

## **Twenty-Seventh North American LCJE Meeting Atlanta, March 1-3, 2010**

### **International LCJE Report 2010**

**Kai Kjær-Hansen**

Greetings in the name of our Messiah. Of the twenty-seven North American LCJE meetings, this is the third to be held here in Atlanta. We have been here before, in 1991 and in 2000. Then as now: We have a heavenly high priest of whom the Scripture says: “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever” (Hebrews 13:8). In the context in which these words appear in the Letter to the Hebrews, it is also said: “Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise – the fruit of lips that confess his name” (13:15). To confess his name therefore means to profess, to make known, that Christ was sacrificed “once for all when he offered himself” (7:27). What he has done neither can nor must be repeated. His sacrificial offering applies to all. In one and the same person he embodies the high priest as well as the sacrifice. And just as Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people, “he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him” (9:27-28). Therefore: “Consider Yeshua,” as the theme is for this conference.

So there is continuity between Jesus of Nazareth and the Lord Jesus, for whom we are waiting to appear “a second time” in glory. If we fail to consider Jesus as he was “yesterday”, it may have fatal consequences for how we consider the question of the necessity of Jewish evangelism “today”.

This identity has been broken in the popular story of a Jew and a Christian who were engaged in a heated discussion. Suddenly someone came running, shouting: “We have heard that the Messiah is coming.” They run to the place where the Messiah is to appear. And there he is. They both go up to him and ask: “Is this your first or second visit?” The Messiah responds: “No comment.”<sup>1</sup>

The story is grist to the mill of those today who problematize or even speak against Jewish evangelism. When the Messiah comes, Jews will see him as *their* Messiah, and the Christians will also see him as *theirs*, as the returned Jesus. Let us therefore “today” leave each other in peace, recognize that we have different covenants with God and abstain from proselytizing each other. This is the way some people reason.

But the price for this “deal” is too high, for it implies that the sacrifice which Jesus brought “yesterday” is without meaning for Jews “yesterday” or “today” or “forever”. But for the author of the Letter to the Hebrews there is identity between Jesus of Nazareth and the Jesus who at the end of time will appear in glory. At his death Jesus “became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him” (5:9).

It is my hope that this conference may help us all to “Consider Yeshua” again and thereby encourage us to renewed boldness in the service for the salvation of the Jewish people.

### **LCJE – 30 years**

At the end of June this year, LCJE will turn 30. Our network was set up in Pattaya, Thailand, in 1980, in connection with the Lausanne Movement’s Consultation on World Evangelization (COWE). 30 years is not much when compared to, for example, the London Jews’ Society, which

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Hans Ucko, *Common Roots – New Horizons. Learning about Christian Faith from Dialogue with Jews* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1994), 84.

last year celebrated its bicentenary. Other mission societies which saw the light of day in the 19th century have had their anniversaries. In some cases it has been in *continuity* with their founders' intentions. In other cases in *discontinuity*, when the original purpose, to evangelize Jews, has been abandoned. I am happy to say that LCJE through these thirty years has preserved its identity.

Whether or not LCJE has been a success is for others to say. I think there are many things to rejoice in. But when it comes to, for example, obstacles to Jewish evangelism, the problems and the challenges are the same as they were three decades ago. This becomes apparent from the study material which various study groups sent to David Harley, who served as International Coordinator of the pre-COWE study groups on the Jewish People. Fourteen such groups produced reports prior to the conference. Geographically these groups were in North and South America, Europe, South Africa, Israel and Australasia – the very regions where LCJE today, thirty years later, has area coordinators.

I will limit myself to the San Francisco group, which met on November 27, 1979. In my files I have Minutes<sup>2</sup> from this meeting, and the Final Group Report, submitted by Jhan Moskowitz.<sup>3</sup> What did they engage in? What was important for them?

The group focused on two subjects:

1. What are the major obstacles to Jewish evangelism within a) the Church, and b) the Jewish community?
2. What methods are being used in Jewish evangelism, and are they effective?

I have to confine myself to some remarks on what was believed to be major obstacles within the Church thirty years ago; I quote from the Final Group Report.

The first thing to be mentioned among *Obstacles to Jewish Evangelism Within the Church* is “universalism”, which is defined as “the belief that ‘although all men have fallen into sin and are lost, all will be saved through the universal redemption of Christ...’” Also the Two-Covenant Theory “hinders Jewish evangelism,” it is said.

“RESOLVED: That we call upon the Church to reaffirm and state that a faith response to Christ is the only basis of salvation for Jew and Gentile, and that any ‘dialogue’ with the Jewish community must be based upon this understanding.”

This is followed by section *Lack of Distinction Between the Church and Israel*. Here it is said:

“RESOLVED: That we call upon the Church to declare that although the Jewish people abide in unbelief, a valid covenant relationship does exist between God and Israel. That covenant does not provide salvation, but it does provide a certain standing for the Jewish people with God.”

The section *Underemphasis of the Old Testament* ends in this way:

“RESOLVED: That we call upon the Church to state and affirm that all Scripture, both Old and New Testaments, is God-breathed, and that the entire revelation of the Bible is necessary for the proper understanding of the counsel of God.”

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. the Minutes: Consultation on World Evangelism. Study Group on Reaching the Jewish People, [San Francisco] November 27, 1979.

According to Minutes the following were present at the meeting on November 27, 1979:

“Mike Davis and Barney Casden, representing Temple Aviv Judah; Lee Amber, representing Lamb Ministries; Bob Berk, representing the Church of the Open Door; Dr. Ellis, representing Simpson College Urban Studies Program; and Moishe Rosen, Tuvya Zaretsky, Susan Perlman, Mitch Glaser, Steve Cohen, Ruth Rosen, Martha Jacobs, Ammi Adlestein [who submitted the Minutes] and Stuart Dauerman, representing Jews for Jesus. Over 20 mission agencies had been contacted. The meeting was chaired by Jh’an Moskowitz.”

<sup>3</sup> Final Group Report from San Francisco Study Group on Reaching Jewish People. Submitted by Jhan Moskowitz (n.d.).

Among cultural problems “legalism” is mentioned. Over the years the word “legalism” has been used against Jesus-believing Jews who wanted to preserve their Jewish identity. This is a danger; but legalism is not only a danger for Jesus-believing Jews, it is a danger for all of us. In San Francisco, in 1979, the whole thing is turned upside down in a thought-provoking way. It is said that “the term ‘legalism’ best captures the Jewish person’s assessment of the Church.” What is meant by this? Answer:

Many evangelical subgroups have been known for their sets of taboos. These social mores are viewed by the Jewish person as requirements for belief in Christ. The Jewish person finds himself unable to identify with these lifestyles and feels alienated from such social customs. Thus for him, a Biblical picture of Christian commitment is obscured by legalistic practices of the Church.

“RESOLVED: That the Church present the Biblical picture of the Gospel apart from supra-Biblical codes of behavior. This should lead to fewer barriers for the Jew seeking to know Christ.”

If the question is asked if we in LCJE have succeeded in convincing the Church as such of the relevance and truth of these matters, the answer is, of course, no. Must we then stop saying it “today”? Of course not. If we did not do, we would be to blame.

Which stand did the San Francisco group back in 1979 take on questions about Jewish identity and Jewish lifestyle for a Jesus-believing Jew? Again, and briefly: Under *Provision of avenues for cultural expression* it is said in the Minutes:

- a) offering of worship in a Jewish way in a messianic synagogue
- b) encouraging maintenance of a Jewish lifestyle as Jewish believers

In the Final Group Report there is a comment on the same matter under the heading “Methods”: *“Congregational Planting (Messianic Synagogues):* This is defined as the establishment of Hebrew Christian congregations in conjunction with or independent of denominational outreaches, e.g., Beth Messiah Congregation, located in Washington, D.C.”

Even in this point there is continuity between the San Francisco group in 1979 and LCJE three decades later, which emerges from the statement “An Appeal for Unity”, put forward by LCJE North America at its meeting in San Antonio, 2007.<sup>4</sup>

The Final Group Report also has Moishe Rosen’s fingerprints. Under the heading “Lack of courage to face opposition” it is said:

All too often the cause of Christ has been hurt because those entrusted with bringing the Gospel to the Jewish people have been afraid to stand up under pressure from the Jewish community. They have chosen to do less and be less rather than incur the wrath of the opponents of the Gospel, whether they be Jew or Gentile.

These words are as relevant for us today as when they were said a little more than thirty years ago.<sup>5</sup>

## **LCJE Update**

### *LCJE Conferences*

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. LCJE Bulletin, no. 88 (2007): 10-11. Also accessible on [www.LCJE.net](http://www.LCJE.net)

<sup>5</sup> The final document from the Mini-Consultation in Pattaya 1980 is entitled *Christian Witness to the Jewish People. The Thailand Report on Jewish People* (Wheaton, Illinois: Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, 1980). The report can be found on [www.LCJE.net](http://www.LCJE.net)

Practically all LCJE chapters held conferences in 2009, as reported by the respective LCJE coordinators in their annual reports in the LCJE Bulletin 98 (2010).

Furthermore, the third LCJE CEO conference took place in France in May. Forty individuals participated in the conference which was held in a good atmosphere and had many useful contributions, good discussions and good humor – the very characteristics of an LCJE conference.

One of the upcoming conferences is the one LCJE Europe holds in Krakow, April 18-22/23. The number of participants is expected to be about 70. After the conference there is an optional tour to Auschwitz and Schindler's Factory.

On October 15, LCJE South Africa hosts a conference in Cape Town with the theme "Jewish Evangelism in the 21st Century?" The conference is two days before the Lausanne Movement's world conference, which also means that the LCJE South Africa conference can use speakers such as Tuvya Zaretsky and Mitch Glaser, both participants in Lausanne III.

#### *LCJE Bulletin and LCJE Website*

From 2008 to 2009 Cindy Osborne was editorial assistant and did the layout. She continues as linguistic editor, while Chris Skjøtt, Denmark, will be doing the layout. The Bulletin has a circulation of 750.

Sean Osborne used to be webmaster. He has now been replaced by the said Chris Skjøtt, who has created a new LCJE website. We hope it will fulfill the need for swift information and communication to our members. If resources allow, we hope the website will also function as a venue where the main lines of LCJE's history can be found and where important LCJE statements are accessible. With a few exceptions the LCJE Bulletins from issue 67 (2002) issue 98 (2010) are already there. The goal is, eventually, to have also Bulletins 1-66 posted on the net.

The LCJE website is still under construction. But which website is not that?

#### *New Agency Members*

Since the last North American meeting, LCJE has got four new agency members, which means that there are now 25 agency members.

- Lutherans in Jewish Evangelism, USA, Executive Director is Kevin Parviz.
- Shores/CMJ Australia, Chair is Martin Wheatherston.
- Jewish Voice Ministries International, USA, Director is Jonathan Bernis.
- New Covenant Forum, Canada, General Director is Daniel Richard Muller.

Kevin Parviz and Jonathan Bernis have, for some years, been individual members of LCJE. They have now replaced their individual membership with agency membership for organization, which I appreciate hoping that others will follow their example.

LCJE's new homepage now has logos for all agency members of LCJE links to their own homepages. The fact that we have placed this under the heading "Resources" clearly signals that LCJE is a network which connects individuals and organizations and creates a platform for inspiration, help and cooperation among its members to the extent the organizations and/or members want it.

#### *Ninth International LCJE Conference 2011*

Last year I was able to announce that the Ninth International LCJE Conference has been scheduled for August 7-12, 2011. After some looking around, not physically but in cyber space, we have now found a suitable venue. We looked into various possible places and considered such diverse possibilities as Malta, Turkey, New York, even Joseph Rabinowitz' hometown Kishinev. We have landed a little north of London, UK, at *High Leigh Conference Centre*. It is located in Hoddesdon,

Hertfordshire, and is easily accessible, whether from the centre of London or from the different London airports. The train journey from London takes about an hour.

The price for attendance at the conference is comparable to the latest conference at Lake Balaton, Hungary, 2007 – when allowance is made for the usual rise in prices in the course of four years. The prices in 2007 were 725 Euros in single room and 575 Euros per person in double bedroom. Add to this approximately 15% and – this is my guess at this moment – we will have the approximate prices for the 2011 conference.

We shall soon have the sign the final contract; at this meeting we will try to estimate how many participants we can expect.

High Leigh is a place with atmosphere, and it is far from the first time Jewish evangelism has been in focus in these old buildings. Through the years CMJ, Church's Ministry among Jewish People, an agency member of LCJE, has held "Summer Schools" in the old buildings.

### **Back to 2010 – the celebration of Edinburgh 1910**

In the light of history we can see that the World Missionary Conference, which was held in Edinburgh in 1910, became enormously important for Christian mission in the subsequent decades. From Edinburgh 1910 there went out a powerful call to mission among all peoples – the Jewish people included. The Centenary will be celebrated in various ways.

The Lausanne Movement will be holding its third world conference in Cape Town, South Africa, October 17-24, 2010. The choice of the year 2010 is no coincidence. 4,000-5,000 delegates are expected to attend the conference.

Project "Edinburgh 2010" has chosen to hold a minor Centenary Conference in Edinburgh June 2-6 with approximately 250 church leaders and an additional 900 visitors to a Sunday Celebration. Apart from that "Edinburgh 2010" has inspired the holding of conferences and study projects around the world.

What is "Edinburgh 2010"? This is the official definition: "Edinburgh 2010 is a multi-denominational and international project set up to commemorate the 1910 World Missionary Conference, and to provide new perspectives on mission for the 21st century."

"Edinburgh 2010" is, theologically and missiologically, broader than the Lausanne Movement. As it is officially said: "Whereas 1910 was confined to mainline Protestantism, the participants in 2010 will be drawn from the whole range of Christian traditions and confessions." Included in this are – I do not know if this will be a surprise for some – the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization and World Evangelical Alliance.

### *Edinburgh 2010 and Jewish evangelism*

I am not going to venture a prediction of what Edinburgh 2010 will have to say about Jewish evangelism. What can be said at this time is that the subject is included in the study commission on "Christian Mission among Other Faiths" under the heading "Judaism".

A number of position papers, representing very different theologies, were submitted at a meeting in Hamburg, Germany, in August 2009. At the beginning of September 2009 I was invited to submit a paper, which became "The Scandal of Jewish Evangelism. From Edinburgh 1910 to Edinburgh 2010".

In Hamburg Matt Friedman, Asbury Theological Seminary, submitted a case study entitled "Back to the Future: Nineteenth Century Foundations of Messianic Judaism". It is difficult to imagine a more loyal presentation of Jewish mission and evangelism!

Matt Friedman believes that mission in a Jewish context has often been overlooked. First he focuses on Joseph Samuel Frey, and then on Joseph Rabinowitz; both are presented in a positive light. In the last part of his case study Matt Friedman writes: "let us look at how the mission of God

is going forth on particularly three levels: the mission *to* the Jewish community, *within* the Jewish community, and finally, *from* the community of Jewish believers in Jesus to the nations beyond, participating in God's overall mission to the world."

Susan Perlman and Stuart Dauerman are among the sources he mentions for these sections. LCJE and the Hashivenu forum are referred to unpolemically as well the Borough Park Symposium (2007). By way of conclusion Friedman writes:

... Messianic Judaism is coming full circle, that even as a genuinely indigenous movement to and in the Messiah has continued to grow, even so, members of this movement are beginning to move out, bearing witness to Messiah's presence in their midst. They thus seek to be used of God in partnering with him in the initiation of indigenous movements to Christ among those who still have not heard.

A surprisingly positive description! What more can you wish for? If this and my case study become important for Edinburgh 2010 remains to be seen. But only an ungrateful wretch would not be pleased that the two case studies are placed under "Judaism"; both are positive towards Jewish evangelism.

The position papers and case studies are accessible on Edinburgh 2010's website.<sup>6</sup> According to plan this material will be published as a separate volume in the series of Edinburgh 2010 publications. The future must show if this is implemented.

#### *The Lausanne Movement and Jewish Evangelism in Cape Town 2010*

I am anxiously waiting to see how the question of Jewish evangelism will be treated and not least what will be written in the official statement from the Lausanne Movement's conference in Cape Town.

There will, I think, be about 20-25 participants involved in Jewish evangelism. Add to this number some stewards who are related to Jewish missions. Later Bodil F. Skjøtt will say more about this and the setup of the conference and about what we in LCJE have done to put Jewish evangelism on the program, so I will restrict myself to these few comments:

Jewish evangelism will hardly be an issue that takes up much space in the plenary at the conference in Cape Town. LCJE can live with that. It is pretty certain that we will have four so-called "dialogue sessions", where we invite other participants to dialogue about themes related to Jewish evangelism. The challenge is, of course, that we get in conversation with others and not just ourselves. The themes will be decided at the meeting which LCJE's International Coordinating Committee is going to have the day after this conference.

If the statement from Cape Town touches on the political situation in the Middle East, Zionism included, I expect a balanced statement; if such a statement is issued, I do not expect all LCJE members to be content with it. This is also something we can live with, as there are differing views of these matters among us.

At any rate, I expect from Cape Town a clear and unambiguous affirmation of Jewish evangelism.

I cannot possibly imagine anything else.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.edinburgh2010.org/en/study-themes/1-foundations-for-mission/hamburg-consultation.html>