

Bethel Mission History

The American-European Bethel Mission, Inc., formerly The Bethel Mission of Eastern Europe, was founded by Rev. and Mrs. Leon Rosenberg. ts Gospel activities in the USA began in the late 1930's and following World War II expanded anew into Europe and the newly established state of Israel. This mission was originally incorporated in the state of Minnesota and, in 1945, was moved to and incorporated in the state of California. It is governed by an active Board of Directors. Pastor Rosenberg's missionary activity and ministry began in 1899, shortly after his conversion, completion of seminary studies and ordination in Hamburg, Germany. At that time Rev. Rosenberg was commissioned by the British Mildmay Mission to go to Odessa in South Russia to serve as a pastor-missionary among the Jewish population there. The work in which the Rosenbergs were engaged resulted, by the grace of God, in winning precious Jewish souls, old and young, to their promised Messiah and Savior. It also established Hebrew-Christian congregations and, of necessity, educational institutions because public Jewish schools would not accept Hebrew-Christian children and the Gentile schools would not accept Jewish children. This ministry lasted until 1922, when the Rosenbergs were forced to leave Russia.

After leaving Odessa, Leon and Fanny Rosenberg settled in Germany and began a new ministry in the city of Frankfurt/Main, which had a large Jewish population. A group called "Friends of Israel" (not to be confused with the USA organization of the same name) formed the core of this ministry. As well as holding regular meetings, Pastor Rosenberg gave public lectures. Two of these lectures, "Evangelical Christianity and the Jewish Question" and "The Essence of Redemption" were translated into English and are all still available. In 1927, the Rosenbergs obeyed the "Macedonian Call" from Lodz, Poland, resulting in the formation of the Bethel Mission of Poland. Later the name was changed to Bethel Mission of Eastern Europe. The Lord blessed this ministry among the orthodox Jews. It grew, and in time, blossomed into a large Hebrew-Christian congregation and children's home.

Between 1899 and 1967, when the Lord called Pastor Rosenberg home, his Gospel work experienced the restraints of Tzarism, the cruelties of Communism, imprisonment with a death sentence, as well as the horrors of Nazism. The Lord's promise: "He shall deliver thee in six troubles; yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee" (Job 5:19) was literally fulfilled in the lives of the Rosenbergs. Three times the work was destroyed by the godless: first in Odessa, Russia, by the Communists; the second time in Lodz, Poland, by the Nazis; and finally, after World War II, again by the Communists who closed the reestablished work in Poland. Great were the losses. Children and adults, missionaries and lay believers, close relatives and friends became victims of the inhumane atrocities. This forced the Rosenbergs to stop their work in Eastern Europe. Soon a new door opened for them to resume their service in the Lord's vineyard in America, and to expand it into Israel. The Lord made it possible to establish in the United States The American-European Bethel Mission, Inc., which, by bringing a thoroughly evangelistic and fundamental testimony, has now enjoyed the Lord's most tangible blessings for several decades.