Commission.

[Leader's Guide](#) [PDF] -- [Participant Handout](#) [PDF]

"Three Keys for Sharing Christ with Others" by Jerry M. Kosberg - This study examines 1 Corinthians 9: 19-23 and Colossians 4: 2-6 to present some key components of effective disciple-making and helps students begin to develop their own plan for using those "keys."

[Leader's Guide](#) [PDF] -- [Participant Guide](#) [PDF]

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