

2023: Year in Review

By PAUL J. SCHARF

Church Ministries, Preaching and Teaching

Speaking opportunities (by messages)

Total – 169

Sunday services – 72

Midweek services – 3

Maundy Thursday – 1

Men's breakfasts – 2

FOI Prophecy Up Close – 3

FOI Proclaim Conference – 2

FOI Look Up Virtual Conference – 1

FOI Equip – 2

FOI Chapel – 1

IFCA Regionals – 4

Conference reports – 4

Bible study groups – 40

Prophecy conference – 3

Pastors' conference – 4

Pastors' video calls – 2

Radio interviews – 14

Radio spots – 3

Zoom meetings – 4

SermonAudio.com Daily United Prayer – 4

Ministries in church services (by days)

Total – 53

Sundays – 44
Midweek – 3
Holidays – 1
Church conferences – 5

Churches in which we ministered (by states)

Total – 37

Wisconsin – 22
Indiana – 3
Missouri – 3
Texas – 3
Illinois – 2
Iowa – 2
Kansas – 1
Wyoming – 1

Cumulatively, through five years with FOI, I have spoken in 14 different states, and I have been to seven other states for additional types of ministry.

I did five presentations on **Passover** for three churches and two Bible study groups.

I did five presentations on **Hanukkah** for two churches and one radio interview.

I exhibited at 13 **conferences** –

Chafer Theological Seminary Pastors' Conference (Houston, TX)
Conference on the Church for God's Glory (Rockford, IL)
IFCA International Annual Convention (Covington, KY)
IFCA Greater St. Louis Regional (St. Charles, MO)
IFCA Heart of America Regional (Kansas City, MO)
IFCA Wisconsin Regionals (Green Bay and Sheboygan*, WI)
Northern Plains Independent Baptist Fellowship (Cheyenne, WY)

Refresh Conference—Faith Baptist Bible College and Theological Seminary
(Ankeny, IA)

Shepherds 360 Church Leaders Conference—Shepherds Theological Seminary
(Cary, NC)

The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry Prophecy Up Close Conference
(Wausau, WI)

Wisconsin Fellowship of Baptist Churches Annual Meeting (Holmen, WI)*

Wisconsin State Youth Conference (Watertown, WI)

*No formal exhibit—I distributed literature and gave a report from the pulpit.

In addition, I was privileged to speak for FOI's Look Up Virtual Conference, as well as FOI's nationwide PROCLAIM Conference in Winona Lake, IN.

I also took part in FOI's Christian Leaders Encounter tour, and Lynnette and I participated in the FOI Staff Conference at Sandy Cove Conference Center.

Media Outreach

I wrote one **blog article** for FOI.org.

I wrote 44 additional **columns**. (Five of these involved reposting material previously published by *Israel My Glory* and *Voice* magazines.)

In total, 45 articles (all 44 columns and my FOI blog) ran on SharperIron.org. A total of 37 articles ran on RaptureReady.com.

I wrote an article that was published in the January-February issue of *Israel My Glory*.

I wrote an article that was published in the Fall issue of Baptist Bulletin.

I wrote an article that was published in the May-June issue of *Voice Magazine*.

When my trip to Israel was canceled in October, I used part of my extra time to begin the practice of hosting Monday night Zoom calls. I ended up doing four of these, on the themes of the Reformation, Israel in prophecy, the Thanksgiving Pilgrims and Hanukkah.

I had 15,807 downloads on **SermonAudio.com/pscharf**. These reached all 50 states (and Washington, D.C.) and 81 foreign countries.

SermonAudio's ChurchOne App continues to be another means by which people can access our latest content on their phones and mobile devices.

It was a privilege to continue in the rotation of speakers for SermonAudio.com's online Daily United Prayer meetings. SermonAudio also ran my one-minute Christmas devotionals on its online radio stream—which was indeed a great honor.

I am also very appreciative of Bruce Munsterman and the KHCB Christian Radio Network in Houston. Bruce and his team interview me every time I visit the area. They, along with the VCY America Radio Network, also played my one-minute radio spots for the holiday season. Credit goes to KWYG—"Wyoming Gospel Radio"—in this same regard, as well. I am most thankful for all of them!

I certainly want to thank Q90 FM—"Christian Truth Radio"—in Green Bay, Wisconsin, which also aired my one-minute spots. Additionally, they began interviewing me on their nationally known podcast, "Stand Up For The Truth," during the past year.

Last but not least, I am deeply grateful to Dr. Jimmy DeYoung, Jr., for all that he does for me as a broadcast partner at ProphecyToday.com—playing my sermons on the Live Streaming Radio Station, and interviewing me for the "Prophecy Today Weekend" and "Prophecy Today Daily" programs.

Communication

We purposely began to move away from some hard copy letters this past year, as we are increasingly relying upon our emails to communicate with our constituency. We still ended up sending many letters to churches and supporting individuals in 2023, however. At the end of the year, our mailing list consisted of:

- 15 supporting churches in five states;
- 142 non-supporting churches, with which we have a direct connection, in 18 states;
- and 85 individuals (in nine states) who have supported our ministry.

With the ongoing help of a faithful, expert volunteer, we sent 48 regular editions, and five special editions, of our weekly e-newsletter—the "**Weekly News Update.**" At the end of December, we were sending it to 969 subscribers.

I produce a "**Weekly Prayer Update**" each Wednesday morning, which I currently send to 16 churches and two families, as well as posting it on Facebook and SermonAudio. I am also sending a special edition of it to a new prayer team we are developing for the new year.

Final Thoughts and Future Goals

We praise the Lord for helping us through a very eventful year in 2023.

Sometimes it was a challenge just to know what time zone I was in! I traveled out-of-state in every month except December. Numerous FOI-sponsored conferences and events were some of the main things that kept us very much on the go. As you can see above, we also traveled to numerous other conferences to represent The Friends of Israel.

In March, Lynnette went through an unplanned and unexpected hernia surgery, followed by a period of recovery. She handled it all extremely well, but extra rest was essential. Still, she persisted and went with me on many local trips, as well as two longer ones during the summer—and faithfully supplied special music in our services, much to the delight of the congregations we visited.

The big thing that we need to work on going forward is to establish a stronger and wider base of financial support—right from the beginning of the year. We praise the Lord for so many who have given faithfully—even sacrificially—to make this ministry possible. It is truly humbling when we stop and think about it. Yet, the opportunities before us are limited only by time and resources. And, as everyone knows, the costs of travel and related expenses just keep going up.

Although we did not make much progress on this in 2023, it remains our desire to focus on expanding our outreach through media and technology—increasing our offerings and upgrading their quality.

As referenced above, I was able to record eight one-minute devotional spots for Christian radio last year. I went beyond what I had accomplished before in that this year I added one for Reformation Day and one for Thanksgiving, in addition to five for Christmas and one for the New Year. Our desire is to continue to build on this effort and take advantage of all opportunities to magnify the ministry by means of Christian radio and other technologies.

Certainly, we aspire to wisely multiply the effectiveness of our ministry. Yet, more and more, the Lord is challenging me to dig deeper, as well. In particular, I have a strong desire to continue my education by enrolling in a doctoral program. My goal is to produce a dissertation that will help to define my ministry for years to come. Of course, this will also require increased support.

Would you please pray with us, and for us, in light of these goals that I have outlined above? Your participation—your interest and involvement—in this ministry are vital to its success.

We praise the Lord for His many undeserved blessings in our lives, not the least of which is this opportunity to serve Him in these last days by representing The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry.

***We want to share our deepest appreciation
for everyone who has supported our ministry
through prayer and financial giving in 2023.
You play a pivotal role in this ministry!
We could not continue apart from the contribution you make
to this great work. May God richly bless you for it!***

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