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ON JEWISH EVANGELISM

from the STEERING COMMITTEE



The LCJE Steering Committee (together with LCJE President Murdo MacLeod) met in Jerusalem from March 23rd to 25th 1985.

David Harley reported on developments over the past year, referring in particular to the new-look Bulletin, about which many favourable comments had been received.

It was noted that Dr Louis Goldberg's Bibliography is virtually complete and will be published soon, probably in Mishkan.

There was some discussion of the question of membership dues, and it was decided that these should be reviewed so that recommendations could be submitted at the 1986 Israel Consultation.

The Steering Committee then spent considerable time finalising the draft programme for the 1986 Israel Consultation. It was agreed that speakers and respondents should produce a full text of their papers before the beginning of the conference, and that these should subsequently be published together in a hard-back book.

The next meeting of the Steering Committee will take place in England from February 8th to 9th 1986.

????!

At the time of the Steering Committee meeting, a number of questions were raised, chiefly on the part of one respected Israeli elder (not an LCJE member) concerning the wisdom of holding the 1986 Consultation in Israel. The North American Co-ordination Meeting of LCJE (meeting in Dallas) advised the Steering Committee to seek the mind of the total LCJE membership in Israel. A meeting was duly convened on April 22nd in Jerusalem, at which it was unanimously agreed that the Steering Committee should be strongly recommended to reconfirm the decision of the 1983 Newmarket Consultation that the Third International Consultation on Jewish Evangelism should be held in Israel.

Members of the Steering Committee were able to meet in London on April 24th, and they gladly received and implemented the recommendation of the meeting two days earlier in Jerusalem. LCJE members will be receiving invitations to attend the 1986 Israel Consultation in due course, and further details of the programme will be enclosed at that time.

New Area Co-ordinator

At the meeting of the LCJE (Israel) members held on April 22nd 1985, Baruch Maoz was appointed as the new Israel Area Co-ordinator of LCJE in succession to Ole Kvarme. Ole Kvarme will continue to serve on the International Steering Committee. At the same meeting, David Stern was co-opted on to the local organising committee in Israel.

Dallas '85

MOVE OVER J.R.!

Leaders of Jewish missions, pastors of Messianic congregations, representatives of denominational groups involved in cross-cultural evangelism and academics engaged in missiological research and teaching converged on Dallas, Texas, from all corners of the USA for a two-day conference, April 10th-11th 1985.

The North American Co-ordination Meeting of LCJE had been organised by Arnold Fruchtenbaum, Area Co-ordinator for North America. Fruchtenbaum chaired eight two-hour sessions in the course of the thirty-six hours of the meeting, at which a number of significant papers were presented on topics of crucial importance for Jewish evangelism.

Dr Richard DeRidder and Dr Louis Goldberg presented papers on the topic, "How does one's theological perspective affect one's attitude towards Jewish evangelism?", from the viewpoint of an amillennialist and of a premillennialist respectively. Rev. Harold Sevenser contributed a paper on "The Christian Embassy", from the viewpoint of a Jewish mission. On the second day, the morning's topic was "Messianic Congregations", from the viewpoint of a participating leader by Rich Nichol, and from the viewpoint of a Jewish mission by Rev. William Currie. The final major theme was "Ethics in Jewish Evangelism", explored in relationship to the Jewish community by Rev. Moishe Rosen, and in relationship to other Jewish missions by Rev. Herb Links.

Following each of these papers, there was an opportunity for open discussion. Although the various participants represented a whole spectrum of possible views (particularly in the fields of eschatology and of attitudes to Messianic congregations), the discussions were conducted in a frank, honest and irenic manner! There was considerable agreement in support of Sevenser's thesis on the Christian Embassy, in which the tenets of the Embassy's policy were contrasted with the call to unhesitating evangelism recorded in the New Testament. Sevenser set out to explore the effect the Embassy's work has had on Christian attitudes to Jewish evangelism, pointing out that while prayer for Israel is laudable, it is nonetheless inadequate as a fulfilment of the divine commission. It was recommended that this paper should be circulated widely in the theological seminaries.

International Co-ordinator David Harley's presence in Dallas for the conference enabled discussion to assess the progress of LCJE since the 1983 Newmarket Consultation. Satisfaction was expressed that a budget of \$10,000 per year should cover the costs of a part-time office, publications and the travel costs of the International Co-ordinator and Steering Committee on behalf of LCJE. Appreciative comments were recorded about the Bulletin (*Ed.: Thank you!*).

As always, the conference found its lighter moments in fellowship over food (and in the jacuzzi!). Participants expressed their grateful pleasure at being able to come together for a meeting of this kind, and it was agreed that a similar gathering should take place in Chicago after an interval of one year. The view was shared that, in addition to the intellectual stimulus of the papers and discussions, the friendship and understanding sown at such an occasion had the potential to bear lasting fruit in terms of future mutual co-operation.

N.B. Excerpts from some of the papers presented at Dallas will be prepared for inclusion in future issues of the Bulletin.

No! No! NO!
!N? DO! NO!
NO! NO!
No! NO!

by Elizabeth Hill
Editor

The recurring theme in the reports in this quarter's LCJE Bulletin is OPPOSITION.

- OPPOSITION to Felasha Christians arriving in Israel
- OPPOSITION to a faithful Jewish believer's ministry in Australia
- OPPOSITION to Jewish evangelism courses at an American Seminary
- OPPOSITION to Christians on kibbutzim in Israel

Of course, there have always been individuals who disapprove of those of us who seek to communicate the gospel of Messiah Jesus to the Jewish people. Saul of Tarsus was perhaps the first notable example.

Recently, however, the opposition has become more vocal, more widespread and more organised.

A couple of decades ago, it was not uncommon to find American Jewish groups inviting a Jewish believer in Jesus to address them publicly. He or she would be regarded as a curiosity, falling into the same category as a visiting Martian or a snake-eater. Today, however, the rabbi would veto the invitation.

A decade ago, no-one was circulating pamphlets entitled, "Why you CANNOT be Jewish and believe in Jesus". Today, however, there are many such anti-missionary apologetic pamphlets and newspaper articles. And their tone becomes ever more vitriolic. On December 21st 1984, the Jewish Press (of New York) carried a piece under the headline, "Missionaries: Eichmann's Accomplices". The writer, orthodox rabbi Yaakov Spivak, said, "There is no question in my mind that the missionaries are succeeding" - succeeding in bringing about what he defined as the spiritual genocide of American Jewry. Even that bastion of respectability, the London Times, published a letter on April 6th 1985 from Marcus Braybrooke of the Council of Christians and Jews, saying that "conversionist activity implies a 'spiritual final solution'".

Why the sudden outburst of negative publicity? After all, it's not as if bringing the gospel to the Jewish people was something new. Missionary work among the Jewish people, in its modern form, commenced at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Many thousands of Jewish people recognised Jesus as their Messiah in those days - in the overcrowded East End of London, in the forgotten depths of Ethiopia, and later in the pre-war communities of Germany and Poland.

Is it that the rabbis have suddenly recognised that 'the missionaries'

can no longer be classified as THEM? Half of them are US! The missionaries are OUR sons and daughters, who, far from shedding their Jewishness and assimilating into the Gentile Christian sub-culture, are publicly proclaiming that Jesus too is one of US! See that young evangelist over there - he's a SABRA!

On February 25th 1985, the Task Force on Missionaries and Cults (a project of the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York) sent a memo to Long Island rabbis. Spotlighting the efforts of two of the major Jewish missions in the USA, the American Board of Missions to the Jews and Jews for Jesus, the memo continued:

"They are trying to rent space in order to conduct an interfaith seder in your community. If that fails, then they ask Long Island churches to rent them a room, an office or any space at all.

They hope to gain church approval on the basis that they are a "co-Christian body" sharing in the Christian mission.

Of course, what they seek is the imprimatur of a recognised church group in each local community.

PLEASE CONTACT YOUR CHRISTIAN COLLEAGUES (sic!).. IMPRESS UPON THEM HOW SERIOUS AN AFFRONT THESE HEBREW-CHRISTIAN GROUPS ARE TO THE JEWISH COMMUNITY..

IF THEY CANNOT RENT SPACE IN A CHURCH, THEY MAY TRY TO RENT A CATERING ESTABLISHMENT OR A LARGE RESTAURANT. PLEASE CALL ANY SUCH PLACES IN YOUR COMMUNITY AND ASK THE CO-OPERATION OF THE MANAGEMENT IN NOT RENTING TO THESE GROUPS."

Here is evidence that pressure is being brought to bear, not only on readers of the Jewish media, but also upon churches and secular commercial establishments which might facilitate the evangelistic activities of Jewish believers. The Christian minister, receiving what appears to be a spontaneous telephone call from the local rabbi, is being subjected to a conspiracy to condition his attitude against Jewish evangelism.

Do such tactics indicate that our self-appointed opponents are afraid that major hidden assumptions in the Jewish mentality at large have been undermined or even overturned? Has the point been successfully made that you CAN indeed be Jewish and believe in Jesus? Are more mothers than ever before asking their rabbi, "Nu, so what's wrong with my boychik believing in the Messiah?"

Are there now more 'travellers along the road' with us, who, while not yet being for Jesus, are by no means against him?

We can count the numbers of those who publicly put their faith in Jesus as their Messiah. We can count the numbers of those who attend our meetings. But can we count the numbers of those who are positively influenced by our message, who recognise that belief in Jesus is indeed a Jewish option?

One mission leader in the USA has gone on record as saying that he believes that one in every five American Jews is ready and open to consider the evidence for the Messiahship of Jesus. Although the ratio might still be a little lower than that elsewhere in the world, our opponents are certainly worried about something!

FOCUS ON ETHIOPIA PART 3

THE PLIGHT OF THE FELASHA CHRISTIANS



A Felasha Christian Family

Focus on Ethiopia, parts 1 and 2 ("An Historical Survey of Christian Work among the Felashas" and "The Tribe in the Headlines: A Christian Perspective") appeared in LCJE Bulletin no 4, February 1985. In Part 3, we report on Rev. Eric Payne's journey to Ethiopia earlier this year in search of news about the Felasha Christians.

"After a gap of 18 years, I was afraid that I would stumble over every other word of Amharic", joked Eric Payne, former Head of Mission of CMJ (the Church's Ministry among the Jews) in Ethiopia. But Payne, who ministered among the Felashas from 1946 to 1967, was delighted to find his old fluency in the language return to him as soon as he set foot on Ethiopian soil earlier this year. He had travelled to Addis Ababa ostensibly to lead a group of British tourists around the sights of Ethiopia. The timing of his journey, however, enabled him also to fulfil his urgent longing to find out what had become of the Felasha Christians in the midst of the events which have flashed on to the world's television screens over the past six months and more: the tragic famine and the undercover exodus of many of the Felashas to Israel.

Although they did not visit the most severely hit famine areas in the north and south of the country, Payne's party still covered

an area the size of France, taking in the capital Addis Ababa and the Gondar region where Payne had exercised his long ministry. In Gondar, they were able to attend a major baptismal festival of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. "Vast crowds attended", reported Payne, "but sadly this is no sign of revival in that church, more of a safe way of protesting against the government. There is little sign of repentance, yet there is a hunger among the people. The real Christians have had to go underground, and these include some of the Felasha Christians."

The various groups of Felasha Christians, who had continued to meet together after political circumstances forced the withdrawal of CMJ's non-Ethiopian personnel in 1979, are no longer able to gather for fellowship. For some, the reason lies in the proximity of the rebel forces, with the resulting suspicion of the authorities on even the smallest of meetings. Others, however, have simply backslidden, discouraged by the economic and political pressures of their situation.

Nevertheless, Payne was able to meet and talk at length with some of his former fellow-evangelists, such as Qes Asres, a Felasha priest within the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, and his family. Fearing that many of the Felasha Christians might be falling between two stools, spurned both by the Marxist government and by the Israeli rescue teams, Payne had travelled equipped with practical means of assistance for those in need. "And so I found it", he said. "Some have been told clearly by the Israelis who had been organising the airlift that they would not be helped to go to Israel unless they repudiated their Christian faith. Nevertheless, many have gone and some are on their way now."

Payne now has documentary evidence that the same ambivalent attitudes are being shown to the Felasha Christians who have arrived in Israel. (It is, of course, the orthodox leaders in Israel who have been assigned the responsibility of 'settling' the new arrivals.) In one letter, for example, a young Felasha Christian divulges that she has been told that she cannot be accepted as a citizen of Israel or attend the university of her choice if she will not undergo the symbolic ritual immersion (which the rabbis are demanding of all the Ethiopian immigrants, to the dismay of many) AND repudiate her faith in the Messiah. Instead, she has been faced with the agonising task of working to repay the money spent on bringing her from Ethiopia - and then of being repatriated to her native land. Payne does not believe that the Israelis will carry out this threat, because of the adverse publicity that would be generated. Nevertheless, he says, "clearly the Felasha Christians there in Israel need our prayers and maybe our financial and other help, and we must see that they get it."

At the time of writing, Payne is himself in Israel, visiting his correspondents there and assessing for himself the situation of the various Felasha Christians known to him who have been airlifted to the land where they hope to be able to make their permanent home.

Ed. note: An account has been opened at an English bank for emergency aid for Felasha Christians in need, drawing initially on funds saved for just such a purpose over 40 years ago by Eric Payne's sister-in-law in Switzerland! Contributions (made payable to 'Felasha Mission Account') will be forwarded by the Editor.

of MOLES and PLANTS



Betty Baruch, herself a Jewish believer, is the LCJE Co-ordinator for Australia/New Zealand. Last month, she completed her first 20 years of ministry among the Jewish community in Melbourne! We asked her to share some more 'pages from her diary' with us: in the extracts below, she describes the kind of opposition she sometimes faces.

I was at an elderly citizens' home visiting the father of one of my Jewish friends, when his grandson burst into the room. Although he had given every appearance of being in a tearing hurry, he didn't rush away at the end of his visit. Instead, he seemed very interested in the work he knew I was doing, and asked some penetrating questions. He indicated he would like to know more about my faith, and I assured him I'd be in touch.

Another Jewish believer had met him casually at the house he was sharing with several other Jewish young men. She phoned to invite him to an evening of discussion at her home, mentioning that she had asked me to come too. He arrived punctually, bringing a friend. The two young men became immersed in what we, as Jewish believers, had to say about Jesus. When they asked questions, it was only to clarify some point we had made. There were no loud arguments, and when they left it was with reluctance, as though they were having to drag themselves away.

Time proved, however, that theirs was just a clever act. They were plants.

Some weeks later, the local Jewish paper announced details of a public meeting being called for the purpose of countering the influence of the cults on Jewish young people in Melbourne. My Jewish believer friend decided to go, for believers too were being troubled by the cults.

A rabbi from the States was the main speaker. He urged the Jewish community to 'take up arms' against those making inroads in Jewish student ranks, citing Hare Krishna and Ananda Marga and others. And then he spoke at length about the harm that was being done by Christian missionaries. The latter inclusion was not a surprise to my friend, but what did surprise her was the sight of someone she had entertained in her own home as one of the main organisers!

We had been taken in by the two young men. To their credit, they did eventually return the Bible that had been lent to them. We still pray that somewhere some seed may have been sown.



I had been visiting her for years; and when weeks went by without my going to see her, she telephoned, urging me to come again.

"Why should I come?", I asked her. "You know my purpose in coming is to share the truth about Jesus, our Messiah, who means everything to me. You won't allow me so much as to mention His name." She was silent for a long moment, then she said, "All right. Talk about Jesus if that's what you want. But come! Come tomorrow!"

So I resumed my visits, but now I went to see her only when she rang asking me to come. In spite of her avowed willingness to allow me to speak freely of my Lord, she continued to talk non-stop about her own concerns, the family and the neighbours. Whenever I reminded her that it was Jesus I had come to speak about, she would pause to listen in deadening silence!

On one of my visits, she told me about the new neighbours across the road. They were very 'frum', and since both husband and wife worked, he for the local Jewish newspaper, she was keeping an eye on their children when they returned from school.

Soon I began to notice that, before I had even driven away after visiting her, she was already out of her front door and hurrying over to the neighbours. This raised suspicions even in my normally unsuspecting mind! But I continued to visit her each time she asked me to do so. The months lengthened into years, and I eventually heard that the frum neighbours were leaving to make aliyah. After they had departed, she let drop the fact that the husband had been preparing a report for his newspaper on the activities of Christian missionaries. Immediately the questions surfaced in my mind. Had she endeavoured to help him in the matter of her 'own' visiting missionary? If so, what possible significance could be placed on one who came only when implored to do so?!



As he walked into the room with a tall student each side like a bodyguard, I recognised him immediately. This was a Christian students' meeting, and these three were the only ones wearing yarmulkas! The last time we met was at the university where a group of us had supported the Jews for Jesus team in their lunchtime witness. He had introduced himself then as the rabbi who served as chaplain to the Jewish students on campus. Now here he was, attending the meeting at which I was scheduled to speak - and I found the situation anything but relaxing!

Nevertheless, I was given a wonderful liberty to speak of my own experiences in the Lord. Along with the other students present, the three whose entrance had so alarmed me listened quietly throughout. It was only at question time that the rabbi at last spoke. He said he wanted Christians to know that to use the words 'Jews' and 'Jesus' in the same phrase with a positive connotation was a contradiction in terms and unacceptable to Jewish people. When he finished speaking, there was a stunned silence. The majority of those present had never given this any thought and found the rabbi's remarks difficult to fathom. In discussion later, they said they simply couldn't see what his objection was!

But when the Jews for Jesus team next visited, they found themselves banned from the campus at the request of the Christian students. The latter said that their relations with the Jewish students were delicately poised in negotiations, and they didn't want anything to jeopardise the situation. Negotiations for what? Was it a case of full marks for the rabbi?

CONTROVERSIAL AND BIBLICAL

"Controversial and Biblical.." - that's how Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia describes its courses in Jewish Evangelism.

Professor Roger S. Greenway has developed an annual Jewish Evangelism Seminar with a curriculum covering the theological and historical issues at stake in Jewish/Christian encounters, with training in practical methodology. To Greenway's surprise, it wasn't only his seminary students who got excited about the course! His local newspaper, the Philadelphia Inquirer, gave him an 8-column write-up under the headline, "FUNDAMENTALISTS STRIVE TO CONVERT JEWS".

The writer of the article examined Jewish concern at the "tremendous rise in missionary activity.. aimed at Jews nationwide", and spotlighted the kind of training given to the missionaries and "other arms of the Jewish conversion movement".

Westminster Seminary was found not to be unique: there are of course plenty of Christian schools in the USA offering courses in Jewish Evangelism. Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, for example, as been doing so since 1923. Originally, these courses served as training for the members of the Hebrew Christian Alliance (now the Messianic Jewish Alliance, based in Philadelphia). Louis Goldberg, Professor of Theology and Jewish Studies, said that the number of students on his Jewish courses had "tripled, quadrupled" over the past decade.

Some schools, however, said they offered no such courses. A spokesman for Oral Roberts University in Tulsa, Oklahoma, said, "I don't know of any accredited Christian schools that would be that forward".

Philip Abramowitz, director of the Jewish Community Relations Council Task Force on Missionaries and Cults, told the Philadelphia Inquirer that he saw an increasing need for "various programmes offering positive Jewish identity". James Rudin, director of Inter-Religious Affairs at the American Jewish Committee, was more direct. He likened Greenway's approach to "a kind of insidious weed which should really be stamped out".

But, encouraged by the interest shown in Greenway's courses, Westminster Seminary is planning to expand them to cover a full semester! Greenway envisages the development of what he calls "Messianic Rabbinical Studies": first-rate scholarship combined with missionary zeal and vision. After all, he asks, "Isn't that what the Scriptures call for?"



Dr Roger S. Greenway

NEWS FROM ISRAEL

חדשות מישראל

Prayer conference

Dr Henry Backhouse writes:

The idea of a small Intercessory Prayer Conference in Israel was floated to a small group at the end of the Christian Celebration during the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem last October. It received a warm welcome, and so about twenty people gathered in an upper room at Kibbutz Maale HaHamisha from January 15th to 21st 1985. There was almost an equal distribution of Israelis, residents and visitors for the occasion. A group of Israeli musicians led the singing and worship in both Hebrew and English. Johannes Facius (Co-ordinator of Intercessors International) led the conference, with help from Shell Sjoberg of Sweden and Lance Lambert and Steve Lightle from Israel.

The sense that we were meeting at the right time became evident from the first meeting, when we were presented with the hot news that two workers from Project Kibbutz, who were returning to Israel that day from two months' leave, had been refused entry. As we prayed, so firstly we heard that they had been given a week's reprieve, and then (in an unprecedented move) they had been allowed to remain in the country until their appeal to the Supreme Court had been heard.

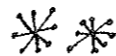
It became clear that this campaign against the leaders of Project Kibbutz emanated from a group in Tsfat (Safed) who also wished to remove all the workers of the Voice of Hope radio station in Lebanon and the staff of the International Christian Embassy. Tsfat is the centre of the kabbala study and we were conscious that we were entering into spiritual warfare as we prayed.

Quite apart from the immediate results of the conference, a new sense of urgency has come upon the church in Israel to grow up in its prayer ministry and to take seriously the challenge of evangelism. A second conference is being called for local believers this month, with the theme: "... you will not have gone through the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes" (Matthew 10:23).

The **BACK** Page



Jews for Jesus is pioneering a teaching programme for Messianic kids.. but they didn't tell us it included preparation classes for the chupa!
Pictured (left) are Chaim Avraham Dauermann aged two and Rebecca Lipkowitz aged one!



The Brazilian Messianic Mission is among the new member-societies of LCJE. Founded in 1967, the Missao Brasileira Messianica concentrates on teaching Brazilian Christians to engage in the task of Jewish evangelism and provides them with literature and other resources for use in cities with a substantial Jewish population - notably Sao Paulo (130,000) and Rio de Janeiro (80,000).



The Lutheran Church in 9 European countries has a forum called "Lutherischen Europaischen Kommission Kirche und Judentum" (LEKKJ) - "Lutheran European Commission on the Church and the Jewish People". The results of its study over recent years have just been published in a book, "Luthers Erben und die Juden" (Lutherisches Verlaghaus, Germany). The book contains theological reflection and documentation on mission and dialogue in Germany, Holland, France, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland. The Lutheran churches in Britain and Austria recently joined the LEKKJ, but too late for inclusion in the book!



Since the 1960s, the Scandinavian Israel Missions (of Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden and Iceland) have held joint summer courses. This year, it is Finland's turn to play host, and there will be a gathering at the end of July at Kauniainen Bible College, Helsinki. At least three speakers are expected from Israel (Ole Kvarme, Risto Santala and Seppo Norjanen) to explore the conference theme, "I will build my church".