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Networking Jewish Evangelism

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Not ashamed – but scared?

Paul writes that he is not ashamed of the gospel (Rom 1:16). Some interpreters believe that the reason why Paul emphasizes this is that he knows such a feeling of shame.

On several occasions Jesus and the apostles exhort the believers not to live in fear of men. Such exhortations only make sense if the believers know of such fear.

At the recent LCJE meeting in San Antonio David Brickner, Director of Jews for Jesus, told about networking in connection with the worldwide campaign *Behold Your God*. He also mentioned that Jews for Jesus were on the point of launching an evangelistic outreach in Israel.

In that connection he mentioned that he had received an email from one of their leading staff members in Israel, who prior to the campaign had written, very honestly: "I am scared!"

Is this a good signal to send for a leader who is at the front of such a campaign and who is supposed to be a model for others who may be even more frightened?

This question can be answered in more ways than one.

I have to say that it made a certain impression on me, a positive impression. I was more impressed by this than if it had been said, triumphantly, that now they were ready to fight for the cause of the gospel.

Of course you will pray for those who are ready for action. But the call to pray for those who are scared is more effective – at least it is for me.

When you pray for yourself you indicate that you cannot handle the situation yourself. When you pray for others, it is the same motivation.

That leaders have the courage to say that they, too, are sometimes scared can be a real blessing for others.

And that, really, goes for all evangelism: the person who communicates the gospel must somehow allow it be seen that they too need the gospel.

With LCJE Lake Balaton in view – the Eighth International Conference 19-24 August in Hungary – I cannot say I am scared. But I am excited and expectant. Approx. 160 leaders in Jewish evangelism will gather here to be encouraged, and to encourage each other, to go on telling the story of Jesus to Jewish people.

Scared or not. If this conference is going to be a blessing, we need prayer. Also from those LCJE'ers who cannot attend the conference.

All papers delivered at the conference will appear in five conference booklets. We hope and pray they may also be a blessing for those who cannot be there themselves.

Kai Kjær-Hansen

Written by the Finger of God

By Rev. David Sedaca, Chosen People Ministries, LCJE Latin American Coordinator

Before the Law was given to Israel in Sinai, all humankind, including the children of Israel, had a very limited idea of who God was. Although God had revealed himself to some individuals such as Noah, Enoch Abraham, and Moses, in general, humanity knew very little about Him. The children of Israel had seen God's power in their deliverance from Egypt, but had no additional knowledge of who He was or how to relate to Him. Then it all changed at Mount Sinai. There God revealed his moral character by giving his laws to Moses, and these laws are not only a reflection of His personality and character. Jacob Neusner defines Torah as "*God's revelation and what God 'reveals' in Torah is self-manifestation*" (Cf. Neusner, Jacob; *Introduction to Rabbinic Literature*, Doubleday, New York, 1994, p. 3).

In Exodus 31:18 we read "*When the Lord finished speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai, he gave him the two tablets of the Testimony, the tablets of stone inscribed by the finger of God.*" A closer look at this verse will reveal several things worth pointing out. In first place it says that it was the Lord himself, not an angel or any other intermediary, who wrote the words of Testimony (Torah). What we know of God as revealed in the Law given at Sinai is directly what God wants us to know of Him. The words of the Testimony are not Moses commentary of what the Lord said to Him, but are God's own words. "...*inscribed by the finger of God*" means that the revealed word of God came directly from God, not dictation or from Moses' memory, but written by God himself.

This verse also says these words are written "*in tablets of stone.*" It is difficult to erase or modify what is written on stone. Today, our word processors can erase, delete, or insert any words we write thus modifying what we wrote before; but the words of the Torah (Covenant, Law, Testimony) were written in stone, thus making them immovable, unchanging, and eternal. There are things in God's law that makes us feel uncomfortable or may seem not to be politically correct, but by writing them on stones the Lord implied that what He said cannot be modified, added or erase. Many people may think that God's words do not have to be taken literally because they were given at a different time, given to a different people under different circumstances, yet the truth remains, God's words were written on stone by God himself thus making them unchanging and eternal. There is one moral and ethical absolute, and it was written on the tablets of stone.

But the Lord said through the prophet Jeremiah, "The time is coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah."This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts." (Jer. 31, 32)

Does Jeremiah contradict what we have just said? Not at all! Some have understood the New Covenant promised to Israel as a replacement of the covenant God himself gave to Israel, written by his own hand on tablets of stone. If we take a careful look at the New Covenant promised to Israel, we realize that it does modify neither the meaning nor the text of the words given at Sinai. The words of the Law are perfect (Psalm 119) because are given by a perfect God, they are immovable because they were written by an unchanging God, and they are eternal, because they emanate from the heart of the Eternal God. What is then the meaning of the New Covenant? What makes this covenant new is that now the words that were written on tables of stone are now written in the hearts and in the minds of men. Is not the *meaning* of the words, but the *location* of the words that make this covenant new! The tablets of stone in which the Law is inscribed will no longer be confined to the Ark of the

Covenant, but will now find its place in the heart and the mind of men. The Lord will write his Law in man's heart so that there will be a desire to do His will. The Lord will put His Law in man's mind so that man will have the knowledge of God's will.

But the Lord takes even another step to make His will real in our lives. In the fullness of times he sent Messiah Yeshua that God's Law can be made perfect in our lives. John writes that "*The Word became flesh, and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth*" (John 1:14). In Yeshua the Messiah we see the ultimate revelation of God, the same God who wrote the Testimony by his own finger in two tables of stone.

In a barren desert there are seeds that remain in one place waiting for the time when there will be rain, and that rain produces the miracle of germination, the seed comes alive and a plant is grown. Like the seed in the desert, the New Covenant has been implanted in man's hearts and minds, waiting for Jesus the Messiah who is like the drops of rain, the "*Living Water*," to make it come alive.

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Outreach "Dieu Vivant et Peuple du Livre" in Lyon

By Jean-Paul Rempp, Pastor at *La Bonne Nouvelle Evangelical Church, Lyon*, and worker with Christian Witness to Israel (CWI).

It has been a great "première" !: A series of 8 meetings took place from May 6th to 13th 2007 on the general theme: "*The Living God and the People of the Book*". These original meetings were organized by our Church "La Bonne Nouvelle" in Lyon first district, with the help of Christian Witness to Israel (CWI) in the framework of our annual church outreach. This was also open to the other Evangelical Churches in Lyon, second City in France.

Our purpose was to reach out to each and every one without exception, even though these meetings were particularly adapted to welcome Jewish people in the most appropriate way as possible. In fact, we sought

rather to awaken an interest and gain the trust of people, in view of going deeper later on at a personal level with those who might wish, which seems to us increasingly important in the present French situation. It is of no use having too high a profile and then shocking needlessly from the beginning on, if no-one turns up and there is nobody with whom you can discuss matters.

Each evening there was a kind of a thread-theme, on which songs, a testimony, and the main program were based.

The themes were: *The Living God – Transformed lives today.*

The Book – The Bible: an outstanding Book.

The People of the Book – Anti-Semitism: Why?

Humanity – Man in the Gardens of the Bible.
The Shoa, an opaque mystery – Astounding testimonies of survivors.
Artists question the Bible – Dali and Chagall facing ultimate questions.
Israel – People and History, from past to present.
The True Hope – The Prince of Shalom

In His Grace, the Lord evidently blessed these meetings, and granted them to be quite a success. All along the week the average number of those attending was around 60, with a good number of non-believers, around half of which were Jewish. It is rather unusual in our context, so we really praise the Lord for this success!

Another significant feature: half of those who attended had never had any previous contact with our church nor with its members. They simply either had an invitation in their letterbox, or in the streets or had seen a poster. This is a recent phenomena that we had already noticed in March 2006 during our outreach with ProChrist, for the first time for many years. This shows a real helplessness among our contemporaries, who seek what only the Gospel of God can bring.

We can note that David and Lisa Loden played the key part in attracting people, that we expected of them. As they led the first section of the program by singing Hebrew songs, they allowed the coming of many who otherwise would never have "set a foot" in a church building like ours! For instance, I think of one

Jewish man, met in the street: he arrived in the hall and wanted to leave again straight away! I reassured him saying that he would hear, at the beginning of the program, beautiful songs in Hebrew. So he accepted to stay for the songs, and finally, he sat through the whole meeting! After that, he came back almost every evening, and even attended part of the Sunday service. Most certainly, he is one of the Jewish people who approached the Lord, during this week, the most closely.

Furthermore, believers like unbelievers, all unanimously appreciated the diversity and outstanding quality of the meetings, may it be for the songs (whether by David and Lisa, or by the French Messianic Jew Gil Bernard, who sang in as just a remarkable way on the last weekend), for the conferences or contributions (André Boulagnon, Frédéric

Baudin and Jacques Guggenheim), as well as for the presentations on video or DVDs, related to some of the topics.

Beside the special meetings mentioned above, we had two beautiful services on May 6th and 13th, respectively on the themes of Reconciliation as well as of the prophet Jeremiah and his message.

On the 14th, I had my birthday, which I could celebrate in one of the big *kosher* restaurants in Lyon. The lady in charge of it had come to one of the meetings. We ate there with the Lodens, Francine Roulet, members of the family and a friend ... who is a Rabbi in Lyon.

Thank you very much for your prayers for the follow-up work!

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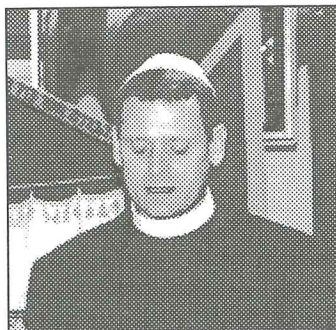


Francine Roulet with Lisa and David Loden at the outreach in Lyon.

The Truth has found Me

By Jan Mortensen, Immanuel Church, Jaffo

In March Jan Mortensen, pastor at the Immanuel Church, Jaffo, was invited to speak at the Sabbath service in the reform synagogue Darchei No'am in Ramat Hasharon. How do you tackle a task like this? Jan Mortensen did it with the sermon which is printed here.



Wearing a clerical collar and a kippa, Jan Mortensen spoke about the truth that had found him

Thank you for the invitation to come and speak to you today on the occasion of this "International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination". The fact that you have invited me as a representative of another faith to speak to you on this occasion speaks volumes about your own commitment to this day's purpose. And it is an honor for me to be here.

A comfortable image falls apart

I grew up in Denmark in the 60's and 70's with a strong sense of pride that we were able to save almost all the 7000 Danish Jews during the German occupation. We liked this image of ourselves as anti-racist heroes and saw Christian values reflected in it.

But it is an image that has received some severe blows since then. In recent years, with the influx of refugees from all over the

world, we in Denmark have seen a rise in xenophobic and racist rhetoric, as well as in blatant discrimination. In light of this development, some have begun to ask whether our unselfish actions towards the Jews might not have been so unselfish after all. Most of the Danish Jews had, to a large degree, assimilated into Danish society, and maybe one of the reasons the Danes were so vigilant concerning them was that they saw them as Danes, *not as strangers*. Once we found "true" strangers and visibly different refugees on our doorstep, it didn't take long before our "inner racist" began to bark.

Double stereotyping

One of the dynamics of racism is that we stereotype "the other": his looks, his culture, his behavior. More often than not, we choose extreme and unsympathetic

representatives of "the other" as a basis for this stereotyping. But that is not all. The dynamic of racism is also driven by our stereotyping *ourselves!* And more often than not, we choose sympathetic and elevated examples of "ourselves" as a base for this stereotyping. We stereotype our own ethnic group as intellectually, morally and culturally elevated above "the others".

And with this double stereotyping it is no wonder that it becomes really difficult to actually see "the other" as a human being in and of his own right and value. High values and ideals then aren't really enough to combat racism – if these values are not painfully followed and lived up to, but merely become a fixed image of how we like to see ourselves.

Christianity (religion) as a co-player in racism

In this respect it is extremely sad and disheartening to see the role *religion* has played historically. I stand here representing the Christian Church, but I dare to say that there is much in the history of Christianity which I do not want to defend or represent. Grave atrocities have been committed in the name of Jesus. I don't think I have to remind you about some of these atrocities. As an Israeli Rabbi recently said:

"we don't want to hear more about Christian love for the Jewish people; we have tasted it on our own bodies".

The problem of the truth claim

Many would claim that the problem with religion in this respect lies in its claim to truth. If I have the truth, then the others don't. And of course, if it is a part of a religious or ideological belief system that this "truth" should be imposed on others by force, manipulation or coercion, then this claim of truth *does* become a problem. But the answer is not just to abolish the quest for truth, or the belief that objective truth actually exists. Some modern thinkers would have us do that, and they would turn the so-called "truth" – that real truth does not even exist – into just another oppressive truth that everybody should accept. In this system, "tolerance" becomes the new God we must all bow before for the sake of peace. The God of "tolerance" can tolerate everything except those who are intolerant, bringing us right back into just another oppressive belief system.

The truth I believe in

So, since no one can believe anything if he doesn't believe he "has the truth", I am not ashamed to stand here today as a Christian, in spite of the history of the Christian Church, and say that I believe that I've found the

truth, or rather that truth found me. I don't stand here as the defender of a certain denomination or tradition or nation or people. I stand here because I came to believe in the God of Israel as the creator and redeemer of this world.

But will such a claim not lead to intolerance? Well it depends on the content of the truth I claim. The Christian faith is not a faith that allows me to elevate myself above anyone else. It is not a faith that allows me to force my understanding upon my neighbor or discriminate against him. Quite to the contrary: Jesus says this in very clear words: "Whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all" (Mark 10:43-44).

And this is not just one isolated commandment which we could sort of place on a list of many others and forget about. It lies at the very root of our faith. Jesus himself is the role model: "For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many" (v. 45).

God broke the barrier. So should we

The fundamental teaching of the New Testament is that in Jesus God came to atone for our sins. It implies the thought that none of us could do this by ourselves. That we were all stuck in our sinful nature. We are all on the same level:

"For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly... God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us" (Romans 5:6 and 8). At the base of the Christian faith lies the belief that God humbled himself and came down to our level *in spite* of our enmity, sinfulness and godlessness. He identified with us and became one of us. He broke the barrier between him and us. He took responsibility for our fall to the extent that he became an atoning sacrifice for us.

And *this* is the example that I am called to follow. I am called to follow the example of my Messiah, who became like one of us, *while we were still his enemies!* I am called to break the barrier between me and "the other", and sympathize with him *even* when he does not sympathize with me; even when he doesn't live up to his side of the bargain. As Jesus said: "You have heard that it was said: you shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous" (Matthew 5:43-45).

I will fight for your right to reject this truth

It is quite obvious that those

who call themselves Christians didn't always follow their master or their "truth" in this way. It is none the less the truth we claim. In this truth, we see man reconciled with God and *one another*.

I acknowledge and accept the fact that many do not share this faith. And it is essential to my faith that this

freedom to believe or to reject this truth is maintained. It is essential to my faith to assure that the dignity of those who do not agree with me is preserved and respected.

The fight against racism and other kinds of discrimination is far from over. Let us who have seen its danger, whoever we are

and whatever our creed is, join forces and fight it together. May we get the grace to live by the famous words (Beatrice Hall paraphrasing Voltaire): "I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it."

May God bless you!

Jan Mortensen

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The View from a Newcomer

By Casey Grist, Light of Messiah Ministries, Atlanta



The North American LCJE meeting in San Diego was Casey Grist's first personal encounter with LCJE.

Shalom! My name is Casey Grist, and I am a missionary with Light of Messiah Ministries in Atlanta, GA. This spring was the first time I had the privilege of attending a LCJE-NA conference. The setting, San Antonio, TX, was wonderful, the hotel accommodations superb and the atmosphere was stimulating and encouraging.

I was greatly interested in many of the sessions. Among some of my personal

favorites included Kai Kjær-Hansen's presentation on LCJE's roots and stance on the issue of evangelism. There could be no doubt in my mind, nor anyone else involved with LCJE, that evangelism is the foundation of this group. This was especially helpful to me, as a newcomer, to understand the history of this movement.

The session on the Qumran excavation was informative and exciting. I found the slides of the archeological dig sites and the discoveries there, as well as learning about the Essenes and their lifestyle to be a refreshing peek into the past.

Jonathan Bernis, from Jewish Voice's presentation on the Felasha Mura: The Abandoned Jews of Ethiopia was excellent and inspiring. I believe that 75% of the room was ready to pack their bags and jump on a plane, to go serve amongst those precious people! I

know I was! The wonderful thing I witnessed from this session, was the whole principle of networking came into play, as a sheet was passed around, with people interested in partnership to sign up.

Dr. Michael Brown's session on "Is Post-Missionary, Truly Messianic Judaism Possible" was the highlight of the entire conference for me. I learned so much about the true issues behind the concerns raised by this movement, and how to combat such error. As always, Dr. Brown is well spoken, well-informed and timely in his address.

The Behold Your God update and the Media Report were both excellent as well. I was privileged to serve on many BYG campaigns and was even in New York when many of the media highlights were happening live, so it was fun to reminisce over those wonderful outreaches and opportunities.

I think my favorite aspect of the entire event, however, is really in the relationship building and networking possibilities. Frankly, if I could change anything, it would be to build in more time for just that. More time for networking, and more time for sharing from each ministry what is effective and new and what we are struggling with. I saw that most of this interaction occurred after hours, which is fine. But I believe much of the true ministry aspects of the conference happened during this down time. This is where I saw the encouragement happen, where friendships and partnerships were forged and ideas exchanged.

The last thing, from my perspective, that I might perhaps suggest would be to shorten the length of some sessions, especially the afternoon sessions as I noticed many people demonstrating weariness. I also might suggest, just from my observation, that the most excitement generated was during sessions that pertained to actual ministry efforts and ideas, as opposed to histories. I might eliminate a few of the histories and add a few more opportunities for individual ministries to actually share their hearts. Perhaps even a session or two designed to invigorate and revive our hearts would be good.

In closing, I would say the entire experience was a tremendous blessing for me and the networking was absolutely invigorating and priceless. The heart of the ministries represented there is inspiring to witness and I learned a great deal.

And, last but not least, I got to take some of my excitement from the conference with me, on my taxi ride to the airport. I was able to share with my taxi driver, Sammy, and pray with him to receive Jesus as his Messiah, Lord and Savior, so I felt it was a perfect ending to a wonderful experience.

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Gary Hedrick, Christian Jews Foundation, presented Theresa Newell with a diploma after her eight years of service as coordinator for LCJE North America.

Explanation for "An Appeal for Unity"

By Tuvya Zaretsky, LCJE President

At the 2005 meeting of the LCJE North American network that met in San Francisco, concern was voiced on the program regarding published statements about evangelism by a few writers associated with the American messianic congregational movement. Some statements reflected a potential negative influence regarding the uniqueness of Christ for salvation and the necessity of a direct, vocal witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ among the Jewish people. As a network, the LCJE attracts messianic congregational representatives, individuals and mission organizations who advocate Jewish evangelism.

During that LCJE meeting in San Francisco, a majority of those present indicated a desire to address those missiological concerns. However, a clear consensus could not be reached as to the best way to do that at the time. Clearly, no one wanted to disrupt the bond of unity within the body of Christ. At the same time, many felt that specific positions being voiced by a few in the Congregational movement would be hurtful to the cause of Jewish evangelism.

What to do?

A committee was appointed by the North American LCJE coordinator to work on possible declarative statement in the

hope of engaging the hearts of American messianic congregational opinion leaders. It was also their desire to support those congregational leaders who were not in favor of positions that might undermine Jewish mission efforts. After a two year study reflection and effort, the LCJE NA committee presented the following report to the network body that met as LCJE NA in San Antonio, Texas, April 16-19, 2007.

The report is An Appeal for Unity that is addressed to messianic congregations as well as to the broader Body of Christ. The report was adopted by a majority vote of those LCJE members who were present at the meeting.

An Appeal for Unity

LCJE North America, San Antonio, April 18, 2007

As disciples of Messiah Jesus, our highest priority is to be transformed into His image even as we proclaim the Gospel first to the Jewish people and also to the nations in love and in unity. We rejoice with the psalmist in the hope of brothers dwelling together, and serving together, in unity. The LCJE-NA is a network of congregations, organizations and individuals engaged in Jewish evangelism. We

seek a broader coalition with the messianic congregational movement recognizing that obstacles to such unity have been erected by some both within and without our constituency. Therefore we present this initiative toward greater unity in order that the Good News of Messiah may be communicated more effectively. As members of the LCJE-NA, meeting in San Antonio, April 18, 2007, wish to express our affirmation of the messianic

congregational movement as well as some of our concerns.

OUR AFFIRMATIONS:

1. We praise God for the growth of the messianic congregational movement and believe that it witnesses to the faithfulness of God to preserve a believing remnant among the people of Israel.
2. We thank God that the existence of messianic congregations is a visible

and identifiable expression of Jewish faith in the Messiah and believe that they serve as a powerful force to counteract the ever-present tendency toward the assimilation of the Jewish people.

3. We thank God that messianic congregations help to preserve and transmit Jewish identity and heritage to the next generation of Jewish believers and believe that they are especially suited to fight against anti-Semitism within the Church and the world.

4. We praise the God of Israel that messianic congregations serve in the important task of making the Church more sensitive to the Jewishness of Jesus and the Jewishness of the New Testament and believe that they provide a bridge to promote understanding between the Jewish people and the larger Christian community.

Therefore we support the messianic congregational movement and pray that God would bless it with strength and growth to be a blessing to all the families of the earth.

OUR CONCERNS:

1. We view with concern that some believe in the possibility of a right

relationship with God apart from a conscious personal confession in this lifetime of Jesus as Messiah and Lord.

2. We view with concern that some non-Jews believe that they can become better believers or deepen their spirituality by converting to messianic Judaism or by adopting certain rabbinic practices that are non-biblical.

3. We view with concern that some within the messianic movement are not properly emphasizing active Jewish outreach.

4. We view with concern that some within the messianic movement inaccurately accuse the evangelical community of engaging in pagan practices.

Therefore we encourage the messianic congregational movement to prayerfully consider our concerns and to continue toward transformation into the image of Messiah Jesus.

Having expressed our affirmations and concerns, we call upon messianic

congregations and the entire body of Messiah to do the following:

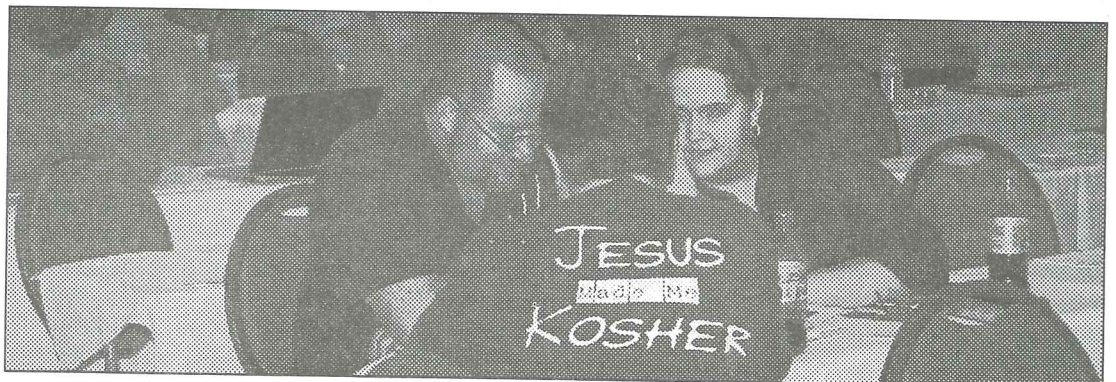
1. Train and equip its members to sensitively evangelize the Jewish people wherever they are.

2. Encourage Jewish believers to retain, cultivate and nourish their Jewish identity.

3. Teach and promote the biblical mandate for non-Jewish believers to provoke the Jewish people to desire Jesus as their Messiah by their holiness and godly conduct and by proclaiming the Good News.

4. Denounce any expression of anti-Semitism and reject unequivocally both the theology that teaches that God has rejected the Jewish people and the theology that Jewish people may find acceptance with God apart from faith in Jesus.

Above all, we call upon Jewish and Gentile believers to join in humility and mutual respect for the various expressions within the Body of Messiah as a sign of the truth of the Good News of Jesus that the world may know Him and the One who sent Him.



IS A POSTMISSIONARY, TRULY MESSIANIC JUDAISM POSSIBLE?¹

By Dr. Michael L. Brown, ICN Ministries, Harrisburg, NC



Michael L. Brown.

Below is the introduction of Michael L. Brown's paper at the LCJE North American meeting in San Antonio, April 2007

Since the title of this paper comes in the form of a question, I want to remove all suspense and answer the question up front. Is a postmissionary, truly Messianic Judaism possible? The answer is absolutely, categorically, incontrovertibly, without question or equivocation, NO.

As stated (in Gentile terms) by Oswald Smith, "The church that does not evangelize will fossilize," and once we lose the missionary burden and spirit and passion – which, inevitably, begins with one's own people – we lose an essential aspect of the heart of the Lord and an essential

component of our faith. This is certainly an extremely critical question!

The watershed volume of Dr. Mark Kinzer

Obviously, both the title and subject of this paper are inspired by the watershed volume of Dr. Mark Kinzer, *Postmissionary Messianic Judaism: Redefining Christian Engagement with the Jewish People*², a volume that has received considerable attention in the Messianic Jewish community, especially in academic circles.³ All of us are indebted to Dr. Kinzer for his careful scholarship and for the many important issues he raises, some of which challenged me personally, forcing me to look again at some familiar texts and to ask myself some searching questions. Certainly, there are many topics that he has put on the table in a clear and reasoned way that demand our attention, most specifically, the question of the problem of assimilation for Jewish believers and the proposed solution of a strict bilateral ecclesiology.

On the other hand, in the midst of 300 pages of often nuanced and sophisticated arguments, it is somewhat shocking to arrive at two of the book's main conclusions: first, that Jewish believers should embrace

Orthodox Judaism; and second, that our witness of Yeshua to our own people should henceforth "be rendered in a postmissionary mode."

Kinzer explains the second point as follows: "... the Jewish ekklesia will, as the UMJC definition states, 'bear witness to Yeshua within the people of Israel.' The Jewish ekklesia will not hide its light under a bushel. Its Yeshua-faith and its Judaism are not two separated realities but one integrated whole. Its Yeshua faith will affect every dimension of its life, including its participation in the wider Jewish world. However, its witness to Yeshua will be rendered in a postmissionary mode."

What exactly does this mean? "First, the Jewish ekklesia will realize that it must first receive the testimony borne by the wider Jewish community to the God of Israel before it is fit to bear its own witness. It must hear before it can speak. It must learn before it can teach. What it receives, hears, and learns will affect the substance – and not just the form – of what it gives, says, and teaches. Second, the Jewish ekklesia bears witness to the One already present in Israel's midst. It does not need to make him present; it only needs to point other Jews to his intimate proximity. The

Jewish ekklesia bears witness to the One who sums up Israel's true identity and destiny, who lives within Israel and directs its way, who constitutes the hidden center of its tradition and way of life. In the words of Joseph Rabinowitz, it bears witness to 'Yeshua achinu' – Yeshua our Brother, who like Joseph, rules over the Gentiles while providing for the welfare of his own family who do not recognize him. For the Jewish ekklesia, all Judaism is Messianic Judaism because all Judaism is Messiah's Judaism. Third, the Jewish ekklesia bears witness discreetly, sensitively, and with restraint. It is always aware of the painful wounds of the past and seeks to bear witness to Yeshua in a way that brings him honor from among his own."⁴

In all candor, and with due respect for Dr. Kinzer's scholarship and personal commitment to the Lord, these suggestions are outrageous and must be categorically rejected, with the exception of several phrases with which, I trust, we would all agree. That is to say, would any of us argue that we should be *insensitive* when witnessing to our people? And would any of us differ with the concept that Yeshua "sums up Israel's true identity and destiny"? Putting these small disclaimers aside, however, I reiterate: These suggestions are outrageous and must be categorically rejected.

Comments to the statements just quoted

The rest of this paper will be devoted to articulating my response to Dr. Kinzer's "postmissionary" proposal. For the moment, I want to add my own comments to the statements just quoted: "First, the Jewish ekklesia will realize that it must first receive the testimony borne by the wider Jewish community to the God of Israel before it is fit to bear its own witness." Translation: Before we can share our faith, we who are commissioned by Yeshua and empowered by His Spirit to be His witnesses must first receive the testimony of a diverse Jewish community that continues to reject Jesus as Messiah and considers our belief in Him to be completely idolatrous. "It must hear before it can speak. It must learn before it can teach." Translation: We must learn from those who, for the most part, have not spent a second meditating on the glorious truths of the New Covenant Scriptures and instead, for the most part, have spent their time immersed in the traditions of man. They, who Paul tells us are enemies of the gospel on our account, are now our teachers, and we their students. "What it receives, hears, and learns will affect the substance – and not just the form – of what it gives, says, and teaches." Translation: As we listen carefully to the rabbinic authorities, we will

learn that our view of the Messiah is not in harmony with the rabbinic view, that our view of the authority of the Torah is not in harmony with the rabbinic view, that our view of God is not in harmony with the rabbinic view, that our view of salvation and atonement is not in harmony with the rabbinic view, that our view of the inspiration of the New Testament is not in harmony with the rabbinic view, that our view of oneness with our Gentile brothers and sisters is not in harmony with the rabbinic view, and that if we do not submit ourselves fully to rabbinic authority we can make no real claim to legitimate Judaism. So, if we listen and learn well, we will no longer have our faith!

"Second, the Jewish ekklesia bears witness to the One already present in Israel's midst. It does not need to make him present; it only needs to point other Jews to his intimate proximity." Translation: The prophets who spoke of God abandoning our people because of our sins were actually mistaken, since God never abandons His people Israel. And Yeshua Himself was mistaken in claiming that there would be tangible judgment on His generation for their rejection of Him along with His real absence from their midst until they recognized Him as Messianic King.

"Third, the Jewish ekklesia bears witness discreetly, sensitively, and with restraint." Translation:

Forget about the bold and fearless proclamation of Yeshua the Messiah in the Book of Acts; forget about Paul's counsel that his answer to both Jews and Greeks was the undiluted message of Messiah crucified (yes, forget about the fact that, in the words of one prominent evangelist, "the power is in the proclamation"); forget about Yeshua's promises that we would be put out of the synagogue for our faith and that we would be persecuted by our own people for our association with Him. It's time for a new and better method, one that emphasizes being accepted by the very community which the Scriptures tell us would often reject us, a method that to a great extent bypasses the reproach of the cross. "It is always aware of the painful wounds of the past and seeks to bear witness to Yeshua in a way that brings him honor from among his own." Translation: From here on, we assume that every Jew we meet – even the most secular, anti-traditional, detached-from-his or her-roots Jew – is keenly aware of the painful wounds of "Christian" anti-Semitism and will not respond to a compassionate and clear call to repentance, will not respond to the convicting power of the Spirit, will not respond to the power of the gospel, and will not respond to the glorious testimony of the Son of God (although this is how many

of us – including the presenter of this paper – came to the Lord). Such is the way of postmissionary Messianic Judaism. (And I have not even mentioned the fact that Dr. Kinzer wants the Christian Church at large to adopt a similar approach in terms of restraining its witness to the Jewish people, a suggestion that would literally damn multitudes of our people.)

Is my "translation" over the top?

I suspect that some of you may be a little uncomfortable at this point, thinking that my "translation" is over the top. Rather, what is over the top is the thesis being put forth by Dr. Kinzer and others, and it calls for a strong and unambiguous response. Anything less than that allows us to entertain concepts that, in my opinion, fly in the face of key biblical truths, most centrally, that our people are lost without explicit faith in Yeshua and that it is our sacred mission to be unapologetic witnesses for Him, to them.

While reading *Postmissionary Messianic Judaism*, I found myself going back and forth in a spirited internal debate over many of Dr. Kinzer's important points, but his conclusions brought me to Tevye's famous breaking point in Fiddler on the Roof, "There is no other hand!" To reiterate once again: He is asking us to negotiate that which is non-negotiable, and

I say this as someone who is close to a good number of rabbis, including the ultra-Orthodox.

To be sure, my hundreds of hours of dialogue and discussion with the rabbinic community – especially, Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox rabbis – have produced in me a profound respect for traditional Judaism, an appreciation for the beauty and spirituality of many of our traditions, and a pained conflict in my heart over the lostness of these people for whom I deeply care. To me, traditional Judaism is the most beautiful and comprehensive religion made by man, yet it remains so near and yet so far.

Even more personally, most of us as Jewish believers have loved ones who have died without a profession of faith in Yeshua – my own dear father falls in that category – and we all hold out hope that somehow, someway, through last minute divine intervention, we will see these loved ones in the world to come. Yet we cannot change our theology to make a way when Scripture makes no explicit way.

For several years now, I have had a weekly dialogue by phone with an ultra-Orthodox rabbi from Lakewood, New Jersey, sometimes studying Talmud and New Testament together, other times just talking about our respective views on various subjects. (I should note that this rabbi is

a rare Tanakh expert in his very frum community, since the great majority are not as fluent in Bible as in rabbinic traditions.) We even covenanted to pray regularly for one another with the following words: "God, I pray for Y- and for myself that you would give us the courage to follow You and Your truth wherever it leads, regardless of the cost or consequences, whether by life or by death." Our love and respect for each other is deep, and yet we both recognize that the distinctives of our beliefs are mutually exclusive – this would be the case even if I were a card-carrying, Hashivenu-belonging, orthopractic, Torah-observant, Messianic Jew – and that to accept the other's faith would mean the fundamental repudiation of our own. We hold to two different systems of authority and live with two different spiritual orientations, and despite the massive areas of commonality and solidarity we share, we are in two different religious camps with a great divide between us.

I am, quite obviously,

sensitive to the emotional issues involved in this discussion, I am sensitive to the theological issues involved (most prominently, the pervasive influence of supersessionism in Christian thought and practice), I am sensitive to the intellectual issues involved (specifically, with regard to traditional Jewish thought and praxis), and, having spent many years speaking to the Church about the horrors of so-called "Christian" anti-Semitism, I am sensitive to the historical issues involved as well. The scriptural testimony, however, is absolutely clear, and that must be our final guide.

My response

My response will emphasize five main points: First, that our calling as Jews in general and as Messianic Jews in particular requires us to be active witnesses; second, that the Jewish rejection of Yeshua today is integrally related to our forefather's rejection of Moses, the prophets, and the Messiah Himself; third, that the New Covenant documents make abundantly clear that our

people are lost without explicit faith in Yeshua as Messiah; fourth, that the overwhelming emphasis of the New Covenant documents is YESHUA rather than Judaism; and fifth, that the path to postmissionary Messianic Judaism is the path to the negation of the true Messianic faith.

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NOTES

¹ Because this paper was prepared for public presentation, I have kept footnotes and academic discussion to an absolute minimum. In another context, I hope to provide the scholarly apparatus to support all the main lines of discussion included in this paper.

² Mark S. Kinzer, *Postmissionary Messianic Judaism: Redefining Christian Engagement with the Jewish People* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2005).

³ Witness the discussion in *Kesher*, 20 (Winter/Spring 2006), 4-64, and *Mishkan* 48 (2006), 3-72.

⁴ *Postmissionary Messianic Judaism*, 304-305.

Dr. Michael L. Brown's more detailed responses to these five main points can be read at <http://www.realmessiah.com/articles.htm> or at www.lcje.net

What Do We Stand For? – A Look at LCJE Statements 1980-2005

By Kai Kjær-Hansen

Paper delivered at the LCJE-NA meeting April 2007. - Information about where these statements were published has been gathered in an Appendix, which will appear at www.lcje-net

The theme of this conference is *Jewish Evangelism and the Body of Messiah*. At the conclusion of this conference the North American LCJE Chapter has to consider the resolution "An Appeal for Unity." It has been under way for two years and has undergone quite a few changes, a fact that in itself might be worth studying. The resolution is about unity between LCJE North America and the messianic congregational movement. The very fact that such a resolution has been presented and is felt to be necessary indicates that some believe that the relationship between the two parties could be better.

In an attempt to form a general view of what has been said earlier in statements, resolutions and press releases (with the official LCJE seal of approval) about what we, LCJE, stand for, I have gone

through the sources. I may have overlooked a few "statements" but that hardly changes the overall picture. I have been particularly interested in finding out what sort of subjects LCJE has officially pronounced upon. And about what LCJE has had to say about the unity in the body of Messiah/Christ and the relationship between LCJE and the messianic movement, including the question of Jewish identity and connected topics.

Some of the documents are already available at www.LCJE.net. I hope that all these statements, before the end of the year, will be accessible at LCJE's website.

Before LCJE came into being

Let us begin with the beginning. Even before LCJE (Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism) existed, LCWE was (Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization). LCJE is a part of this worldwide evangelistic movement which has the *Lausanne Covenant* (1974) as its basis. There is no reason to hide that, from time to time, there have been some tensions between LCWE and LCJE. But we are part of the "Lausanne family". This most strongly finds

expression in the fact that in order to become a member of LCJE one has to be in substantial agreement with The Lausanne Covenant. "Substantial" means that there is space for interpretations of this covenant as there is with any other text.

It goes without saying that not all is said in the Lausanne Covenant as to what gathers us in LCJE, namely Jewish evangelism. But one thing is clear with the demand "in substantial agreement with the Lausanne Covenant": LCJE does not distance itself from the Body of Messiah/Christ, the universal Church of Messiah/Christ. We are an independent network with a special task. But in LCJE we say: Jesus-believing Jews and Jesus-believers from the nations are one in Messiah.

From LCJE's very beginning in 1980, an awareness of *this* unity has been fundamental in LCJE's self-perception. And this is where LCJE still is in the year 2007.

LCWE publications and statements on Jewish Evangelism

Christian Witness to the Jewish People was one among several Occasional Papers to come out from the LCWE meeting in Pattaya, Thailand, 1980. In the

conclusion it is stated that Jewish evangelism is "a central and unavoidable task for the body of Christ". The document ends in this way:

"Including Jewish people is a test of our willingness to be involved in world evangelization. It is a test of our faith in the one exclusive way of salvation and of our proclamation of Christ as an adequate Saviour for those who are apparently adequate so far as worldly righteousness is concerned."

Sponsored by the World Evangelical Fellowship and supported by the Lausanne Committee came, in 1989, the *Willowbank Declaration on the Christian Gospel and the Jewish People*. In my opinion *The Willowbank Declaration* is, theologically speaking, the best statement on Jewish evangelism to come out in the period 1980-2005. The thread is picked up from the 1980 document *Christian Witness to the Jewish People*, which is described as "a landmark statement".

That same year, in 1989 at "Lausanne II in Manila", the theme Jewish evangelism is entered in the *Manila Manifest*:

"It is sometimes held that in the virtue of God's covenant with Abraham, Jewish people do not need to acknowledge Jesus as their Messiah. We affirm that they need him as much as anyone else, that it would be a form of anti-Semitism, as well as being disloyal to Christ, to depart from New

Testament pattern of taking the gospel to 'the Jews first...'. We therefore reject the thesis that Jews have their own covenant which renders faith in Jesus unnecessary."

At LCWE's "Forum 2004" in Pattaya seven persons, all long-time members of LCJE, draw up the booklet *Jewish Evangelism: A Call to the Church*. Also in this is a clear calling to Jewish evangelism. By way of summing up, this statement is made in the document:

"If Jesus is not the Messiah for the Jewish people then neither is He Christ for the nations.

Either Jesus is the Messiah for all, or He is not the Messiah at all."

From these quotations no one can be in doubt as to what LCJE has stood for regarding the issue of salvation for Jews and the obligation to become involved in Jewish evangelism. – This is where we are also standing in 2007.

A good statement from LCJE Europe 2005

I think there have been many good statements on Jewish evangelism within the framework of LCJE and LCWE. If I were to give one statement to a *theologian* who was interested in what I am doing, I would point to the *Willowbank Declaration*. If a person with a more general interest in what LCJE stands for were to have a short account, I

would point to a statement from the LCJE European Chapter in 2005. In itself it is by no means unique but it sums up well most of the themes which, expressed in different ways, are found in practically all statements issued at LCJE's international conferences.

The Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism (LCJE)

Eight European Conference in Révfülöp, Hungary

"The European chapter of the Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism met in Révfülöp, Hungary, from 10th to 13th of March 2005. Participants from thirteen countries and ten societies committed to Jewish evangelism met to report on their ministries and to consider more effective ways to reach the Jewish communities in Europe with the gospel. The conference concluded by issuing the following statement:

Modern Jewish mission in Eastern Europe was born in the middle of the 19th century as a result of which many thousands of Jewish people embraced their Messiah. We rejoice that again at the beginning of the 21st century we see Jewish people finding salvation in the Messiah promised by their ancient prophets.

We rejoice that these Jewish believers in Jesus are finding spiritual homes in both churches and

Messianic fellowships where they may freely express their Jewish identity.

We rejoice that after years of religious repression freedoms are enjoyed in Eastern Europe that allow Jewish people to identify themselves as such and also to embrace Jesus as the Messiah.

We rejoice at the opportunities the new freedoms afford to proclaim the gospel to all, including the Jewish people.

We rejoice that in European countries once associated with the death of Jews there are now a growing number of Jews who have found new life in the resurrected Messiah.

We rejoice that Jewish and gentile believers are now sharing the love of Jesus in the very countries where a previous generation of Jewish people perished as a result of the Final Solution.

We view with concern, however, that some Christians are declaring that God has rejected the Jewish people. Such a theology has in the past fuelled the fires of anti-Semitism and we are dismayed to see a similar pattern re-emerging in both Eastern and Western Europe.

We therefore call on believers in Jesus to acknowledge the Jewish roots of the Christian faith and that we worship the God who has been pleased to reveal himself as the God of

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

We call on Christians to denounce anti-Semitism in its many forms, and to reject unequivocally both the theology that teaches that God has rejected the Jewish people and the theology that Jewish people may find acceptance with God apart from faith in Jesus.

We call on Christians to remember that if Jesus is not the Messiah of Israel he cannot be the Christ of the nations.

We call on Christians to rejoice with us at the movement of the Spirit of God among the Jewish people in Eastern Europe and to pray that even greater blessing will follow.

Above all, we call on Christians to acknowledge that Jewish evangelism is an indispensable element in the evangelistic programme of the church and that the greatest expression of anti-Semitism is to withhold the gospel from the Jewish people."

LCJE Israel 1990: A Statement on Christian Zionism

LCJE Israel issued two official press releases in 1989, one on LCJE in Israel and one on the freedom of opinion in Israel. The latter was addressed at religious *Jewish* authorities who successfully had prevented a planned meeting at a hotel. In 1990 a statement was issued about *Christian* Zionists because of uncertainty as to what the

Christian Embassy in Jerusalem stood for on the issue of gospel preaching to Jewish people.

I have to pass over what was said about Christian Zionism. What is more important for the objective I am pursuing here is what LCJE Israel said about evangelism. In conclusion this is said:

"We therefore call upon the Church throughout the world not to abandon its central calling to preach Christ. Political support for Israel must not come in place of preaching the gospel to all nations, to the Jew first and also to the gentile."

It seems that no matter what the main theme of an LCJE statement is, the aim of LCJE is consistently emphasized: the salvation of Jews through Messiah/Christ. If something threatens to take the place of this, a danger signal is hoisted.

Is this also true about the statements issued from LCJE North America? And has LCJE North America commented on the Willowbank Declaration?

Statements from LCJE North America

LCJE North America's annual meetings began in 1984. I have singled out 5 or 6 resolutions. Which issues do they deal with?

LCJE North America, Chicago 1987

Two short resolutions came out of this meeting.

1. Ray Gannon had presented a book review of Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein's *What Christians Should Know about Jews and Judaism*. This led to the following short resolution:

"After thorough consideration of the book *What Christians Should Know about Jews and Judaism* by Yechiel Eckstein at the Fourth Annual Meeting of the North American Chapter of the Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism, the following statement was adopted unanimously.

We realise that *What Christians Should Know about Jews and Judaism* is a subtle threat to undermine Christian doctrine for the sake of attacking the Jewish evangelistic endeavour. We need to alert the Church and put the Church on notice that such books written to "further Jewish-Christian relations" might serve to undermine commitment to the scriptural mission of the Church, specifically the evangelisation of all people, including our Jewish people."

The warning to the Christian Church is clear. So is the calling to Jewish evangelism.

The other resolution from the meeting in 1987 was "internal" and meant for the "Lausanne family", i.e. LCWE. It read:

"The Fourth Annual Meeting of the North American Coordinating Committee of the Lausanne Consultation on Jewish

Evangelism (LCJE) met March 25-26, 1987, and was attended by thirty leaders in various areas of Jewish evangelism and representing missions, congregations and seminars. The committee wished to commend the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelisation (LCWE) for their support of Jewish Evangelism, as reflected in recent articles in the LCWE periodical, *World Evangelisation*.

Because there have been many attempts in recent years by the Jewish community in various ways to delegitimise Jewish Evangelism within the evangelical community, the North American Coordinating Committee of the LCJE voted to ask the LCWE to seriously consider some presence on the platform, either by preaching, prayer or testimony on the part of a Jewish believer or a Jewish mission leader to show its support of Jewish evangelism at its world meeting in 1989."

Susan Perlman came on the platform in Manila in 1989. And the issue Jewish evangelism was included in the Manila Manifesto, as already mentioned.

LCJE North America, Los Angeles 1989

With Louis S. Lapidés' paper *The "Christian Identity" Movement in America* as its starting point, a resolution was drawn up against the "Christian Identity"

Movement with its insistence on the "superiority of the white Anglo-Saxon Aryan race and the inferiority of all others" and against the fact that the movement "views the Jewish people as accursed", and "dishonors the Person of Jesus the Messiah by its erroneous theological justification for racial bigotry and "is fostering the same attitude and actions that existed in pre-Hitler Germany that led to the genocide of 6,000,000 Jews."

The resolution "calls upon all genuine Christians everywhere" to be "alert to the presence and danger" of this; "to affirm God's everlasting love for the Jewish people;" to take "an active stand against this insidious form of anti-Semitism"; to pray for such people and for the Jewish people, and ... "Share the love of God manifested in Jesus the Messiah with both Jews and Gentiles."

This is also a warning to the Christian Church. The warning is about people who misuse the name of Christian and use the Bible for anti-Semitism and argue that Jewish evangelism is against the will of God. Also this resolution ends with a calling to share the love of God *manifested in Jesus the Messiah*.

LCJE North America, St. Louis 1990

Two resolutions are issued from the meeting but the introduction is really a "resolution" in its own right

so when I count, I get three.

1. The introduction deals with the Willowbank Declaration from 1989, which strictly speaking is not an LCJE Statement but which would hardly have seen the light of day without LCJE. The introduction also has a reference to the passage in the Manila Manifesto (1989) that I mentioned above. On this background it is said in 1990:

"The North American LCJE delegates heartily and unitedly endorsed the Willowbank Declaration and pledged to be guided by its articles."

So LCJE North America has taken a stand on the Willowbank Declaration. (A letter of thanks was also officially sent from the LCJE meeting in St. Louis to the Willowbank Committee). The same positive attitude to the Declaration was expressed by LCJE Europe in a statement from 2001.

2. *Evangelistic Committee Alarmed by "Pro Jewish Book"*.

At the St. Louis meeting in 1990 a certain book was the object of review, and was reviewed by both Louis Goldberg and Art Glasser. This resulted in the following resolution:

"The Committee also addressed the book *Our Father Abraham*, written by Professor Marvin R. Wilson of Gordon College (in Massachusetts) and endorsed by Dr. Carl E. Amerding, the President

Emeritus of Regent College (in Vancouver, BC).

After examining carefully the book's basic themes alongside the biblical mandate to the Church to evangelize the Jewish people, the delegates concluded that the book challenged the validity of the basic tenets of the Willowbank Declaration. The glaring omission of any significant reference to the love of Jesus for his own people according to the flesh and to the centrality of his redemptive sufferings on their behalf amazed and troubled the delegates – most of whom are Jewish believers in Jesus. They much regretted that the two scholars so highly regarded in the Church seem to have been deceived into ignoring the biblical preeminence of the One who, at his birth, was named Jesus "that he might save his people from their sins." (Matthew 1:21)."

I want to draw your attention to the fact that this resolution speaks in strong terms against two Christian theologians held in high esteem in Evangelical circles.

3. *Collapse of Israeli Government Alarms Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism*.

"In light of recent tensions in the State of Israel (the protracted "Intifada," growing world pressure to negotiate peace with the resident Arab population and now the collapse of the coalition government) we

resolve, as the North American Coordinating Committee of the Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism:

1. To affirm our support for the State of Israel based upon principles of justice, equality and freedom for all its people; and

2. To commend Messiah now, Jesus Christ the Prince of Peace, as the sole hope for lasting shalom in the Land and in the lives of all its inhabitants.

Therefore, we call on all North American believers in our Lord Jesus to pray fervently for God's peace in the State of Israel and among all who live there."

This resolution takes a stand on political topics in Israel – but it does not do it without a call for Jewish evangelism *now*.

What does LCJE stand for in the year 2007?

According to the statements cited above it is not difficult to draw the conclusion. There is nothing surprising in it, but even that which is not surprising has to be said now and again.

What's in a name? LCJE stands for what is in its name: Lausanne Consultation on *Jewish Evangelism*.

We are primarily a network: Networking Jewish evangelism. That was the vision that created LCJE. All the statements over the years have given expression to this vision. It is my hope that this vision is still with us – also in years to come.

There are probably diverging opinions about how well our networking has functioned. Nothing is so good that it cannot be improved. Self-criticism is an important thing. And any criticism that can help LCJE to network even better will be appreciated.

So to be brief: Whatever subjects LCJE has pronounced upon, no one can be in doubt that LCJE is committed to Jewish evangelism.

The Body of Messiah – Unity and Messianic Jewish Identity etc.

I will just give some hints and then restrict myself to a few extracts from the Willowbank Declaration and from statements from International LCJE Conferences and the European LCJE Chapter.

Willowbank Declaration, 1989

II. The Church of Jews and Gentiles

Article II.9:

"WE AFFIRM THAT the profession of continuing Jewish identity, for which Hebrew Christians have in the past suffered at the hands of both their fellow-Jews and Gentile church leaders, was consistent with the Christian Scriptures and with the nature of the church as one body in Jesus Christ in which Jews and non-Jews are united.

WE DENY THAT it is necessary for Jewish Christians to repudiate their Jewish heritage."

Article II.10:

"WE AFFIRM THAT Gentile believers, who at present constitute the great bulk of the Christian church, are included in the historically continuous community of believing people on earth which Paul pictures as God's olive tree (Romans 11:13-24).

WE DENY THAT Christian faith is necessarily non-Jewish, and that Gentiles who believe in Christ may ignore their solidarity with believing Jews, or formulate their new identity in Christ without reference to Jewishness, or decline to receive the Hebrew Scriptures as part of their own instruction from God, or refuse to see themselves as having their roots in Jewish history."

Article II.11:

"WE AFFIRM THAT Jewish people who come to faith in Messiah have liberty before God to observe or not observe traditional Jewish customs and ceremonies that are consistent with the Christian Scriptures and do not hinder fellowship with the rest of the Body of Christ.

WE DENY THAT any inconsistency or deception is involved by Jewish Christians representing themselves as "Messianic" or "completed" or "fulfilled" Jews.

LCJE INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS

LCJE Newmarket 1983

"We rejoice in the growing number of Jewish people

who believe in Jesus as Messiah and Lord. These Jewish believers are variously known as Hebrew Christians, Jewish Christians, Christian Jews or Messianic Jews, depending on personal preference or the culture in which they live."

We also rejoice in the enrichment of the Church as a result of the added insights on Biblical Jewish customs and practices (e.g. Passover) provided by these Jewish believers in Jesus.

We appeal to our fellow Christians to recognise that Jewish believers have the freedom to keep or not to keep certain customs and practices that are prescribed in the Mosaic Law, while continuing to rely solely upon the sufficiency of Christ for salvation. The Law which was given by God through Moses is part of the heritage of both Jews and Christians."

LCJE Easneye 1986

"We are greatly encouraged to share the news about considerable growth in the number of Jewish believers in Jesus, both in Israel and elsewhere in the world. These Jewish believers are variously known as Hebrew Christians, Jewish Christians, Christian Jews or Messianic Jews, depending on personal preference or the culture in which they live. Some of them have joined established denominations or congregations, whereas others have been

incorporated into Messianic Jewish congregations. This latter category of congregations emphasises the Jewishness of the gospel and its application to contemporary Jewish life.”

Today Christian communities in various parts of the world are developing their cultural distinctives. Jewish believers are also developing Jewish expressions of their faith in Jesus and of their life with him. This includes the use of music and the arts and creative patterns of worship and celebration. As Jewish believers share their biblical heritage with the church, they have enriched many congregations.

We therefore call upon the churches to affirm the Jewish identity of the Jewish believers in their midst and to provide an environment in which new believers can develop that Jewish identity on a sound, biblical basis.

We affirm the unity of Jews and non-Jews in Jesus Christ. This unity is fundamental to the gospel: Jesus has brought reconciliation between God and man, and has broken down the barriers between Jew and non-Jew (Ephesians 2:14).”

LCJE Jerusalem 1995

“We also note the skepticism of many churches towards the Jewish believers in Jesus who maintain their Jewish identity. The first century Apostolic Council in Jerusalem recognized the

work of the Holy Spirit in bringing Gentiles into the community of God’s people, and decreed that these new Christians need not become Jews (Acts 15). In like manner, we call upon the churches of this century to recognize the work of the Holy Spirit in bringing Jews into the body of Christ. We urge all Christians to welcome Jewish believers in Jesus into the Body of Christ with glad hearts, whether they choose to worship in traditional churches or Messianic congregations.”

LCJE New York 1999

“Jewish Identity

As we enter a new millennium we recognize that Jewish people express their identity in many ways and are affected by social, political and religious changes in the wider society. We also recognize that Jewish identity and therefore Jewish survival is once again being challenged.

Those of us who are Jewish share in the challenges confronting our people and stand with them in the need to strengthen and preserve our God-given identity. We also recognize that our faith in Yeshua is seen by many as a threat to Jewish identity and survival. Yet we believe that the core of Jewish identity is tied to a purpose and a divine calling that is fulfilled only in Yeshua—to be reconciled to God and to be a light to the nations for his glory. We therefore reject the commonly held view that

Jews who believe in Jesus are no longer Jewish.

Those of us who are Gentiles affirm that Jews who believe in Yeshua do not forfeit their Jewish identity; indeed, our own identity as Christians is also found in Yeshua the Jewish Messiah. Through him our identity is linked to the destiny of the people Israel. We do not wish to see our brothers and sisters lose their Jewish identity. We are enriched and encouraged by their distinct identity within the body of the Messiah.

As Jews and Gentiles united by faith in Yeshua, we recognize the right of Jewish believers in Yeshua to maintain a recognizable Jewish identity and to communicate faith in the Messiah to Jews and Gentiles alike.”

LCJE Helsinki 2003

“We observe with concern the challenge to the deity of Jesus by some in the broader Messianic movement. A proclamation of a lesser Jesus, though more palatable to the Jewish community at large, will inevitably lead to a false gospel message.

We observe with concern whenever the national identity of Jewish believers takes precedence over their unity with others in the universal body of believers.”

LCJE EUROPE

LCJE Europe 1990

“In our testimony to Jewish people we must endeavour to appreciate the integrity of

Jewish identity and uphold the New Testament witness of Jesus as Messiah and Saviour."

LCJE Europe 1992

"In the face of harassment from some in the Jewish community and others in the church, speakers urged that the growing number of Jewish believers in Jesus be given room to discover and celebrate their Messianic Jewish identity, affirming both their Jewish heritage and their place as members of the body of Christ."

LCJE Europe 1996

"We maintain the right of Messianic Jews to preserve both their Jewish identity and their essential unity with all believers in Jesus."

LCJE Europe 2005

"We rejoice that these Jewish believers in Jesus are finding spiritual homes in both churches and Messianic fellowships where they may freely express their Jewish identity.

Against the background

of these statements about unity and about messianic congregations and Jewish identity it is difficult to maintain that LCJE has not dealt with these issues or has not wanted to include the messianic movement in the LCJE network. Inside the framework of LCJE there is much freedom to, in different ways, express one's Jewish identity.

As to observing the Law some of these statements affirm there is freedom to do this but they also deny that it should be an obligation for a Jewish believer. They also dissociate themselves from any attempt to challenge the deity of Jesus."

Anti-Semitism and anti-Semitism

In practically all LCJE statements, both from International and European Conferences, there is a distinct dissociation from any form of anti-Semitism. At the same time it is made clear that omission to bring the gospel to Jewish people is a form of anti-Semitism.

As long as LCJE maintains that Jews – like all other people – need Jesus for salvation it is, in my opinion, an illusion to believe that Jews will give us credit – nor for our struggle against anti-Semitism. But no matter what, we will continue that struggle. And the struggle against misrepresentations of Judaism.

But being a part of the Body of Messiah, the Jewish Messiah, and being involved in Jewish evangelism, also implies that we have to be prepared to be called anti-Semites, both by the synagogue and parts of the Christian Church.

Such a statement may not be irrelevant when we are gathered under the theme of *Jewish Evangelism and the Body of Messiah* and are to decide upon a statement entitled *An Appeal for Unity*.

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LCJE Meetings

LCJE North America

7-9 April 2008 in Boston

2-4 March 2009 in Phoenix

Contact Theresa Newell (LCJENA@comcast.net)

Eighth International LCJE Conference

19-24 August 2007 at Lake Balaton, Hungary

More informations at www.LCJE.net

LCJE Germany

11-13 December 2007. Contact Hartmut Renz, (hrentz@evangeliumsdienst.de)



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ON JEWISH
EVANGELISM**
Networking Jewish Evangelism

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