

Panel on the LCWE Movement
Contribution by Susan Perlman

Enjoying being part of the Lausanne Movement since 1980.

While Tuvya was one of the few Jewish believers representing our movement at the historic 1974 Lausanne Congress, I guess I'm the longest standing person in our LCJE network who has had a contiguous connection for over thirty years. I was at COWE in Pattaya and served on the LCWE's main body from the early eighties. I was part of the leadership of Singapore 87, the first younger leaders meeting of Lausanne and so on. In some ways that has given me a great span of time to reflect on how much I have enjoyed being part of the Lausanne Movement.

My enjoyment has been both personal in the many rich relationships I enjoy to this day and professional in what I've seen by way of the exposure our movement has had to the larger body of Messiah and the exposure the larger body has had to us. I remember with great joy an early meeting of LCWE held in Stuttgart. We were singing a hymn. Leighton Ford, then chair of LCWE was presiding. Menachem Ben Hayim was on the committee at that time and he brought Chaya with him. She was moved by the music and with her castanets she made her way to the front and started dancing with Leighton. Leighton was beside himself. This was a new cultural experience for LCWE that I thoroughly enjoyed!

Likewise, another year I remember our sister Judy Pex, who succeeded Menachem on the LCWE representing Israel, reading a passage of Scripture in Hebrew before the entire body. This was just before the Bible reading that was given by Union Seminary president Saphir Aattayal of India. I think of how Yacov Damkani as a firebrand young Israeli evangelist in 1987 out there among all these other up and coming younger leaders from around the world meeting in Singapore, leaders like Ajith Fernando of Sri Lanka and Peter Kuzmic of Croatia and I smile. I remember the great privilege of giving my own testimony in Manila at the second world congress of Lausanne from the morning plenary on the day that Ulrich Parzanny spoke on the uniqueness of Christ. You see, in each of these examples and many many more, the larger body of

Messiah who did not often have direct connection with Jewish believers were faced with the reality that Jewish evangelism is part of God's bigger picture. That the cooperation, which is the hallmark of the Lausanne Movement, is impossible without the inclusion of Jewish workers in the field. That a passion for the lost is incomplete without our Jewish people among those who need to be reached. I enjoy Lausanne because we are very much a part of this diverse group of people with a single focus – the whole church taking the whole gospel to the whole world.

My enjoyment, however, is not merely a sweet sentimental look back over the past decades. There is so much to say about why I enjoy *today's* LCWE Movement. Lausanne embraces individuals and agencies and churches with a wide range of theological positions. We agree to disagree — even on some issues that are very close to our heart, because we believe that the cause of Christ is better served by us working together. I enjoy the fact that Jewish evangelism cannot be ignored or discounted by our presence, but I also enjoy the reality that our involvement in Lausanne forces us to grow in our own graciousness in recognizing that others who while recognizing the need for everyone to hear, do not make this their number one priority.

Yet I look at today's Lausanne leadership and I am more encouraged than ever before that we have made a difference. The current chair of Lausanne, Dr. Doug Birdsall, has not only been a champion of Jewish Evangelism in word, but in print. He has put his name (and in so doing the name of LCWE) to the full-page position paper on the Gospel and the Jewish People which appeared in prominent publications around the world. Doug would have been here at High Leigh in person if it weren't a matter of health concerns. Chris Wright, chair of the Theology Working Group of Lausanne has done a masterful job in the Cape Town Commitment to make a stronger case for our cause than ever before. Paul Eschelman, chair of the Strategy Working Group, has painstakingly sought data on the need of Jewish evangelism around the world and recognizes the importance of our movement in the bigger picture of world missions. I recently watched the documentary Lausanne has put out on the Cape Town meetings and enjoyed the clip they included of our own Dan Sered.

I leave you with two thoughts. Perhaps more than two thirds of those who are part of the Lausanne family have no exposure to Jewish Evangelism in their day in day out work apart from us. That is a fantastic opportunity God has provided for our field and for the enrichment of the larger body. Secondly, many of us have not had the blessing of fellowship with brothers and sisters who come from very disparate traditions from ours however that has become possible in Lausanne. We can be less myopic by allowing what God is doing in other fields into our vision.

The key to enjoying one another in Lausanne is believing the best of one another. Paul put it this way: "Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves."
It would do us all well to heed Paul's words.