

JUNE 2008

LORD, Give Us Boldness...

By Steve Cohen

In preparation for our upcoming summer outreach in Chicago, I gave a four-hour workshop on sharing our faith in public settings. Fifteen participants joined with us at Rev. Matt Gunia's church, Trinity Lutheran Church in Burr Ridge.

I usually begin these sessions with a question: what hinders you from actively sharing your faith. Most of the participants responded with a concern or fear of reactions they MIGHT receive, a sense of inadequacy in handling God's word, or a sense of not knowing how to steer the conversation.

In my 33 years as a missionary, I have seen the same patterns emerge when people begin to take the Great Commission seriously. First the spiritual battle heats up. People are confronted with situations and obstacles not normally encountered in daily life. This is normal – as we have an enemy of our souls who is very content that we maintain the status quo – go to church, but keep our faith to ourselves.

Jesus overcame the enemy, and because we have spiritual standing IN CHRIST, we also have received the authority to move forward, even when the enemy is whispering in our ears that little of what we do will have any effect at all.

Matthew 16: 13-18: When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah



or one of the prophets." "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.

Sometimes we encounter people who choose to give a knee-jerk reaction to our saying that Jesus is the Messiah. Many have been told throughout their lives that He is NOT the promised one, so when they meet someone who says differently,

the reaction comes without a lot of thought... it just happens.

On our way back to St. Louis that weekend, I dropped off our son, Micha, at the Walk For Israel March in Chicago, commemorating Israel's 60th anniversary. He works with Jews For Jesus. He met another of his associates, and they displayed a banner for passersby to consider Jesus. When I

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called him later to see how it went, he told me how one irate individual confronted him, slapped him in the face and stole his brand new glasses. Micha's reaction was, "Praise the Lord that I could stand up for Jesus and be counted worthy to be persecuted for His name's sake. He then went on to say that it was good preparation for his planned trip to Israel for an outreach in Tel Aviv later that week.

In Romans, Paul reasserts that he is, "not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is God's power for salvation for all who believe, to the Jew first..." (Romans 1:16) Salvation comes to others not by the power

of our speaking or persuasion, not by our logic or emotion... but by the work of God in people's hearts, convicting them of sin and convincing them that Y'shua really is the promised Messiah.

At the end of June, we will once again assemble as a team and take to the streets with the Gospel. This time it will be in Chicago. *We covet your prayers for boldness as we go and tell the Good News, and as we help others to grow in sharing their faith.*

Thank you for underwriting our ministry now in our 12th year. Because you care, we can continue to carry the Gospel out to others who desperately need it.

I do!

By Steve Cohen

Many of you have been praying for the Cohen clan for years as we walked through the physical battles of Jan's declining health and ultimate promotion to heaven in 2007. Those prayers greatly helped me through a very difficult time of life and I will be eternally grateful for the kindnesses shown us!

As we experience the changes in the annual seasons, so too, God allows for changes in the seasons of our life. A new season was experienced recently when Nancy Heinrich and I exchanged wedding vows. Nancy has served in many mission positions and was introduced to me through her daughter, Toi.

As we share our joy in the Lord, we invite you to pray for us as newlyweds. Pray that we will grow in knowing one another and in service to the Lord. Thank you!!!

Join with us in praying from Psalm 126:

When the LORD brought back the captives to Zion,
we were like men who dreamed.
Our mouths were filled with laughter,
our tongues with songs of joy.
Then it was said among the nations,
"The LORD has done great things for them."
The LORD has done great things for us,
and we are filled with joy.
Restore our fortunes, O LORD,
like streams in the Negev.
Those who sow in tears
will reap with songs of joy.
He who goes out weeping,
carrying seed to sow,
will return with songs of joy,
carrying sheaves with him.





Can Envy be a Good Thing?

By Alan Butterworth

philemonv6@aol.com

Last week, Florence, a spry 94-year old Jewish woman in South Florida, told me she envies my faith in Jesus, the Jewish Messiah! I hope your Jewish friend says this to you soon! Why?

This is our calling! In Deuteronomy 32, the Song of Moses, the LORD says in verse 15 that the Jewish people would reject the Rock, their Savior. Who is the Rock? Y'shua (Jesus). In verse 21, the LORD says, "I will make them envious by those who are not a people."

Who are "those who are not a people"? Gentiles! You and me! Before the Israelites went into the Promised Land, God said Gentiles would make Jewish people envious! How? As they see our faith in the Messiah of Israel and the Holy Spirit working through us. There is nothing else in me worthy of envy. That is for sure.

About two years ago, we started a small group in Boca Raton, FL. Florence has been coming and reading the New Testament. Recently, Matt the group leader, began by asking: "Do you have any questions?"

Florence said: "I have trouble believing a man could be conceived by a virgin or rise from the dead." We thanked her for sharing these questions and we shared that there are many things in the Bible we have trouble understanding. But we explained that the Scriptures are God's Word. This Word changes us and gives us the faith to believe.

I shared about Steve A., now a Lutheran, who was raised Orthodox. As a yeshiva 'bocher' (student studying to becoming a rabbi), Steve was the pride and joy of his family. He learned a lot at the residential yeshiva, but it was not all good. He learned how to be Torah observant. But at night, the students escaped and (in Steve's words) committed "every sin known to man."

Despite all the praise, something was terribly wrong. Steve couldn't stop asking: "where is God?" When he left the yeshiva, his family shunned him! They couldn't understand. What could be wrong with studying to become a rabbi?

Steve married a Lutheran woman. As he studied the New Testament, he reached a barrier. He was afraid to trust the Bible. His Christian friend asked him to ask God to show him if the Scriptures are true. God answered his prayer and Steve confessed faith in Jesus.

As soon as I finished, Florence said, "it is amazing you told that story. My dad was a *yeshiva bocher*. He was so disappointed; he left the yeshiva and became an atheist. I was raised without the Scriptures. We didn't even celebrate the Jewish holidays. All I learned is I am supposed to be a good person."

Florence is a good person. But as we began looking at the Scriptures, we talked about the reality that we are accountable and we are not able to do everything God wants. Florence began to see that maybe she is not good enough to be in the Book of Life.

At one point, Florence shared that a Christian friend was so peaceful, she was envious. She wanted this peace. Florence enjoyed hearing how I came from a Jewish neighborhood to the assurance that through

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faith in Jesus, my sins are forgiven and I know I will be in heaven when I die. Before I left, Florence told me I had the same peace as her friend, and she was envious of my faith!

Florence is looking forward to spending more time studying the Scriptures. She wants her daughter, Debby, to join us. Debby lost her husband to cancer 6 months ago.

Pray that the Holy Spirit will continue to draw Flor-

ence, Debby, and many others to the Gospel through this group before it is too late!

Would you let us know if you have a Jewish friend? We hope you and others will help us start more small groups so we can invite more people like Florence.

Another way to build your relationship with your Jewish friend is to send a card for the High Holy Days. May we send you a card in September to send to your Jewish friend? Please let us know if we may help you in this way.

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For information and applications on any of these positions, please contact Steve Cohen at steve.cohen@appleofhiseye.org or call him at 636-326-4040 ext 3.

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LCMS mission society files First Amendment lawsuit

The Apple of His Eye, a St. Louis-based LCMS mission society, and two of its missionaries filed a lawsuit May 1 in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri seeking an injunction against the City of St. Louis for violation their First Amendment rights to proclaim the Gospel in public places.

In its mission to "bring the message of Jesus the Messiah to Jewish people and gentiles alike -- and to equip the church to do the same," the Apple of His Eye regularly sponsors outreach events in public places, such as parks, where its staff and volunteers distribute religious literature and engage passersby in conversation about Christianity.



In 2006, Apple of His Eye founder Steve Cohen and senior missionary Alan Butterworth were distributing Christian tracts during a "gay pride" festival in Tower Grove Park in St. Louis when they were threatened with arrest by park officials unless they stopped handing out their materials, according to a news release from the mission society.

After Cohen and Butterworth removed their literature from the park, they returned to share personal testimonies with people visiting the park. Officials again threatened to arrest Cohen and Butterworth if they did not leave the premises, the news release reports. The two left, even though they believe that religious speech, through the distribution of literature and expressions of religious views, is fully protected by the First Amendment.

The lawsuit was filed after the mission society made several unsuccessful attempts to resolve the matter with the city. The suit is being handled by the American Liberties Institute of Orlando, Fla.

Parties in the lawsuit were unable to talk to *Reporter* until after the court renders its decision.

For more information about The Apple of His Eye, visit its Web site at www.appleofhiseye.org or call (636) 326-4040.

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<http://www.lcms.org/pages/rpage.asp?NavID=13547>