

## Report for LCJE South Africa 2007–2011 Cecilia Burger, LCJE Area Coordinator

Of the 88,000 Jewish People in Africa, about 90% live in the Republic of South Africa and more than half of them are concentrated in the vibrant city of Johannesburg. About 15,000 Jewish people live in Cape Town. Within the total population of almost 50 million people in South Africa, the Jewish people is a minority group. New ideas are often looked upon as a threat to Judaism and their Jewish identity.

### **Stumbling blocks**

Antisemitism in some Christian circles is a stumbling block in reaching Jewish people with the gospel. Sharing the gospel with Jewish people is not a priority in most churches in South Africa. Many churches teach replacement theology and deny the place of the Jewish people in the plan of God.

Michael Sischy, director of Jews for Jesus in South Africa, mentions “a return to orthodoxy or a return to what is perceived as the faith of our fathers.” Michael says, “This has largely been due to the work of the Lubavitcher movement and their success in promoting a more vibrant living Judaism. This is a real challenge for evangelism as to the how, why and where of proclaiming the gospel to this group which tends to isolate itself very well from outside influences.”

### **LCJE membership**

We thank the Lord for an increase in the LCJE membership in South Africa from four to eighteen. Ministries such as Messiah’s People, Messianic Testimony, Jews for Jesus, David & Jonathan Foundation and Simcha Ministry to Jewish People are represented. LCJE members in Cape Town are meeting bi-monthly for networking and prayer. This has resulted in close friendships amongst LCJE members, co-operation and help in various areas of ministry.

Increasing the number of LCJE members in Johannesburg, and getting them to meet together regularly, remains a challenge for the future.

### **Opportunities**

More and more churches and Christian groups are showing interest in hearing testimonies of Jewish believers. An increasing number of Christians are also interested in getting to know more about the Hebrew roots of the Christian faith. Messiah's People in Cape Town presents quarterly half-day conferences, *Roots & Shoots*, teaching Christians about the Hebrew roots of their faith. These conferences are very well attended and supported by the LCJE members in Cape Town. The attendance is about 400 people at a time.

Michael Sischy mentions another “doorway for the gospel is the rising trend of Jewish-Gentile couples seeking to find their identity with the challenge of the two cultures juxtaposed in the marriage context – this is an area we need to be constantly aware of. We need to be ready to use these opportunities to provide harmony and reconciliation that the gospel of Messiah Jesus brings.

As LCJE members we realize the importance of training and encouraging the Body of Messiah and especially young people to reach their Jewish friends with the gospel.

### **A Highlight – LCJE South Africa Conference**

A highlight in the work of the LCJE South Africa was our first LCJE conference in South Africa held in Cape Town on 15 October 2010. The theme of the conference was, *Jewish Evangelism in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century?* This conference was arranged as a result of the Third LCWE congress in October 2010 in Cape Town. 130 People attended our conference of whom 20 were from abroad. We are

grateful that many of the conference papers are available on the LCJE website. We are planning to have the next LCJE conference in South Africa in 2012.

Thankfully in His service.

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