

Welcome to LCJE at High Leigh 2011

Kai Kjær-Hansen, International Coordinator of LCJE

Dear sisters and brothers in Messiah Jesus.

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you to the Ninth International LCJE Conference. I do it in *the name of Jesus* – with all which that involves. Welcome to you who have participated in earlier international LCJE conferences, and welcome to you who take part in one for the first time. Welcome to be part of the LCJE family for five days. A family where we may have different views of many things in the way of theology, missiology and eschatology. But there is one thing we agree about and do not question, namely that Jews need the Jew Jesus for salvation. Just as everybody else needs Jesus for salvation – ourselves included.

And welcome to the High Leigh Conference Centre. At this venue much has been said about Jewish mission over the years. We are reminded of this through a photo on a wall in one of the halls, a group picture from 1931, when the International Hebrew Christian Alliance (IHCA) held its Third International Hebrew Christian Conference here at High Leigh, July 17-24, 1931.

The front of High Leigh's main building is the same as then, but indoors some changes have been made. The prices have gone up considerably, to be sure. One young conference participant wrote to me that he assumed that with these prices, they would serve caviar for breakfast! I cannot promise that. The way of travelling from London was the same as it is today, namely train from Liverpool Street Station to Broxbourne, although I have not dared to promise in the travel information that the journey would only take "twenty-eight minutes ... by fast trains," as they said then.

High Leigh has been of great importance – not least for the London Jews Society, now the Church's Ministry Among Jewish People (CMJ). The annual "Summer Schools" in August or September have provided CMJ's friends opportunities to meet the Home Board, missionaries on leave, veterans and recruits (although the first "Summer School" was held in 1910 at The Hayes in Swanwick, Derbyshire). But it is interesting that today The Christian Conference Trust operates The Hayes Conference Centre as well as High Leigh Conference Centre. Some decades later the "Summer School" was moved to High Leigh. About 1960 the name of the week-long meeting was changed to "Summer Houseparty".

When we made the program for the LCJE conference this year we had in mind, and were inspired by, CMJ's annual "Summer Schools" in past years. This is also the case with Wednesday's afternoon off when we arrange "The High Leigh Games" – with games and sports activities. This will also give those who were not understood or heard in a discussion or conversation an opportunity to take their revenge – and then to continue the conversation!

In the *CMJ News* (October-November 1963) it was said about the recently held "Summer Houseparty": "Once again 'High Leigh' has been one of the 'high spots' in the C.M.J. year." I wish to God that LCJE High Leigh 2011 may be one of the "high spots" in LCJE's history.

At our opening session here at High Leigh both CMJ and Sir Leon Levison have a word for us. Sir Leon was President of the International Hebrew Christian Alliance and leader of the Alliance's Third International Conference at High Leigh in 1931.

Fred Levison, Sir Leon's second son, writes the following in his biography about his father:

Regarding the place in organised Christianity of the creeds, the sacraments, and the Bible, Leon never departed from his conviction that
"The Church's one foundation
is Jesus Christ her Lord".

I need hardly mention with which hymn we will begin LCJE High Leigh 2011: of course, *The Church's One Foundation*.

Mission to the honour and praise of God

The main theme for our conference is "Mission and Jewish Evangelism – Always and Everywhere". The programme was made before the Lausanne Movement's third congress, in Cape Town, October 2010, but when we made it we also intended to bring inspiration from *Lausanne III* to *LCJE IX*. It would be unnatural not to do so since LCJE is a part of the Lausanne Movement.

In Cape Town it was emphasized again and again that mission is God's mission. *Mission dei*. By God's love and grace we are involved in it. *Mission accomplished* belongs to the world to come. Something is at stake, for ourselves and others.

But something is also at stake for God, namely God's and Jesus' honour. This is underscored in *The Cape Town Commitment*. The question *why* we should let ourselves be involved in God's mission is answered with the following thought-provoking sentences in one of the papers at the congress:

*Not because it is our duty,
though it is.*

*Not because it will bring eternal life to many,
though it will.*

*Not because it will improve the living conditions of the poor,
though it will.*

*Not because it will improve stability in the world's institutions,
though it will.*

*Not because it will improve environmental stewardship,
though it will.*

*Not because we will be rewarded,
though we will.*

*We should disciple the nations because Jesus is worthy to receive their honor, glory
and praise.*

And we can add that when this is true of “the nations”, how much more is it not true of Israel, God’s own chosen people?

So why are we involved in Jewish evangelism? Because Jesus is worthy to receive honor, glory and praise from his own people, the Jewish people.

Prior to Cape Town 2010 the ageing and weakened Billy Graham sent the following greeting to the participants in *Lausanne III*: “Keep evangelism at the center. Make Christ your focus. Base everything on Scripture. And pray, pray, pray.” Indeed, God give that we at *LCJE IX* – and in everything we do in the LCJE context may keep evangelism at the centre, make Christ our focus, base everything on Scripture and not forget the prayer.

So now it is time to bring LCJE High Leigh to the Lord in prayer. Even here we will let Leon Levison decide the *way* in which we do it. In the report from the opening meeting at IHCA’s conference in 1931 it is said: “Sir Leon Levison, presided over a crowded gathering that sang ‘O God of Bethel’ with great feeling. Then followed silent prayer and audible prayer, led by Rev. Samuel Schor.”

We will now take some time for silent prayer. And then I have asked two people to pray aloud on everybody’s behalf.

We are involved in Jewish evangelism, I said, because Jesus is worthy to receive honour, glory and praise from his own people, the Jewish people. Now we will praise him. The next item on the programme is “Songs of praise”, which will be led by Ann Hilsden, Music Director in King of Kings Community, Jerusalem, and international committee member of LCJE.

Kai Kjør-Hansen
lcje-kai@post4.tele.dk