

Holy Discontent

Dear friends in Y'shua...

This is the most important letter I have written in several years...

Some Background

When I came to faith in Jesus as my Messiah in 1973, I had never considered becoming a missionary and I knew nothing of being Lutheran. I was just a 23 year-old young Jewish man who had received the greatest gift in the world, salvation, and I wanted to share it with the world... but how to do it?

When I began my missionary journey three years later, I was told by the mission leader that the organization had nothing to give but the opportunity to take ordinary, everyday situations and turn them into extra-ordinary occasions for presenting the Gospel. From the beginning, what may have seemed like failures because of low results, actually turned into times of the Holy Spirit giving birth to new life through the Gospel seeds that had been planted. Patience, patience – O Lord give me patience.

There were the students at Queens College who watched on the sidelines the opposition to the Gospel... but later took a tract from the ground, spoke with her Christian friends and came to faith in Y'shua. I found out four years after the fact. There was the student leader in Toronto who forced the university administration to work against us being on campus and was successful. Several years later he confessed Y'shua, and before his baptism, sought forgiveness for his opposition to the Gospel.

The Issue

Recently I was approached for understanding as to why our church leadership could not affirm an irenic statement sponsored by the World Evangelical Alliance and signed by a multitude of key Christian leaders from around the world and published on March 28th in the New York Times:

As evangelical Christians, we want to express our genuine friendship and love for the Jewish people. We sadly acknowledge that church history has been marred with anti-Semitic words and deeds; and that at times when the Jewish people were in great peril, the church did far less than it should have.

- We pledge our commitment to be loving friends and to stand against such injustice in our generation. At the same time, we want to be transparent in affirming that we believe the most loving and Scriptural expression of our friendship toward Jewish people, and to anyone we call friend, is to forthrightly share the love of God in the person of Jesus Christ.
- We believe that it is only through Jesus that all people can receive eternal life. If Jesus is not the Messiah of the Jewish people, He cannot be the Savior of the World (Acts 4:12).
- We recognize that it is good and right for those with specialized knowledge, history and skills to use these gifts to introduce individuals to the Messiah, and that includes those ministries specifically directed to the Jewish people (1 Corinthians 9:20-22).



We are an RSO of The LC-MS.

- We deplore the use of deception or coercion in evangelism; however, we reject the notion that it is deceptive for followers of Jesus Christ who were born Jewish to continue to identify as Jews (Romans 11:1).

We want to make it clear that, as evangelical Christians, we do not wish to offend our Jewish friends by the above statements; but we are compelled by our faith and commitment to the Scriptures to stand by these principles. It is out of our profound respect for Jewish people that we seek to share the good news of Jesus Christ with them, and encourage others to do the same, for we believe that salvation is only found in Jesus, the Messiah of Israel and Savior of the World.

One Jewish Response

Not unexpectedly, there was this reaction a few days later in *The Jerusalem Post*:

...The Jewish community must respectfully but forcefully respond to our Christian brothers and sisters as to why proselytizing Jews is a bad idea.

IT'S BAD for Christianity because it betrays the tragic fact that after thousands of years of persecuting Jews, many Christians still have not evolved enough to respect the Jewish faith.

It's bad for Christians because if they reject the Jewishness of Jesus they will never fully understand his teachings or his life.

It's bad for Jewish-Christian relations because, for all their immense support for the State of Israel, most Jews are still suspicious of evangelicals precisely because many treat Judaism as an unsaved, subordinate faith.

And it's bad for the Western world whose basic fabric is based on Judeo-Christian values, which will of necessity suffer if the groups who promote these values neutralize each other through unnecessary conflict...

And is the Christian emphasis on salvation what we most need now, or is it the Jewish emphasis on redemption? Should we be talking about getting into heaven when, after so many thousands of years of human history, our earth still has genocide in Darfur, terrorism in the Middle East, and broken, lonely souls across the West?

Rather than worrying who needs to be converted to get into heaven, Christians and Jews should join together to create heaven here on earth. *The Jerusalem Post March 31, 2008*

Holy Discontent

I admit that I am not content with the status quo. Of the 13 million Jewish people around the world today, 99% are unsaved and facing a Christ-less eternity.

Unlike many other mission fields, there are limits as to how we can reach my people:

We can not piggyback the gospel on a medical mission effort – our people are leaders in medical advances.

We can not piggyback the Gospel on an agricultural mission effort – our people have taken deserts and made them bloom.

We can not piggyback the Gospel on literacy mission efforts – our people are very literate and the scriptures were written in their original tongue – Hebrew.

What we must do

This leaves one avenue – simple – loving direct and personal proclamation of the Gospel. It is not fancy; it is not flashy; it is simply needful and necessary that those who first had Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, the Law, the Prophets, the Land, the Sabbath, the Festivals and the promise that Messiah would come now need to hear that He has come.

We are compelled to go but there is resistance around us:

Some resistance comes from indifference to the eternal fate of others.

Some comes from the unwillingness to be inconvenienced in reaching out.

Some comes from a fear of receiving a negative reaction from the Jewish community.

Some think is just won't make any difference at all.

Some comes from the spiritual battle within each of us distracting us from what must be done!

But none of these is sufficient to say we should turn from the Biblical mandate to stop sharing or exclude a certain group of people for fear of a reaction because ETERNITY HANGS IN THE BALANCE!

So, how do we deal with HOLY DISCONTENT?

1. By pledging ourselves to be available to others.
2. By pledging ourselves to use our gifts in ways that leads to extra-ordinary opportunities to tell the Good News of Jesus.
3. By pledging ourselves to pray for those who are lost that they might be found in Christ.
4. By pledging ourselves to give the financial resources so that the Gospel can go forward.
5. By pledging ourselves to speak up and invite others through our leadership to speak up, too.

Jesus gave his all.

Should we give less?

Should we do less?

Should we stop because it is hard and some do not care?

Did you know that each missionary raises his/her own mission support? We rely on YOU to help sustain our ministry now in our 12th year.

Your 2008 mission support enables us to bring the Gospel to the Jewish people and gentiles, too.



Category	Amount
Total 2008 Mission Support	\$530,000
Amount Received from Thrivent Members	(Partial bar shown)

Thrivent Members can have their gifts matched by filling out the form available on our web site or we can mail one to you.

I am asking for your help and encouragement now.

At a recent mission banquet in St. Louis, our Board of Directors pledged \$42,000 for mission support and the attendees pledged another \$27,000 on top of that toward our annual budget of \$530,000. *We seek your help as we move forward...*

Would you return the enclosed response card letting us know that you care and knit your hearts with us?

Would you pledge your support to help us move forward now and on into the 2008 summer short-term mission event in Chicago (see our web site for details – www.appleofhiseye.org)

Would you prayer for me as I lead that my discontent might be turned to joy?

Would you pray that our church would respond like Paul did years ago:

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

Thank you on behalf of all of us at the Apple of His Eye.

Yours in Y'shua,



Steve Cohen
Founder

1 Cor 15:58



Please remember The Apple of His Eye in your estate planning by giving the gift that keeps on giving!

Yes, Steve, we stand with those who serve in the Apple of His Eye.

We will pray with and for you all!

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Regular gift	\$ _____
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Total mission gift	\$ _____

Please make your checks payable to: The Apple of His Eye PO Box 6977 St. Louis MO 63123

I want to stand with you in Chicago this summer June 28-July 6 during your outreach, please tell me more... (please see our web site for is information...)

