JANUARY 2016

If Not You Then Who? If Not Now Then When?

Covered: A Peak Inside Our Israel Ministry,
And Our New Ministry-Oriented "Mission Tours"

Those who know us know that we shy away from talking about what is being accomplished in the ministry God has called us to. Part of the reason is that we never want to appear to seek donations of any kind. We greatly enjoy seeing God work in His surprising ways to come through right at the perfect time in all our needs. We see that God speaks to people’s hearts to pray ... and to help ...over the distances without any prompting from us, and that is truly amazing. It gives us added assurance that He is with us and continuing to use the Shepherd's Light in reaching His people Israel.

But sometimes I carry that secretive nature a little too far. Sometimes I need to share with you more of what the Lord is doing in Israel with our ministry servants, the church plant, the home fellowships and the poorest whom we serve. Well, today is that day ... In this report we hope to introduce you to some of the precious people the Lord has given us and tell their stories about how God crashed into their darkness with His pure and glorious light. We hope and pray their stories will touch your heart as it has touched ours. In your prayers, and in your giving, you have collaborated with us in the Lord's harvest. These stories are occasion to rejoice together in what God has done and in what He is doing.

Interspersed throughout the stories in the newsletters of 2016 will be the sights of Israel and our ministry on the streets of the cities. We hope the story and pictures draw you into the lives of everyday Israelis and strengthen your love for them. Our goal is to get you to answer the call that God may have placed on your heart to help reach Israel in these last days. In this brief report, we hope to familiarize you with the Jewish people in Israel, and to give you a glimpse of their culture and some of the needs they face in the lives of their poorest citizens. So take in the story and the
images to acquaint yourself with the places and the people. Then you will have a better understanding of who you are praying for when you pray for Israel. So let's get to know Israel and the Jewish people ...

Above: The amazing Roman ruins in Beit She'an, Israel where the Missions Tour stopped to explore Israel's history before the Missions segment of the trip. The site was one of about thirty Biblical sites we explored in our Missions Tour.

A Peak Inside the Ministry.
A Tiny Seed Has Grown

Who would have guessed that what started with two people in 2004 has now grown to dozens of ministry servants, numerous ministries, a thriving church plant, home fellowships and hundreds who are cared for with food assistance. All with many others who receive critical medical care, life-saving medicine and extreme dental surgery care. Then there are the many who have come to faith in Jesus the Messiah. Here are the brief stories of a couple of those who have been given both the story of God's love for them in Jesus the Messiah and also critical physical care in their dire needs and poverty. These stories are of two people out of hundreds who we have been able to care for because of God's provision and
Above: A middle aged lady on the inner city Tel Aviv streets begging. The look in her eyes displays the utter hopelessness she faces daily.

(continued from below right ...)

She is an elderly orthodox Jewish woman ... Though older now, we met her many years ago when she came to our first soup kitchen in Tel Aviv. Like many Israelis in the inner city, she lived in terrible poverty, but also like them she never complained. She walked miles to come to our soup kitchen though walking itself was very difficult for her. I didn’t notice it at first, but like others who would follow her methods, she was looking us over ... trying to find out why we did what we did.

In the Jewish mindset, caring for the poor was only done by those who know God. There was no doubt in her mind that what we were doing was from God, but she could not reconcile it with the fact that we were evangelical Christians. And I was a real question mark ... since I was born into a Jewish family, but I also believed in Jesus as the Messiah and Lord.

At first she thought no real Jewish person could believe in Jesus. But over the span of the months, she found out that yes, Jewish people could also believe in Jesus, the Jewish Messiah ... the most famous Jewish person who ever lived.

I still vividly remember after the church service that Shabbat man years ago, faithfulness. In these accounts, their names are not being given to protect their identity and privacy ...

(continued from above ...)

"To the least of these ..."

He has nobody ... When the ambulance picks him up, now several times a month, there is no one he can call. Normally he sleeps in a small bunk in one of multiple bunk beds in a small, dirty dorm room in a decaying hostel in Tel Aviv's inner city. Drug addicts, drunks and criminals sleep in the place and call it home for a few nights at a time. When, due to his myriad severe medical maladies, he collapses, the ambulance comes and takes him away to the hospital again.

When he gets out ... no ... if he gets out of the hospital, he is unsure if the small bed will still be his. If it is not he may be a severely weakened outpatient with nowhere to go but the cold sidewalk. Or maybe ... if they are not already taken ... a bench on a sidewalk ... in the middle of a harsh winter. For the last several years we have helped him to purchase medicine to simply keep him alive. Two times the doctors almost decided to amputate one of his legs due to severe infection. Diabetes is taking its toll. He awaits a liver transplant, but his sickness has already destroyed much of this once energetic Jewish man. Now he has become older, and he is alone.

We have become his only family. Blankets, coats, food, a roof over his head we try to provide for him when we can afford it, but many times there is simply nothing to give. He has heard the gospel dozens of times, and the church we started has become a place of refuge to him. Still, he does not yet
when she came up to me and told me in Hebrew (she did not speak any English then) that she wanted to give her life to Jesus. I did a double take and asked her to repeat what she said just in case I had not heard her correctly (my Hebrew was not that good at that time). Then my heart jumped when she confirmed it. We prayed ... in Hebrew. She was the first person I had ever had the privilege of leading to the Lord in Hebrew.

Over the years I more or less adopted this little elderly Jewish lady as my sister. And she was truly my sister in the Lord now. Years passed, and I saw the most amazing changes in her life. Before, she would never smile. Now she smiles all the time.

Oh, she still is very poor. Several times her tiny one room place had no water. At other times she had gone for months with no electricity. In each of these situations, we eventually found out about it (she never told us) and we were able to fix the water and get the electricity on again. She is truly a treasure to me and each time I imagine her little smile, I thank God for allowing me to know her and to see the amazing work He has done in her life.

We have provided emergency and ongoing care and food for her through the years. I remember one time when she just came right out and asked me if I had a certain amount of money that I could give her. Somehow I knew there was a good reason, and I just happened to have that amount at that time. I gave her the money. A short time later I found out that she had taken the money and went to help an elderly lady neighbor who had no food.

She wanted to do what she had seen Pat and I doing in helping others, but she had no money to do it with. And now, in her estimation, God had provided that money to help her show His love to someone else. And, although she was living in catastrophic poverty herself, her thoughts believe. But God's love is unconditional. Therefore our love must also be. Freely we have received, and freely we must give. After all, God loved us before we knew Him.

I do not know how much longer we will have our friend with us. Over the years I have seen him fade fast. Any day can be his last. But, I guess that is the case with all of us as well. Please keep my friend in prayer.

(continued at the above left ...)

Above: A Jewish Orthodox man prays at the Western Wall (the Kotel) at the Temple Mount. On the countless paper notes placed in the stones of the walls are the prayers of many for the peace of Jerusalem.
were for that elderly neighbor who had no food. It was then that I realized the amazing work that God had done in her since she had asked Jesus to be Lord of her life. She once told me smiling that everything is okay now because she knows she is going to heaven.

Well these are all the individual stories I am going to share in this letter. More will follow as we go through the year. There are hundreds of stories such as these. The time has flown, but thank God He has brought others to grow the work and continue the work. The Shepherd’s Light still pays the many bills for the ministries in Israel and for the work with the inner city poor. We have been blessed to ordain and help plant pastors over the years. Some are in Israel. Others have planted churches in the Mediterranean region and in Europe. Still others are on their way to ordination as pastors. People come from all over the world to serve selflessly. They have received God’s call on their lives. We are truly blessed as this is not now, and never has been a work of man or a marketing effort. Nor did it originate in the mind of man, but God brought all the pieces and people together to the right place at the right times to build a ministry of His design.

And Pat and I are still in Israel for as much time as we can be which usually works out to about four months a year. But our time outside Israel is consumed with managing and providing for the Israel ministries and representing the ministry to churches in the States. Accounting for the 501(c) 3 Shepherd’s Light non-profit is a non-stop task to make sure that everything is done in an accurate and accountable manner to make sure the ministry is always doing what it was founded to do. A usual day begins at 7:30 AM and ends at 10:30 PM.

One of the ministry servants here stateside, when he's not in Israel, is on the phone to ministry leaders in Israel two to three hours a day for three days a week.

Above: Found on an old wall on a sidewalk in the Tel Aviv inner city. While most Jewish people have been taught that the cross is a symbol of persecution to them, the artist of this image told the true story. There has never been a greater love shown than that shown on the Cross of Calvary, and He died for Jew and Gentile alike.

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The Shepherd’s Light is a 501(c)3 Non-Profit Organization and all donations received are tax deductible and go to our work in Israel.
trying to help them figure out how to Biblically navigate the numerous counseling issues and ministry issues that they face. He is doing what we refer to as Leadership Discipling.

Today we also train people stateside in how to reach the Jewish people. We train and equip the teams then we travel to Israel to make sure they can establish their own ministries there as well. We figure that God is multiplying the little ministry still.

How blessed we are to behold just some of what His hand is doing. Our lives, however long they may be, are dedicated to reaching Israel, and we are honored to be seeing and working with others with the same callings.

And we want to thank you for answering God’s call to partner with us in this noble endeavor. I know God will truly bless your sacrificial giving and answer your prayers. We are praying for you as well.

Some of you I have never even met, but be assured, you are my brother ... you are my sister. And together we are in a wonderful calling in these last days. I look forward to our continued serving together in the Lord’s harvest. We must continue. The time is short. Let us keep our hands to the plow. One day soon, we shall see the fruits of our labors and rejoice together in God's Kingdom.
Above: The synagogue at Capernaum where Jesus taught. This is my favorite of all the many places our Missions Tour visits prior to the Missions segment of the trip. I could think for hours as I sit in this place and consider the things that happened there and the words of the Son of God that still echo in our hearts today.

Above: Our local Tel Aviv ministry servants join with our Missions Tour members in feeding the poor at a soup kitchen outing in a park in Tel Aviv. After preparing the food at our ministry facility, we take it by foot to the place where we meet with the poor of Tel Aviv and distribute it to them as we share God's love.
Above: We visit our Calvary Chapel Tel Aviv church plant and see our brothers and sisters for a
time of fellowship and study of God’s Word and worship. Most are poor and walk to church. They
were greatly encouraged by the Missions Tour team that had come to assist and stand by them.

A New Kind of Tour: See Israel. Reach Israel. Care for Israel.

the Shepherd’s Light "Mission Tour" November 3-13, 2016
For Only $2,899 per Person.
(Flushes, Hotels, Food, Tips, Taxes, Fees, and All Expenses are Included)

We know Israel. We speak the language. We know the people. But the most
important reason we offer this tour is that we love Israel. We have dedicated our
lives to reaching Israel and standing by our Jewish brothers and sisters. That’s why
we designed the “Missions Tour” concept. In a Missions Tour, after we tour Israel's
Biblical sites, we spend a significant amount of time off the bus and rubbing elbows
with the modern day Israelis that God has miraculously brought back into their own
land. We share God’s love, and we care for Israel's poorest. Our 2015 Mission Tour
was a wonderful success, and the 2016 Mission Tour is coming up soon. (We will
also have a Missions Tour in the Spring of 2017. Details of that trip will be given in a
couple of months.)

For both these trips, my wife, Patricia and I will be your hosts. We can speak to you
about what you will be experiencing from a Jewish perspective and explain the
cultural context as we go. The price is amazing, and yet the tour accommodations
are top notch. We will visit approximately 30 Biblical sites throughout Israel, including
major sites such as the Mt. of Beatitudes (the location of the Sermon on the Mount),
an amazing wooden boat tour on the Sea of Galilee, Capernaum, a time at the
beautiful Yardenit on the Jordan River where those desiring to be baptized there
may do so, En Gedi where David hid from Saul, Beit She'an, Tiberias, Jerusalem's
Western Wall, the Jewish Quarter of the Old City Jerusalem, the Temple Mount, the
Temple Institute, Caesaria, and many, many more. Then, for the latter segment of
the tour, we will serve in mission ministry work alongside our brothers and sisters in
the inner city of Tel Aviv in soup kitchen work, serving the homeless and the poorest
of Israel. You will leave Israel a completely changed person.

Our hope and prayer in this is that you will truly remember to pray for Israel and the
peace of Jerusalem for the rest of your life. And, if the Lord puts on your heart a
calling to Israel, then we will provide the resources to train you in the culture, modern
history, society, sharing God's Word and how to stay in Israel for extended times of
ministry. Our desire is that the Holy Spirit will call you and give you the faith to
answer His call to go and share the Good News of Jesus the Messiah with the Jewish people. These are the last days. And these are the days in which the Gospel is being brought back to the Land in which it began. Will you allow God to use you? He is big enough to remove any obstacle and bring you to a place where you can represent Him. This Missions Tour trip can be a time of consideration, familiarization, and prayer for you. Sign up right away ... He will make the way.

Sign up Now at:  [http://inspiredtravel.com/shepherdslight/](http://inspiredtravel.com/shepherdslight/)

Above: Mission Tour members from our November 2015 Shepherd's Light Missions Tour. Don't miss our Missions Tour for November 2016!
Above: Many of the Missions Tour members desired to be baptized in the Jordan River at the beautiful Yardenit Baptism Site built for the Nation of Israel by Pastor Chuck Smith. It was a beautiful time surrounded by the beauty of the Jordan River winding its way through the trees and flowers of the facility. It was a time to consider what had happened in those waters 2,000 years ago. It was a time to consider again the gift that God had given us in His Son and to rededicate our lives to Him anew.

In Closing ...

In closing, we hope you have a fresh perspective on the work the Lord is doing today in the Shepherd's Light ministry to Israel. It started with a couple of people, but has now become a multitude of servants who desire to share God's love with their Jewish brethren. In addition to all you have read and seen above, there are now ministry partners from several other continents working with us. They, too, have been called by the Holy Spirit to reach Israel in these last days. In the USA, Senior Pastors, Missions Pastors, and lay people across the nation sense an urgency and a calling to somehow begin an Israel ministry of their own. We have noticed this wonderful work the Holy Spirit is doing and have been able, through Him, to develop many resources such as video training films that give them a crash course in the things that would be needed and useful for them in beginning their own Israel ministry. For the last two years we have been able to serve alongside these new ministry teams sent by churches and help them get started in their own ministry in Israel.

We have done all this, and will do all this going forward, for no cost to those who are called. Our sole desire is to bring God's love to the Jewish people and to demonstrate that love in tangible ways by caring for their poorest. In that way, when we present the Gospel, the Jewish people see that God has indeed sent us. According to the Jewish people we have spoken with over the last twelve years, anybody who cares for the poor as we do must be from God. So when they see the physical charity that is done, they listen to what we say about the Gospel and how they can have everlasting life through Jesus the Messiah. It is no longer just a debate. It is undeniable.

So, if you are called ... answer your calling. Do not delay any longer. Today is the day. Now is the time. If not now ... then when? If not you ... then who? Who will go for the Lord? Who shall He send? What about You?

in His unfailing care,

Stephen & Patricia Apple