

## **The Blessings of LCJE – What We Do**

By Tuvya Zaretsky

*Jewish Evangelism in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century?*

Cecelia Burger, may I begin with a word of appreciation for all of your hard and diligent effort behind all the details to make this one-day conference possible. I will add my gratitude to you and to Françoise Vessels for an excellent program. From all of us, thank you.

You, along with the staff and the Lord's family here at Christ Church Kenilworth, have provided an opportunity. Those of us who appreciate the value of the LCJE network have seized upon this occasion. We are benefiting from the blessings of this opportunity. It is good to take away from this day together an appreciation for what we have received.

### **Blessings**

When I speak of *blessings*, I have in mind the joy or happiness that comes from our loving God. He pours out favor, kindness and goodness that produces an experience of well being, the blessing of God. And, He does that at times and in various ways through our LCJE network. So, we can expect to come away with something of what God is doing that gives us encouragement, hope, faith and an increased confidence in the blessings of a living Lord.

### **History**

I begin with a brief frame that sets the history of how we came to gather here. Many of us began our walk with Jesus in the same frame of mind as reported in the testimony given by Edith Sherr. We thought at first, "I am the only Jew in the world today who believes in Jesus!" Then we discovered that there are others who share our passion to bring the news back to our own Jewish people. Soon, we discovered that we have a part in the larger body of Messiah Jesus.

In 1974, I attended the first Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization among 4,000 participants who gathered in Switzerland. There was little awareness of things that are Jewish associated with that meeting. A small "interest group" met for a seminar during that week. We found that we were not alone and had a place together in the larger Lausanne movement.

In June 1980, the LCWE held a consultation in Pattaya, Thailand, on unreached people groups, following the missiological lead of Ralph Winter. There were two important outcomes for Jewish evangelism. First, Lausanne Occasional Paper #7 was produced titled, "Christian Witness to Jewish People." Second, a group of participants formed there the Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism (LCJE). That was the origin of our network.

### **Network**

In the thirty years since we formed the LCJE has grown into 7 regional networks that function with the help of an elected International Coordinating Committee of four

members. The international committee of the LCWE considers ours the “most successful” of all the Lausanne affiliated networks.

It is important for us to remember that LCJE is not an organization. It is a network. Everyone who is here is the LCJE network. Like the threads of a fabric or the wires in the sound system, we are the connections between organizations that God is using to accomplish Jewish evangelism. We are like the roads between cities or the canals between lakes.

We communicate, connect, stimulate and make new things possible. And the Lord uses this network to bless organizations and workers in the field of Jewish evangelism.

### **Five Purposes of LCJE**

I want to highlight the five purposes of the LCJE. They help us remember that we are not building an organization. We are a network of people and organizations that come together to accomplish five things: we share, we study, we stimulate, we strategize and we arrange.

Once more, we share information, we study trends, we stimulate each other, we strategize and we arrange consultations.

First, we share information and resources. For example, Mitch Glaser and Michael Sischy gave reports about different types of evangelism as public proclamation. They provided information about the Isaiah 53 multi-media campaign and the World Cup outreach earlier in 2010. Our ideas for evangelistic creativity were challenged and encouraged. The purpose of such informative reports is to refresh our thinking regarding how to do Jewish evangelism.

Every time our regional networks come together, our meetings feature updates about mission activities and reports of new resources. We don't do this to boast in our efforts. Neither do we need to agree 100% about what is the *best* way to get the job done. Ours is a healthy network when we respect that God uses a wide variety of people, tools and means to accomplish Jewish evangelism. As a professional society, we sharpen the thinking of one another, validating views even while differing in our approaches. So, we share information with our peers for the good of the gospel. That's the first blessing of the LCJE network.

Second, we study current trends in the field of Jewish evangelism. LCJE functions as a network of professional people who want to efficiently use the resources that God has given us and to effectively deploy them for God's purpose.

This morning we heard from Michael about the trend toward Jewish-Gentile intermarriage. That trend has been studied globally where out-marriage rates in Europe are about 45-60%, 54% in the United States, 80% in Russia and Ukraine and 20% here in South Africa. It is a signal of potential culture change where a significant door for ministry now exists.

Other trends reported here included David Brickner's insights into missiological implications now appearing at the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Theologically we are dealing more often with supercessionism and Christian Zionism. Geographically there is the shift of Jewish population out of the Diaspora and into Israel. Demographically, we heard today about gospel movement among Jewish youth, Russian speakers, Jewish-gentile couples and throughout global online social networks.

So, we study current trends that effect Jewish evangelism in order to more effectively deploy God's resources in our field. This, too, is an encouragement, a blessing in our field.

Third, We stimulate one another's thinking on theological and Missiological issues. We want to shape and sharpen our strategic efforts in the cause of Jewish evangelism. And so, today we hear about missiological implications of planting Messianic congregations. At the same time, we consider the potential benefits for a traditional cultural church and a new Jewish disciple in its midst.

We are privileged to hear from New Testament scholar Darrell Bock this evening. We want to hear theological and Missiological ideas, analyze them together and critically challenge our own approaches for the purpose of strengthening one another. We want to sharpen our strategic efforts in the cause of Jewish evangelism. We are blessed to see the cause of the gospel made more accessible to Jewish people.

Lawrence Hirsch gave us a helpful report about a rationale for planting messianic congregations and implications for Jewish evangelism. We heard about them as culturally appropriate communities for discipleship. David Zadok and Dan Sered gave excellent reports about missiological trends and methods now employed in reaching Israeli Jewish people for Jesus. These too are blessings of our networking.

Fourth, we strategize on a global level so that Jewish people will hear and consider the good news of Jesus. The LCJE network in South Africa is one of seven regional affiliates. Information shared here is specific to this field of ministry, but it has relevance for other regions where mission workers serve the same cause. You meet together here in South Africa to consider ways to collaborate and to efficiently use the resources that God has given to us.

And so, the conversations between workers here in South Africa and workers from other parts of the world are extraordinarily important. That conversation continues through resources like the LCJE Bulletin where you can read about the work about your colleagues here and in other regions. We are able to strategize globally through the international meetings of the LCJE. I want to use this moment to encourage you to mark your calendar for the next LCJE international at High Leigh Conference Center in the United Kingdom in 2011. We will meet from the 7<sup>th</sup> through the 12<sup>th</sup> of August. Registration information is available here and online at [www.lcje.net](http://www.lcje.net).

Jack Carstens and John Atkinson provided workshops on strategies for Jewish evangelism in existing church structures. We also heard and discussed strategies from Diaspora

Missiology to approach Jewish sub-groups like intermarried, cross-dating and co-habiting Jewish-gentile couples.

And that brings me to the fifth purpose for which we gather, and that is to arrange consultations that will be useful to those engaged in Jewish evangelism. This meeting fulfills the fifth of those LCJE purposes. The fourth purpose, that is to strategize on a global level, is when you take advantage of the consultation opportunities.

Information about future meetings is available on the website at [www.LCJE.net](http://www.LCJE.net). Four other Consultations were mentioned at this time:

- LCJE Europe network – 15 to 19 November in Krakow, Poland
- LCJE AustralAsia network – 8 to 11 February 2011 in Too-Langi
- LCJE North America network – 1 to 3 March 2011 in St. Louis
- LCJE International network – 7 to 12 August 2011 in the UK

So, if you are encouraged in the kindness, the goodness, the favor of the Lord in this meeting, it is because of what you have put into it and can now take away.

Cecelia, thank you and your team for arranging this excellent consultation in Cape Town. Thank you all who care enough to participate in the LCJE network. You aid all of us through your sharing information and resources, through studying current trends together, by stimulating one another as we think theologically and missiologically, and by strategizing together in what the Lord would have us do to enable more Jewish people to hear the good news of Jesus.

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