

# CANADIAN *Communique*

FOI Gospel Ministry, Inc. Vol. 13.2 Fall 2015





# A NOTE FROM STEVE

Shortly after being appointed director of FOI Canada in April, I read an article titled “Canada, Tomorrow’s Superpower.” The author, Noah Smith ([nsmith150@bloomberg.net](mailto:nsmith150@bloomberg.net)), gave three reasons for his thesis: natural resources; a tolerant culture; and good government. Smith’s article helped me segue my thinking to FOI’s ministry in Canada.

Larry Mitchell, our Calgary representative, uses the beauty of the Canadian Rockies to showcase God’s creation. A typical excursion takes a few hours. Included in that time is an hour trip up to the mountains and an hour back. All during that time, Larry maintains a conversation with the young people who go with him. In this unique ministry opportunity

he introduces them to the beauty of the Rockies while God opens doors to share spiritual truth.

As you read about Larry’s ministry, notice how natural his conversation is and how easily he moves it to spiritual matters. Notice, too, how his ministry blends in so well with our mission statement: We are “a worldwide Christian ministry communicating biblical truth about Israel and the Messiah while fostering solidarity with the Jewish people.”

We are pleased to announce the appointment of John Plantz to our ministry team. We actually are welcoming him back to our ministry since he served with us in Canada for 17 years. He left and started his own work where he built relationships

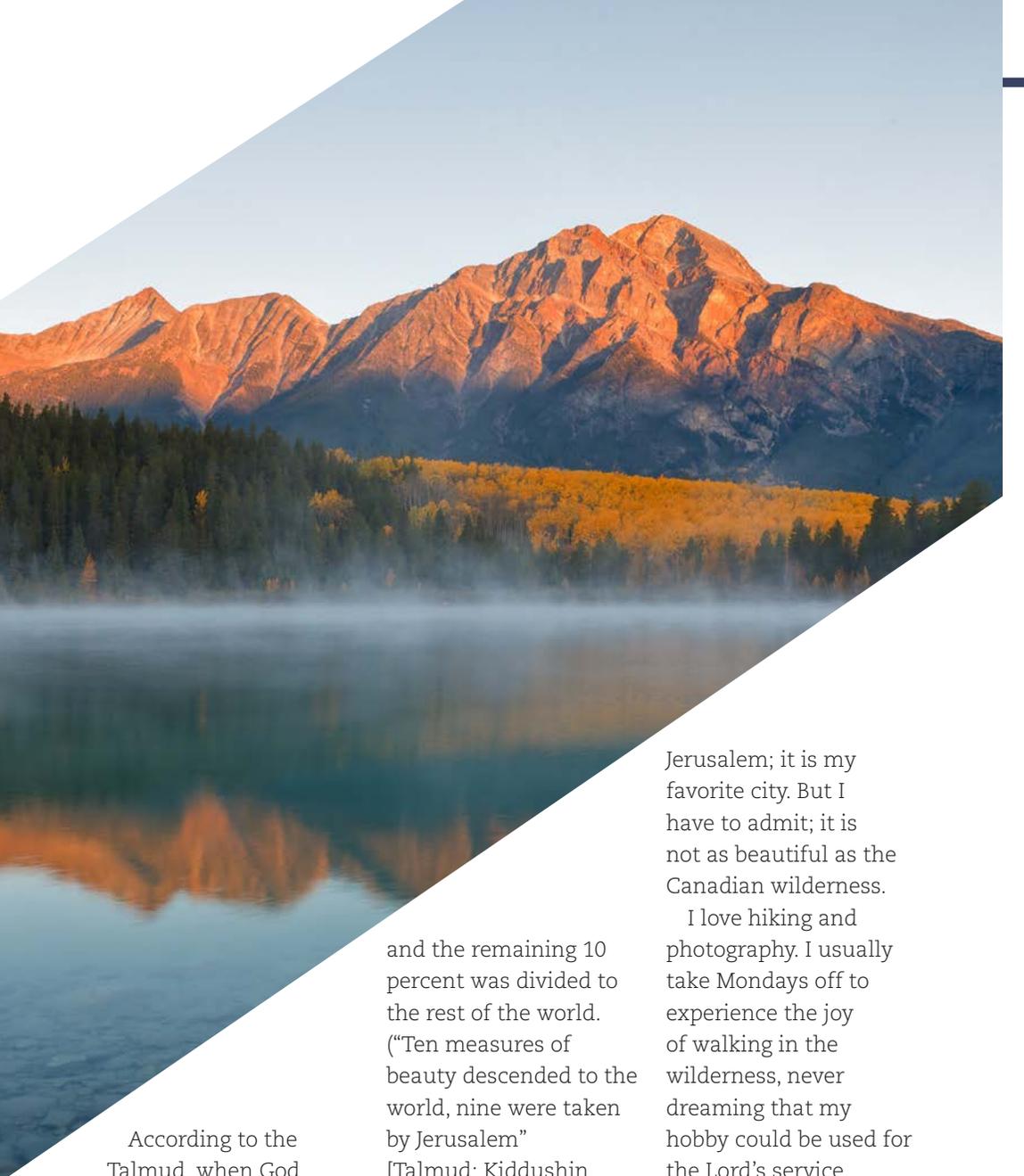


with the Winnipeg Jewish community. He also established great friendships with national Jewish organizations, demonstrating great Christian solidarity with them. John is a gifted speaker and singer. He frequently travels to sing and preach at Bluegrass music festivals.

I am pleased to offer you a free copy of *The Search*, by Lorna Simcox, a Jewish believer and editor-in-chief of *Israel My Glory*. The book is available in English or French. Just fill out and return the tear-off provided on this *Communiqué*.



Steve Herzig is the North American Ministries Director of FOI Gospel Ministry.



According to the Talmud, when God ascribed beauty to the earth, He gave 90 percent of the earth's beauty to Jerusalem,

and the remaining 10 percent was divided to the rest of the world. ("Ten measures of beauty descended to the world, nine were taken by Jerusalem" [Talmud: Kiddushin 49b]). But the ancient rabbis did not know about the Canadian Rockies! I love

Jerusalem; it is my favorite city. But I have to admit; it is not as beautiful as the Canadian wilderness.

I love hiking and photography. I usually take Mondays off to experience the joy of walking in the wilderness, never dreaming that my hobby could be used for the Lord's service.

Six years ago a large mall opened just a few minutes from our home. Wandering through

# HIKING FOR THE LORD

BY LARRY MITCHELL

the mall shortly after it opened, I discovered a store selling Dead Sea products. The staff were all Israeli. When they asked if I knew about their products I shared how I had been to the Dead Sea on my last visit to Israel. I asked the vendor if she had visited the Rocky Mountains yet. She replied she had not but hoped to see them up close before she went home to Israel. I told her that I normally traveled to the mountains every week, and offered to take her out on a hike someday.

A short time later, my wife, daughter, and I took three young Israeli women out to the mountains. Our young guests talked about wanting to find husbands. They said most of their male friends were real creeps, and wondered if they should look for a cowboy to marry, for it seemed to them that all the cowboys in Western movies

were real gentlemen. We were approaching the city of Cochrane, which is famous for being a cowboy town. I told them there was a cowboy often spotted along the highway, but I warned them he had a heart of stone. A few minutes later we passed Cochrane's statue of a cowboy, and I told them, "There he is, but he has a heart of stone."



We traveled to Grotto Canyon Hiking Trail. One of our new friends found a natural heart-shaped rock, which she kept. "I know why you can't find a husband," I teased. "You have a heart of stone. If Moses were here, he

would tell you that you need to circumcise your heart of stone: 'Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no longer' (Dt. 10:16)." We had a good laugh, but it did open the door to share of the need to have our hearts cleaned by the Lord. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked;

who can know it?" (Jer. 17:9).

That hike was the beginning of friendship that continues until this day. It was the first of many hiking trips I have shared with Israelis.

My prayer and my heart's desire for these three women is that they all will be part of the believing remnant.



There is a surprising openness with my hiking guests. One asked, “Larry have you ever dreamed about God?” I told her I have dreamed of Him. “Well I have a recurrent dream about Him. Could you interpret the dream for me?” she continued.

I replied “I am not Daniel nor Joseph, so I do not have gift of interpreting dreams.” That response did not satisfy her. She decided to tell me her dream anyway! “I dream I am in heaven, looking down upon Israel. There are fires, wars, and all sorts of bad things happening there. I plead with the Lord, asking Him to let me go back to help my people, they need my help. He replies, ‘You

cannot go back, you are in a better place now.’ What does that dream mean?” We were on a six-hour hike.

Most of that time was spent talking about the Rapture, the Tribulation period, heaven, and the Messiah. She was not the least bit offended by my explanation.

Another asked, “So Larry do you think the Messiah is coming soon?” That turned into a three-hour discussion about the First and Second Coming of Jesus.

One young Israeli lady has asked if she and a friend could come and stay a week with us before they go back to Israel. We will be opening our home to them in about a month’s time. We will

be taking them out to the mountains, but more importantly, as the Spirit leads, we will be sharing the Messiah with them.

I am planning to take a Muslim man from Tunisia to the mountains after Ramadan. He also works at a kiosk in the mall. He has shared how current world events frighten him. I have been able to talk to him about the last days, and the return of the Messiah. He seems to be as open to discussing the Bible as my Jewish friends. Please pray for our hiking ministry.

Larry Mitchell is the Calgary, Alberta field representative for FOI Gospel Ministries.



# HAPPENINGS

**The Friends of Israel is excited to welcome back John Plantz!**

John was born in Winnipeg, MB, in the small town of Camper, formerly a Jewish farming community. His exposure to the Bible and Christianity growing up was limited to attending Silver Bay Bible Camp every summer for 12 years. During his teen years John's best friends died in an accident. He struggled with the meaning of life. It seemed that life was meaningless with no plan, no purpose, no reason for being here.

After hearing the good news of the gospel several times, on December 14, 1976 he attended the evening service at Grace Kildoan Baptist Church, Winnipeg, to see the film *Time to Run*. He identified with the person in the film running away from God but in the end receiving Jesus Christ into his life. John realized he was just like that person and finally accepted Christ as his Lord and Savior.

John graduated from Bible college with a love for the Scriptures and the Jewish people. He knew God was calling him to teach about the Messiah and Israel while fostering solidarity with the Jewish people. For nearly 18 years he served faithfully with FOI Canada. In 2007 he began Yeshua Ministries.

His ministry to the Jewish people has expanded over the years. He is on the board of the Canadian Magen David Adom; works with Jewish National Fund to promote tree planting in Israel and has been

influential in planting more than 1,000 trees in Yitar; received the Shem Tov (Good Name) award at the Sharey Zedek Synagogue for his work in their library. Through all of these things John maintains a wonderful testimony as a believer in Jesus and, when asked, communicates in a loving, tactful way.

On September 1, 2015, John came back to work with FOI Gospel Ministry, Inc. (Canada). He will maintain all his activities and outreaches, including a wonderful pulpit ministry throughout Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, and Northern Ontario, and in Montréal, Québec. He demonstrates Passover seders and many of the other feasts with unsaved Jewish people, as well as Jewish and Gentile believers.

John and his wife, Irene, sing Gospel Bluegrass music at festivals with crowds up to 5,000 people.

We praise God for bringing John and Irene back to FOI in Canada. The late Christian Holocaust survivor Corrie ten Boom once said, "Every experience God gives us, every person He puts in our lives is the perfect preparation for the future that only He can see." We know what John has learned throughout these years is going to be used mightily in Jesus' name. If you desire a blessing at your church please contact the Canadian office in Brampton, ON 888-664-2584.



# FOI Gospel Ministry, Inc.

PO Box 428 STN A, Brampton, ON L6V 2L4



In August, Executive Director Jim Showers and Director Steve Herzig presented long-time FOI Gospel Ministry Board of Directors member Ruth McAlpine a plaque congratulating her on her retirement and for her faithful service.

*FOI Gospel Ministry, Inc. is authorized by CCRA to issue official donation receipts.*

**FOI GOSPEL MINISTRY, INC.**

P.O. BOX 428 STN A, BRAMPTON, ON L6V 2L4

OFFICE 888-664-2584 • 905-457-6830 • FAX: 905-457-6547

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