

I AM NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL

APPLE OF HIS EYE JEWISH EVANGELISM

By Steve Cohen, Founder of Apple of His Eye, with Cheri Fish, Mission Editor



I am not ashamed
of the Gospel,
because it is the
power of God
for the salvation
of everyone
who believes:
first for the Jew,
then for the Gentile.

Romans 1:16

Nearly 2,000 years ago, the apostle Paul sought to remind the nascent church in Rome of the urgent need to reach all people in the mission of the church, including the Lost Sheep of the House of Israel — the Jewish people. The first followers of Jesus were Jewish, the authors of the Bible were Jewish, Jesus is Jewish ... yet the Jewish roots of our faith seem to have been forgotten over the centuries.

When I began my mission service in 1976, there were perhaps two million Jewish people in Israel. Today that figure is over six million, and 99.4 percent do NOT believe in Jesus ... yet.

It is not that most Jewish people have studied the Scriptures and rejected Him. It is that they have never considered the case for Jesus being the Messiah. The lack of cogent information, the paucity of witness by the church, and the spiritual blindness (see Romans 11) have all contributed to the current spiritual condition there.

Through the prayers of our Board of Directors and our gracious supporters around the country, we sought to bring much needed change to this reality — lives facing a Christ-less eternity.

August 2015, right after the Des Moines LWML convention, the Rev. Dr. Robert Roegner, my wife, Nancy, and I traveled to Jerusalem to participate in an international conference on Jewish evangelism. We met with leaders in this field from around the world to gain insights as to the challenges and opportunities in starting new mission work there.

Instead of finding closed doors, we were welcomed at every turn. The fields are white for the harvest; the laborers few. We learned the value of partnerships, networking, praying for each other and, as one mission leader said, "Wherever you plant your foot in Israel, there is much work to do."

As we move forward, we recognize at this early stage:

1. We will not send over Americans to serve in Israel. Why not? Because new missionary visas are not available. Furthermore, a missionary from outside of Israel would need to spend two to three years learning the language, culture, and people as well as assessing the possibilities. Rather, we will identify Jewish believers in Israel who already know the language, culture, geography, and the environment in which opportunities for the Gospel are present.

2. We will seek partnerships in evangelism and training with those already engaged in effective mission work there.
3. We will identify those in Israel who are Lutheran and are willing to enter into the Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) program from a distance, to lead to greater opportunities for mission work and congregational planting. We are in early discussions with parties involved in these areas now.
4. We will continue to use the enhanced tools of technology to extend the reach of the Gospel. (See our Facebook page and our website www.appleofhiseye.org.)
5. We will invite those who are taking tours to Israel to participate in "insight evenings" to learn not only about the historical places, but also about the people who need the Gospel. In this way, they can bring back to their home churches the desire for greater involvement in prayer, witness, and mission support.

We are most grateful to the wonderful ladies of the LWML. You have given us a historic vote of confidence. Together, we will prayerfully move forward, laboring in the field so that more Jewish people will hear the Gospel and respond, by God's grace, in faith. So on behalf of all of us at The Apple of His Eye, thank you!

Brothers and sisters, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved (Romans 10:1). **Q**

Steve and Nancy Cohen will be Mites in Action speakers and will host a Special Interest Luncheon at the LWML Convention in Albuquerque, New Mexico.



Current Mission Grants Highlighted in This Issue

We Are God's Workmanship — \$32,500

Saint Paul Lutheran High School, Concordia, Missouri, exists to prepare leaders who will declare Christ "to the ends of the earth." They have students representing almost every state in the United States and 35 countries across the globe. The current student body consists of 45 percent international students — many who come to prepare for post-secondary education at one of the Concordia Universities. This LWML grant assists with the education of all students at Saint Paul who ultimately return to their homes across the globe and serve the Church as pastors, teachers, and missionaries.

Opportunities in Uganda — \$100,000

The Lutheran Church of Uganda has worked hard to develop partnerships with other Lutheran congregations, many of which reside in the United States. Through this partnership, a seminary is more than just a vision; it is now a tangible goal. This LWML grant helps in completing the last phase of this building program. To continue the growth and development of lay leaders without delay, this grant also ensures continuation of the Women of the Pearl training and development of women's training and ministry.

Providing Help for Detroit — \$100,000

The ministry of Acts 2 Enterprise (A2E) serves as a catalyst for renewing the hearts, minds, and spirits of children and families, bringing hope to Detroit — a city in crisis. This LWML grant supports the A2E Coordinator, Urban Mission Planter, and Entrepreneurial Education Opportunities along with A2E programs such as Computer Literacy, Job Partnerships, Sports Camps/VBS, Community Beautification, educational support, tutoring, and mentoring.

Mission GRANTS

Mission Goal: \$2,000,000 | 2015–2017

- 1. Clean Water and Evangelism Ministry \$50,000
- 2. Disaster Response Trailers \$80,000
- 3. Cancer Care Packages — Phil's Friends \$50,000
- 4. Renovation of JEM Seminary Buildings \$120,000
- 5. Redeeming Life Maternity Home \$100,000
- 6. Hope and Healing to the Navajo People \$75,000
- 7. Outreach in Refugee Camps—Lebanon \$72,000
- 8. Healthy Families \$60,000
- 9. LCMS Global Seminary Initiative \$100,000
- 10. Training Teachers and Leaders \$100,000
- 11. Opportunities in Uganda \$100,000
- 12. "In Their Hands and Upon Their Hearts" \$50,000
- 13. "We Are God's Workmanship" \$32,500
- 14. Bringing the Gospel to the Lost Sheep of Israel \$100,000
- 15. Helping Hands Initiative \$100,000
- 16. Deaconess Training \$90,000
- 17. Lutheran Youth Corps \$25,000
- 18. Providing Hope for Detroit \$100,000
- 19. Rosa Young Academies \$25,000

KEY: ● – grant paid in full ○ – grant partially paid

Mission Grant updates are frequently posted at www.lwml.org.