

1986
Rubin

ABMJ/CHOSEN PEOPLE MINISTRIES
SUMMER TRAINING AND EVANGELISM PROGRAM (S.T.E.P.)

Let me begin by thanking Arnold Fruchtenbaum and the Steering Committee for inviting me to address you, my colleagues and fellow-workers. This is the first time I have been directly involved in this vital conference, although I have labored in this field for twelve years. During those twelve years, my experience has been varied, having served with three different mission agencies in many different capacities: six years with Jews for Jesus, two years as Executive Director of Messiah Has Come! Ministries (formerly known as the Southern Hebrew Mission and more recently renamed Messianic Ministry to Israel)--now I am completing my fourth year with ABMJ/Chosen People Ministries.

S.T.E.P. -- A PROGRAM TO MEET NEEDS

In 1982, when I joined the staff of ABMJ/Chosen People Ministries, Harold Sevens and I discussed what we felt to be a real need. This need could be broken down into four points:

1) to provide continued training for new ABMJ/Chosen People Ministries staff missionaries

2) to train lay people, Bible college students and seminarians in the methods and ideology of Jewish evangelism (an emphasis we know is not particularly stressed in most churches, Bible colleges or seminaries)

3) to reach Jewish people with the gospel message in cities where no full-time missionaries had been assigned or where an existing mission worker might appreciate the support of other people burdened for the salvation of the Jewish people.

4) to teach more church groups how to share Messiah with Jewish friends and contacts.

In response to these needs, we designed a program that would, in effect, accomplish all four goals. We called it S.T.E.P.-- Summer Training and Evangelism Program, and our Board of Directors greeted the proposal with enthusiasm. After all, ABMJ had historically been a mission involved in training others in Jewish evangelism. Some of you here participated in such programs over the years.

I was called upon to carry out the new program, though it was only indirectly related to my position as National Director of Church Ministries. My varied missions experience, including work developing the Jews For Jesus training program, my seminary courses and my graduate work in Interpersonal Communications all contributed to the tone and direction for S.T.E.P. But first there were the matters of where to hold such a program, how to draw interest from the Christian community and how to coordinate with the Regional Directors in ABMJ.

S.T.E.P. -- GETTING STARTED

New York City seemed the obvious place to teach on-site Jewish evangelism. I chose Nyack College as the base of operations both for its proximity to our own headquarters in Orangeburg, New York, as well as for its accessibility to New York City. In

addition, Rockland County, home of Nyack College, has itself a large Jewish community, and I knew I could count on both the support of headquarters personnel as well as our greater Metropolitan New York Area staff under the direction of Sam Nadler.

To promote this new program, we began by running an ad in our own Chosen People Magazine. In addition to this general announcement, we mailed directly to Christian colleges and seminaries. The response was gratifying, for it demonstrated that the need was as real as we had suspected. Our first group of S.T.E.P. candidates was a varied bunch: they ranged in education from Dallas Seminary graduates to high school graduates. A wide variety of ages was represented in this group as well-- a little old lady in her 70's came from Nashville. Alliance Theological Seminary students, workers with other Jewish mission boards, Moody Bible Institute Jewish studies students all made their way to Nyack to participate in Phase I of S.T.E.P.

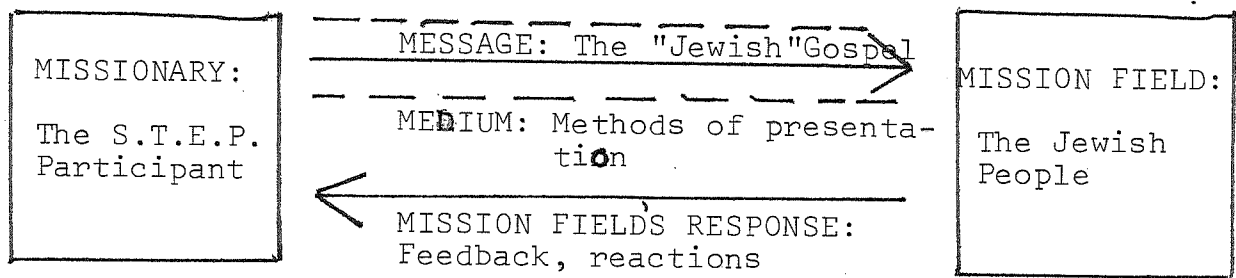
As I mentioned before, we relied heavily on our Northeast Region for workers who could assist in on-site training for the S.T.E.P. candidates. But we also pulled veteran ABMJ/Chosen People Ministries personnel from all over the Western Hemisphere! These knowledgeable men helped with classroom training in S.T.E.P.'s first phase.

S.T.E.P. -- ONE PROGRAM TWO PHASES

Because S.T.E.P. was created to meet the needs I mentioned before, it had to include two basic phases: a learning phase

and a sharing phase. These two phases had to be divided further to meet the needs of the program. First I will deal with Phase I, Part A: the classroom.

In my graduate work in Interpersonal Communications, I found that much of what I learned could be understood better by using a Communications Model. It was a simple way to organize information and understand the communication process. Because the model in its most basic form is very general, I found it could be quite easily adapted to the specific subject of communicating the message of the gospel to the Jewish people. This is how the model looks as we began to use it to organize the information we wished to teach in the S.T.E.P. classroom:



The parts of the model are used to teach the subject of Jewish evangelism this way:

1) The Missionary (that is, any believer who wishes to share the gospel with the Jewish person or persons). The problem we focused on in connection with this part of our model is developing

a correct attitude, an appropriate sense of who the missionary is. We emphasize the need for a loving attitude, an informed position, and the humility which ought to define a believer, particularly one involved in a witnessing situation. We attempt to give the trainees a sense of themselves as a part of history, the history of Jewish evangelism. We include in our discussion such distinguished figures in our field as Joseph Samuel C. F. Frey, Schereschewsky, Leopold Cohn and others. It is our desire to give the candidates a sense of belonging to something much larger than just S.T.E.P.

Included in this perspective, too, is an understanding of the gentile's role in Jewish evangelism. This to assure those non-Jews whose God given interest brought them to S.T.E.P. that they did indeed have a significant part to play in the Lord's work of witnessing to His people.

Finally, in studying this aspect of the role of the Missionary in the communication model, we briefly go into the history of ABMJ and other modern Jewish missions in an attempt to give an overview of what's happening today in Jewish evangelism.

2) The message (that is, the gospel of Jesus the Messiah). The problem we took on here is how to communicate that faith in Jesus is acceptable, indeed, requisite for a Jewish person. For this we teach the gospel of salvation in the Old Testament, the Jewish roots and context of Christianity, and also the Jewishness of the New Testament. Realizing that the Jewish community is becoming armed to battle the missionary on the field of Messianic prophecy, the S.T.E.P. instructors endeavor to give a deeper

understanding of the nature of the prophecies concerning Messiah. And looking toward the future we also emphasize prophecy concerning Israel yet to be fulfilled. It is not our desire to merely arm the trainees with a list of verses to memorize, but rather to understand the Biblical contexts of these important passages.

3) The Medium (that is the options available to present our message). The problem here is basic: what are the most effective ways for the missionary to present his message. Discussed are all of the most widely used vehicles for sharing the gospel. Pros and cons of each are offered. Included in our discussion are mass literature distribution, door-to-door sharing (here we include an effective adaptation of Evangelism Explosion which ABMJ missionary Israel Cohen has adapted for Jewish people), store-to-store canvassing, Jewish-oriented home Bible studies, and Jewish-oriented congregations. For a close examination of witnessing techniques in one-on-one conversations we also include an analysis of John 4 as a model for dealing with different stages of sharing Messiah.

4) The Mission Field (that is, the Jewish person or persons with whom you wish to share. The focus here has to do with the fact that much information on witnessing to Jews tends to ignore the "average" Jewish person. It isn't enough to inform the trainee of the sort of things an Orthodox Jew does during the course of a day. Neither is it enough to describe the three branches of Judaism. The glaring truth is that most Jews are not strongly allied with any branch of Judaism. Issues that S.T.E.P. instructors deal with include Jewish culture (the aspects of Jewishness commonly

shared by Jewish people) and some views concerning issues such as heaven and hell, the Messiah, and Israel. We concentrate on communication principles of discernment as taught in the scriptures. We also teach Jewish humor.

5) The Response (that is, feedback from the Jewish person with whom you share). How do we deal with the usual Jewish objections to the gospel. Some of those included are "Christians worship three Gods", Christianity and anti-Semitism, "Why didn't Messiah bring peace as he was supposed to?" and "How could God allow the murder of six million Jews?" Again, these are not handled in a cursory manner, but with respect to the community which raises these objections. The trainees are also taught how to handle hostility and opposition, an inevitability of our field. Where the opposition is coming from as well as how to defuse it and to respond in love are the emphasis of this part of the instruction.

Having covered all aspects of our communications model, our S.T.E.P. candidates now have a system by which to process and remember the vast amount of information they learn in their month of morning classroom work. Which brings us to part B of the first phase of S.T.E.P. -- on-site practical training.

Following mornings spent in the classroom ingesting and digesting data, an afternoon of actual experience serves to solidify and make real that data for the S.T.E.P. candidate. Many of those who have attended our program commented on the fact that immediate application of S.T.E.P. material enabled them to approach the classroom each day with renewed vigor, confident that they were

not merely marking time at a desk or logging hours at a lecture; but rather learning practical points of Jewish evangelism. Teams of between four and six STEPers, as they came to call themselves, led by one of the New York area staff workers went out to participate in some form of evangelism. Whether it was a busy street corner in midtown Manhattan, or a park bench in the Bronx, there are always opportunities to employ some of the techniques discussed earlier in the day. Some are taken door-to-door in Northern New Jersey or to highly concentrated Jewish neighborhoods like Co-op City for contact and conversation. Some go to nursing homes. Some attend synagogue. Eventually everyone experiences everything. By the time the travellers return for dinner and debriefing, they are brimming over with evangelistic adventures and often with the words, "I led a Jewish person to the Lord!" The rest of the evening is spent in study, in fellowship, and in preparing for Phase II of S.T.E.P. for those who would be going.

Phase II is the sharing phase of S.T.E.P. Earlier I said that one of the needs that had become apparent was the need to further instruct the churches in the need for and how-tos of Jewish evangelism. In completing Phase I of S.T.E.P. the trainees have freshly accumulated and absorbed the very information the churches need to receive. The S.T.E.P. people are grouped into teams of four or five, each led by an ABMJ/Chosen People Ministries staff missionary. The teams travel by car or van, each to a different region of the country where our regional church ministry directors have scheduled

a series of seminars for the teams to teach. The seminars are based upon the same communications model used in Phase I. Two of the team members (during some of their "free time" in Phase I) have prepared a special dramatic teaching tool that we use with each of our S.T.E.P. groups. This dramatic tool consists of four short characterizations reflecting four of the aspects in the communications model. The first depicts what can go wrong in a witnessing encounter where an improper understanding of the Missionary is the problem--that we are saved by grace lest any man should boast. The second shows what can happen when the communicator doesn't present the Message in a Jewish way. The third deals with one's conceptions about the Jewish people, and the fourth, how to handle responses. Each little drama is preceded and followed by an explanation of the Jewish evangelism communications model describing the way in which the information portrayed fits into the understanding of witnessing. Another member of the team prepares a brief message based upon an appropriate portion of Scripture. This message, in conjunction with the drama, gives both the scriptural and practical aspects of witnessing to the Jewish people. Usually some appropriate Messianic music and a testimony round out the program. Thus the graduating class of S.T.E.P. multiplies itself over and over as it travels around the country.

Another important aspect of Phase II concerns what the S.T.E.P. candidates accomplish working together with local Jewish believers and interested non-Jews in these mid-size metropolitan areas. In Rochester, New York, for example, a team working with a local

church led a group of Russian Jews to the Lord and began a fellowship which one of our missionaries still oversees with frequent visits. Like the Apostle Paul, he went out, preached, planted, and continues to nourish. In Raleigh, North Carolina, our team conducted seminars in churches and took people out witnessing in the local Jewish area. In Columbus, Ohio, a team worked together with a local Messianic congregation, encouraging the Jewish believers and strengthening them in their testimony.

The last feature of S.T.E.P.'s second phase is the flexibility with which these newly trained teams are able to reach out at special events. At the 1984 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles, two S.T.E.P. teams were dispatched to hand out literature and to engage in evangelistic encounters. Over 100,000 specially designed gospel tracts were distributed to the crowds at the various events, raising the banner of the Jewish Messiah to the Jewish spectators who had come to Los Angeles. And at the 1984 Democratic and Republican Conventions, S.T.E.P. trainees distributed thousands of printed proclamations signed by such influential Christian leaders as Jerry Falwell, W. A. Criswell, and Bailey Smith making a statement to those at the convention and to the Jewish community at large that real Christians consider the Jews God's Chosen People, now and forever.

S.T.E.P. -- A PROGRAM OPEN TO ANYONE WITH A JEWISH HEART

S.T.E.P. accepts applications from both Jews and gentiles who are believers in Jesus. We ask for a pastor's recommendation, and one other. We will accept applicants for Phase I only, but we

encourage those trainees who we feel qualify to go through the entire two months of the S.T.E.P. experience. We accept applications from those who currently work or hope to work with other mission boards. It is our goal to work together with other groups who would like to provide training for the field, both intensive, in-class instruction as well as extensive, evangelistic experience.

Thank you for the opportunity to share with you about S.T.E.P., ABMJ/Chosen People Ministry's Summer Training and Evangelism Program. And, to answer Dr. Charles Feinberg who said to me, "Why not have a Winter Training and Evangelism Program?" I say, "What kind of word can I make out of W.T.E.P?" After all, you really need a good acronym to run a really effective program.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Barry Rubin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Barry" and last name "Rubin" clearly distinguishable.

Barry Rubin
National Director of Church Ministries
and S.T.E.P. Director
ABMJ/Chosen People Ministries