

## OUTREACH

# Between a Rock and a Hard Place

**APPLE TALK**

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Some people wonder why we should be concerned for bringing the Gospel to such a small contingent of the earth's population — the Jews. The Great Commission was meant for all people and we cannot discriminate or exclude anybody, but the question is asked, "With our limited resources, why not try to reach larger groups of people who in fact are more responsive?" Jews, numbering 14,000,000, constitute only 0.2% of the world's population and express a classic resistance to the Gospel.

There is a clear biblical mandate for Jewish evangelism in the words of Paul: "Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved." (Romans 10:1) In fact, three whole chapters of the Letter to the Romans (9-11) indicate a strong thrust to bring Messiah Jesus to the Jews. Apart from the fact that God "wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth" (1 Titus 2:4) and that the Jews were/are God's original chosen people — are there other compelling reasons to share

the Gospel with Jewish people? We believe so.

Today's Jewish dilemma in the Land of Israel is a signal to all of us of a threat greater than Nazism and Communism — the two "anti-Christ" of the last century which combined caused the deaths of 100,000,000 people and untold suffering. I am speaking of the false religion of Islam.

For decades the tiny country of Israel, surrounded by hostile Islamic countries, has endured terrorist attacks. Contrary to what the news media will tell you, these attacks were not so much motivated by geopolitics as they were by Islamic theology. The suicide bombers — in Israel and in the United States on 9/11 — die with a theological statement on their lips: "Allehu Akhbar" (Allah is the greatest). Israel is between a rock and a hard place, fighting against Islamic hatred (based on the Koran) and the naivety of the western world which believes it is all about politics and statesmanship. We frequently hear about the fight against terrorism, but Islamic terrorism is only a tactic of this *jihad* or war which rages worldwide.

In our pluralistic culture, with its freedom of religion, many Americans find it difficult to believe that Islam is *not* a religion of peace and tolerance, although we believe

the majority of Muslims are moderate people of good will. However, historically the religion of Islam has spread by three means: invitation to accept Islam; forcing non-believers to accept a status of inferiority (*dhimmitude*) which leads to a pragmatic "conversion"; and when the first two methods fail, armed conflict. The "holy" book of Islam, the Koran, teaches that all people must submit to Allah, and that it is the obligation of every Muslim to do *dawa* (proclaim Islam).

Robert Spencer in his book *The Politically Incorrect Guide to Islam (and the Crusades)* reports: "It is the divinely ordained duty of all Muslims to fight in the literal sense until man-made law has been replaced by God's law, the Sharia, and Islamic law has conquered the entire world"

(p. 11). Incidentally, the Islamic website [www.RevivingIslam.com](http://www.RevivingIslam.com) "praises" Spencer's book in the following way: "May Allah rip out his spine from his back and split his brains in two, and then put them both back, and then do it over and over again. Amen."

What to do? The once eminent atheist, who late in life became a Theist philosopher, Antony Flew, wrote: "Jesus is an enormously attractive charismatic figure, which the Prophet of Islam (Mohammed) most emphatically is not." (*The Politically Incorrect Guide*, p. 199) Apart from the need to protect ourselves from violence with the military and Department of Homeland Security, this struggle with Islam will be waged and won by the Gospel. Paul says: "The weapons we fight with are

not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. . . we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ." (2 Corinthians 10:4-5) Yes, the love of Jesus — dying on the cross for those who hated Him — is attractive!

The flowering of the weed of Nazism began with the persecution of the Jews, but expanded to the persecution of the churches and culminated in the deaths of 60,000,000 people. Islam and its many organizations seek to drive the Jews out of the holy land. The Jews are between a rock and a hard place. The bottom line of that conflict is not about politics. It is about the religion of Islam and a spiritual struggle. The problems in the Middle East are only the tip of the whole sword. They typify and represent a worldwide struggle.

We who "hold to the testimony of Jesus" (Revelations 12:17) must share Him with Jewish people, Muslims and all people. Our *jihad* is always fought with the sword of the Spirit, the word of God, not with the weapons of the world. Let us not be asleep. We are at war, but we can destroy our enemy *with the Gospel* when the Holy Spirit uses the Gospel to make brothers and sisters in Messiah Jesus out of those who would place us into bondage or harm us! □



LUTHERANS IN JEWISH EVANGELISM has a new Executive Director — Rev. Kevin Parviz, who was installed into that position on October 2 at St. John's Lutheran-Ocala, FL. Parviz was installed by Rev. Richard Lineberger, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Lutherans in Jewish Evangelism. Shown here (left to right) are Rev. Bruce Lieske, Rev. Kevin Parviz and Rev. Richard Lineberger.

## Look What the Lutherans Did!

# Cooperative Feeding Program Celebrates 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

Twenty years ago this Fall, the pastor and head of social ministries of First Lutheran Church in downtown Fort Lauderdale, the mother church of the area, had repeatedly noticed a need to help with some kind of sustenance for the homeless who were wandering the streets of their city.

They got together, and that first day, made 20 bag lunches — including sandwiches and a small snack — which, when they opened their side door and began to distribute them, were gone in less than 15 minutes. Rev. Dr. Luther Anderson was that pastor, and Pat Mantis was that Social Ministry Chairperson. Little did they know how that decision to help others was going to change their lives.,

They doubled the number of sandwiches they made the next day, then called in help from the congregation. Before too much time passed, they began to see that this was going to be a bigger task than they ever imagined. Pastor Anderson decided to go to area church, and initially Trinity in the downtown volunteered to help,

soon followed by members of Christ, Gloria Dei, Our Savior and others.

Within that first year, a loosely formulated agreement was written down between the congregations recognizing the need for them to work together. By the end of that first year the Lutheran Cooperative Feeding Program was formed, with the feeding site being at First Lutheran Church. Pat Mantis was asked to be its first director and quickly organized volunteers to help with sandwich distribution five days a week. As the program grew, the newly formed board of directors looked into getting governmental help through available commodities and the feeding program quickly became known as the "Cheese Factory" because the surplus cheese given by the government was often the only thing to put between two pieces of bread.

### Look What the Lutherans Did

It didn't take too long for the program to expand. After 10 years it outgrew the facility

at First Lutheran Church and rented a former restaurant on West Broward Blvd, adjacent to the Salvation Army Building. This new relationship with the Salvation Army helped both organizations.

They sent individuals to the program, and the Cooperative Feeding Program used office space in their building. But soon those spaces were getting cramped and the CFP looked for other possibilities. Some other rental property, warehousing space, and even for a while a mobile kitchen were home to this feeding program for the poor in our area.

As the CFP board looked at the possibility of purchasing some land, and building its own facility instead of spending money on exorbitant rents, it became clear that they were facing a daunting task. Finally, land was found, an architect procured and the important issue of funding was solved by a \$1,200,000 loan from the Lutheran Church Extension Fund, guaranteed by Trinity Lutheran Church.

The building was built, named the Edward W. Smith Family Nutrition Center due to a generous contribution from

the Edward W. Smith Foundation. Rooms, offices, the kitchen and pantry, were named after individuals and organizations that had helped so generously in the construction costs of that building.

### Look What the Lutherans Did

A mission that started with some peanut butter and jelly sandwiches 20 years ago now provides more than one million meals a year. The community kitchen, which turns away no one, now provides a daily hot meal to upwards of 500 individuals. The pantry provides a box of food for a family that will last them a week, and 200 of these boxes are provided every day.

In the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the Cooperative Feeding Program was called on again to help with the incredible task of providing food and also resettlement for many of the victims of these storms.

In addition to food, the CFP provides rental assistance, bus tokens and vouchers, re-establishes IDs by sending for birth certificates so jobs can be secured, Legal Aid is provided, Social Security comes and helps

individuals who can get benefits, eyeglasses for humanity comes and sees that people get examinations and glasses . . . all this happening in the years after just making a few sandwiches.

Churches, LWMLs, school children, youth groups, men's and women's clubs, Sunday schools — all have contributed over the years to this incredible ministry. As you enter the main lobby of the CFP facility, there is a newly attached plaque on the wall that says simply, *Look What the Lutherans Did . . .* and then has room for names of churches, individual groups and organizations within those churches.

As we continue supporting this wonderful ministry, we will add names of these churches and auxiliaries to this plaque and dedicate the entrance lobby to the Lutheran effort which started more than 20 years ago.

Cooperative Feeding Program Executive Director Marti Forman and many if the members of the board of directors are available to visit churches and organizations to speak about the ministry. For additional information, contact the Cooperative Feeding Program at 1 NW 33rd Terrace Fort Lauderdale, FL 33311. □