

**YOUR April 2024**

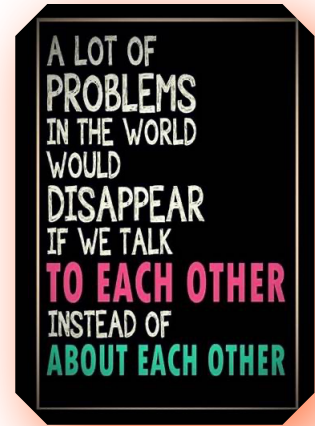
**Apple of His Eye**

**Mission Society Newsletter**

**PRINT EDITION TO SHARE**

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Reminder: New mailing address - PO Box 1649 Brentwood TN 37024



# DISUNITY?

By Steve Cohen

*1 Corinthians 1:10 I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought.*

I have had the privilege of being in over 1800 congregations since I began my ministry in 1976. During that time, I've experienced the good, the bad, and the ugly in the body of Christ. With my background in social studies, I have had a lifelong interest in what motivates people and why they do what they do.

We who are members of the body of Christ have a clear mandate in God's word. I believe that one of the best ways to unify a group is for them to join efforts in a common cause and work together to reach the goal.

For those of you who know me, you know that my personal passion is to reach the world with the gospel with an emphasis of reaching my Jewish people. I also have a passion to urge the church to join in that mission. It is urgent to add intentionality to gospel proclamation among the lost sheep of the House of Israel!

So why is it today that so few people are engaged in bringing this message of hope so desperately needed to those who do not know him? Perhaps if we understood better the causes of disunity within the church, it might help us ferret out the root causes and bring forth a new, refreshing zeal and compassion for those who are facing a Christ-less eternity.

## **Some of the Causes of Disunity in the Church**

### **1) Lack of Communication**

It is hard to think in our world of mass communications social media and personal apps which clog our time and minds that one might experience clouded communication within our churches today. Perhaps we ought to say there is a lack of clear, concise, and effective communication to help inform, equip, and motivate us forward in the mission of the church.

How many emails do you get in a day? How many unsolicited phone calls go to your smartphones? It is almost enough to cause us to build walls against all outside communication just to protect our own sanity. But when we do that, we close ourselves off to the vulnerability and the needs of others to which Christ has called us to care for and share.

## 2) Lack of clear direction

If someone were to ask you what is the mission and vision of your church, what would you say? Can you clearly articulate it in a couple of sentences? Do you agree with it? If not, why not? Without clear direction, a church is bound to be pulled a million different directions by different people within the church (especially the loud people). By making a clear path and direction, or mission, there will be a clear vision and expectation. This vision allows the leadership to acknowledge other members of the church's personal vision and then ask how it aligns with the vision of the church.

## 3) Lack of Expectations

When I was a new believer in Jesus, I was introduced to a book called Dedication and Leadership by Douglas Hyde. He was a leader of the Communist Party in England in the 1940's. He chronicled how he would train new people who wanted to join the party. He gave them some party propaganda newspapers and sent them to a busy street corner to sell them. The expectation was not that they would bring in money but rather that they would be confronted by the public about the party doctrine. These neophytes would then face questions about the party to which they had no competent answer. That created in them a need to receive training to be able to respond with conviction. They were given classroom training and then sent back out to the streets so that they could articulate the answers in their own words. This back-and-forth process would take place over a couple of years, and the result was a highly articulate communicator of the Communist Party doctrine.

Mr. Hyde became a believer in Jesus. He left the Communist Party and joined the church. Upon joining the church, he was immediately put into a class for new believers and catechized in the basics of Christian doctrine. The reward for completing that class was to move on to another class. And finishing that, he was pointed to yet another class. Never once were opportunities provided to take the information that he was learning and go and express it out to the public where he could formalize and articulate these truths in his own words.

So, it is in our churches today! High emphasis on training, verbal lip service on sharing your faith, but no practical means or vehicle for the individual to articulate faith in public settings.

No wonder Christians are fearful of SHARING their faith. They lack practical experience, and specific expectations are never set to have meaningful engagement.

## 4) Lack of Focus on God and His Truth

As followers of Jesus, I believe we are called to maturity and spiritual growth during our days here on earth. Yet with our overly busy schedules, we engage in hyperactivity filling each hour from rising to going to bed. These activities that may indeed be good, but they clog our spiritual senses from focusing on God. We become unplugged from the actual source of God's power - the working of his Holy Spirit in our life.

My wife Nancy has a sign that has impressed me from the early days when we met that reads, "Change of any sort takes great courage." It is hard for us to bring about change in a vacuum, we need to be in community where we can be upholding one another and helping our brothers and sisters who may be struggling in their relationship with God. If you need help, I urge you to reach out to your pastor and ask for help in your life to be restored to your first love of Him.

Being vulnerable before the Lord, confessing our sin, and drawing near to those in your community of faith, are critical for building unity and destroying disunity.

***Perhaps these scriptures might encourage you...***

1 Cor 1:10 I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought.

2 Cor 13:11 Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice! Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you.

Romans 14: 19 Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.

Eph 4:11-13 So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

***Let's focus on eliminating disunity and band together with the body of believers to bring light in this terribly dark world. Shalom! – steve cohen***



# UNITY

*"Then complete my joy by having a common purpose and a common love, by being one in heart and mind."*

*Philippians 2:2 CJB*

*"Be respectful to all - keep loving the brotherhood, fearing God and honoring the emperor." 1 Peter 2:1 CJB*

## **Spoiler Alert! Yeshua did not die for a denomination.**

Aww.... You already knew that didn't you? Yeshua, not man, established the church. Yet we have such a hard time accepting the fact that if a believer goes to a different denomination than the one we attend, he/she just cannot be in sync with us. Really? I remember after the Sandy Hook massacre, someone in the crowd asked a pastor to pray over the situation. He was then harshly rebuked by the head of the denomination he belonged to for praying with other pastors not of the same church denomination. Huh? What? How dishonoring that was to our Savior and God! Some would say that represented ecumenical participation. To that I would respond: you do not understand the Word of God or salvation.

Salvation is by faith, repenting and receiving Yeshua as your Savior. That is it. Not a church representation. Yet, there is an invisible wall we put up when it comes to fellowship with believers of different denominations. Ecumenical is joining force with a cult, sect, or false religion. NOT other believers. In Israel, the Lutherans have little to no fellowship with other Lutherans there. It is ridiculous, but even worse, it is a horrible testimony to the lost. Jewish people have a hard enough time accepting Lutherans as it is, and then to see them bicker with one another, well its tragic.

The church is not a social club. It is not an ethnic body. It is the bride of the Messiah (Christ). I love the unity the churches of Austin, Texas have in reaching the lost. One denomination has no problem in sending new believers or seekers to another denomination if the other church will better meet their spiritual needs. They are multi-cultural. It is not a competition. Our church is growing beyond what many thought would be possible. We have visionary pastors who see beyond blood lines and ethnicity. They see a lost and dying world in need of salvation. They joined in partnership to see Austin saved.

I attended the LCMS convention in St Louis years ago as an exhibitor of Apple of His Eye. Three ladies came to our table and raved about hearing one of our children speak at a woman's meeting in their city. As I rejoiced with them, they then got very quiet and remarked how sad it was that our child had joined the Baptist denomination. They said that they were praying that our child would return to the Lutheran church. Wow, what!?! I told them that we were rejoicing in the choices this child had made and that he/she was an active church member serving full-time in outreach. I then told them to focus their prayers on one of our children who had denied the Savior. I was awakened to the fact that these women were more in tune with an organization than with God's Word. If any of these women eventually enter heaven, they will surely go into shock to be fellowshiping around the throne of God with Baptists, Presbyterians, Methodists, Church of God, Brethren, etc.....

Look at our news. The world is surely under the influence of Satan. We need to unite with other believers and win the lost to Yeshua. The cults are out in force. Where are we?

Here are some prayer requests that every church should have:

## PRAY FOR

- Your pastors and their families (they are under spiritual attack continually)
  - The unity of your congregation
- The unity of your congregation with other congregations
- Your youth (struggling in a world of insane confusion)
  - Your city
  - Our country
- Your involvement in the church

Yeshua, the only begotten son of God, is the foundation on which the church was established, and no evil force can prevail against it. But a house divided against itself cannot stand (the local body).

Yeshua himself established the church (see Matthew 16); He is the rock upon which it was established.

*“Then complete my joy by having a common purpose and a common love, by being one in heart and mind.”*

*Philippians 2:2 CJB*

We cannot walk closely with God without fellowship with other believers. That is why Sunday assembly in our congregations is essential. As a former foreign missionary in Russia, we had no church to attend. We were the church in this godless country. We were amid baby believers and seekers. As we established our churches (we planted two churches), we had fellowship, but in the beginning it was lonely. In a city of 11 million, there were five missionary couples doing the work of evangelizing and establishing churches. We were five couples of different denominations and all of us, ALL of us, had been instructed by our sending denominations to not fellowship with unlike denominations. Uh, guess what, we all ignored that directive. We needed each other. It was a communistic desert, void of God in any manner. The orthodox church was dead except for a handful of struggling starving priests with no buildings (churches buildings had been turned into ammo warehouses or motor pools). We brave few who came on God's call to the former Soviet Union, met every 3-4 weeks for prayer and private fellowship. How sad that the church leadership did not understand who established the church! Unity was a necessity, and those times we spent together were a god send.

*“Not neglecting our own congregational meetings, as some have made a practice of doing, but, rather, encouraging each other.*

*And let us do this all the more as you see the Day approaching.” Hebrews 10:25 CKB*

\*Why should believers assemble together as a church?

1. To worship. When we gather, we praise God in song, giving thanks. Worshiping lifts our spirits and strengthens our souls. Our songs should be full of theological truths that educate and encourage us about our blessings in Yeshua.
2. To learn the word of God. In church we can learn from those with biblical training or deep spiritual maturity. Always check your teaching against the whole counsel of Scripture. We are living in a time when people do not want to listen to sound doctrine, they prefer to have “their ears tickled” – that is, to hear only what sounds good to them (2 Timothy 4:3).
3. To fulfill the great commission. Most of us cannot move to Russia or other foreign countries. But as a body, we can send missionaries to far-off places. We support them through prayer, letters or email and financial support. Together we fulfill the command to take the good news to the nations (Matthew 28:18-20)
4. To protect themselves. When one stops attending church, it is almost inevitable that he or



she will begin to drift away from God. Hearing Scripture truth weekly helps hold believers accountable to high moral, ethical and spiritual standards. Otherwise, the world's messages will tend to distract us from the voice of God.

5. To exercise spiritual gifts. Our supernatural blessings such as administration, prophecy, and mercy are to be used “for the common good” in the body of Christ. (1 Corinthians 12:7).
6. To develop an atmosphere of support. The New Testament is full of advice concerning how we relate to others. As believers, we are told to love, forgive, accept, encourage, and serve one another. Also, we should be patient and always seek to comfort, inspire, and fellowship with other believers. And lastly, Scripture calls on us to confess our sins one to another (James 5:16). Working together believers are able to accomplish God's will. No pastor is able to reach everyone.
7. To strengthen and broaden the Christian impact. When believers are united in a local fellowship, the influence of that church is greatly multiplied. Together a church can raise funds for local ministries, missions, and develop effective ways to reach the communities. God works powerfully through churches where each person believes he or she is making a valuable contribution to the work of the ministry. In God's eyes, all believers are equally important and loved.

*\*copied*

*“And now, brothers, shalom! Put yourselves in order, pay attention to my advice, be of one mind, live in shalom — and the God of love and shalom will be with you.”*

*2Corinthians 13:11 CJB*

Love, from my heart, nanC

(If this article has blessed you – share it)



**Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked? Declares the Sovereign LORD. Rather, am I not pleased when they turn from their ways and live? (Ezekiel 18:23 ESV).**

Last month, I had the privilege of leading a Christ in the Passover at St. James Lutheran Church in Baltimore, MD. The saints gathered there were very welcoming and asked great questions as we enjoyed the experience and learned together! I am still new to leading these events, but each time I lead them, I find something new and exciting in the story of God's grace and how it points us to the love of God in Yeshua. But something new stood out to me in a powerful way. If you've ever done a Passover Seder before, you know that there is a part of the ceremony where you remove a drop of wine for each of the Ten Plagues in grief over the death and suffering of the Egyptians. One person at the seder in Baltimore commented, "Even our salvation has a note of somberness to it because there is sorrow over all who are not also saved."

The service phrases it this way: "As we rejoice at our deliverance from slavery, we acknowledge that our freedom was hard-earned. We regret that our freedom came at the cost of the Egyptians' suffering, for we are all human beings made in the image of God." And later when discussing the drowning of Pharaoh's chariots it says, "The angels then sang God's praises. But He [God] rebuked them, 'The work of my hands, the creatures to whom I gave life, are drowned. When I weep because they are dead, do you sing praises to Me who slew them?'"(Sanhedrin 39b). God does not take pleasure in anyone dying in their sin, He delights when people come to know the gift of Eternal life and forgiveness in Yeshua.

As we celebrate the Passover and how Jesus has fulfilled it, may our celebration of the Passover also become an encouragement to us to pray for the salvation of all, to pray even for our enemies that they too may come to know the salvation of God, and to seek ways to share the hope and love of Yeshua with those God places in our lives.

So, as you celebrate the Easter season and Passover take time to:

0. Pray for all those who do not yet know the Gospel of Yeshua that the Lord would send people to share this hope for them. And, as hard as it is, pray also for those who persecute the Church, that they would have an encounter with the Lord like St. Paul on the road to Damascus.
0. If you have the opportunity to enjoy a Passover Seder at church or with Jewish friends, take the opportunity to prayerfully see what stands out to you and feel free to ask questions about how the Exodus account applies to your life of faith today. God's Word is always relevant! And questions are always a great way of learning together.
0. Remember that the greatest joy of heaven will be seeing our Lord face to face. But, the second great joy of heaven will be celebrating with all those who have been saved by our Lord Jesus Christ. May that truth spur us on to sharing the hope that we have with others and inviting people to "come and see" all that our Lord has done for their salvation.

Yours in Yeshua,  
Pastor Jordan Peiser  
Jordan.peiser@appleofhiseye.org

Prayer requests and upcoming travel:

- That I would have continued creativity and zeal in my mission with the Apple of His Eye and as a pastor.
- That the Lord would guide discussions and planning on building a team to work with me here in Northern New Jersey.
- Safe travel as I go to speak at Redeemer in Elmhurst, IL, to speak at Good Shepherd in Lincoln, NE, and to the LCJE Conference in Denver.

# How long, Oh Lord?

By Steve Cohen

Micah 4:1

It shall come to pass in the latter days  
that the mountain of the house of the LORD  
shall be established as the highest of the mountains,  
and it shall be lifted up above the hills;

and peoples shall flow to it,

<sup>2</sup> and many nations shall come, and say:

“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,  
to the house of the God of Jacob,  
that he may teach us his ways  
and that we may walk in his paths.”

For out of Zion shall go forth the law,  
and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

<sup>3</sup> He shall judge between many peoples,  
and shall decide disputes for strong nations far away;

**and they shall beat their swords into plowshares,  
and their spears into pruning hooks;**

nation shall not lift up sword against nation,  
neither shall they learn war anymore;

<sup>4</sup> but they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree,  
and no one shall make them afraid,

for the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken. ESV

We who follow Jesus have a promise and a future hope – that the ways of this world will fall. We are bombarded by the news these days about wars, rumors of wars, hostages and rampant anti- Semitism – can we even dare to imagine a time of peace and hope?

It is in the dark days such as these that we must cling to the promises of God, find shelter under His protective wing, and pray, pray some more AND keep on praying.

*I believe there is no better time to bring the Gospel  
to the lost than right now!*



## Please pray with us:

1. For peace in Israel that the Prince of Peace would reign in the hearts of all there. The escalation of hostilities in the Middle East is fraught with danger.
2. For the pastors, who serve us, that they might be encouraged in their service.
3. For Jordan Peiser's ministry in New Jersey.
4. For those who serve in our military especially those being sent to the Middle East.

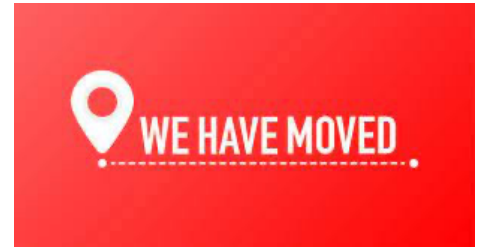


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[www.appleofhiseye.org](http://www.appleofhiseye.org)



Hag Sameach - a blessed holiday season  
to you. Passover this year begins at sun-  
down on Monday, April 22nd and runs  
for eight days.