

LCJE Bulletin

Issue 121, August-September 2015



*The 10th International Conference
in Jerusalem*

Networking Jewish Evangelism



Lausanne Consultation
on Jewish Evangelism



From the Coordinator

The LCJE Tenth International Conference ended in Jerusalem on August 21, 2015, with well over two hundred participants from six continents, including many Israeli believers. I want to thank again our tremendous conference staff for all that they did to make this conference a wonderful success, beginning with Israel Area Coordinator and our Country Host, David Zadok, his executive assistant Yulia Zlatkov, LCJE Secretary Christine Fulcrod, Alec Goldberg, Efraim and Jeannie Goldstein, Ann Hilsden, Dan Sered and Simon Stout, as well as the excellent staff of Sar-El Tours.

LCJE Bulletin
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Elections: We want to welcome and congratulate the new members of the International Coordinating Committee (ICC), Bodil Skjott and Dan Sered, and also very much thank Ann Hilsden and Mitch Glaser for their many years of service on the ICC. We have two new area coordinators: Rolf Heitmann for Europe and Efraim Goldstein for Israel. We extend our deep thanks to Jean-Paul Rempp and David Zadok for their dedicated service to their respective regions.

Papers and Presentations. This issue includes some conference papers and presentations. Other conference papers and presentations can be downloaded from: www.lcje.net/IndexofPapers2015.html or by going to "Papers" from the LCJE homepage and clicking on "2015 Papers."

Photos. Bob Mendelsohn's photos from the conference can be found at: <http://bit.ly/LCJE2015>

Conference Survey: I also want to thank Yoel Ben David and Dan Sered for putting together an excellent survey for us of our Jerusalem conference. Survey results can be downloaded from the main LCJE.net webpage. Some of these responses and other comments from various conference participants will help guide the ICC and regional coordinators in future conference planning and decision-making.

Articles in this Issue. We open this issue with the very welcome news of Barry Barnett's return to Israel, following an extensive legal battle. Next, one of the highlights of our Jerusalem conference was honoring many of the Messianic Pioneers in the Land of Israel. Bill Bjoraker wove together many of their stories into a beautiful tapestry. His article in this issue on Rabbi Daniel Zion grew out of that effort. Dan Sered, who led the 'Next Generation' night at the conference, shares his insights and the small group responses from that evening in his article, "LCJE: The Next Generation."

Next, Dr Skarsaune gives us an update on his *Jewish Believers in Jesus* series. Barry Rubin follows with information on his compilation of new Messianic resources available for Jewish evangelism.

We close this issue with Jim Sibley's paper from the Jerusalem conference that carried the provocative title, "The 'Lost Gospel' of Jerusalem." I think most readers will be very encouraged by Jim's analysis and conclusions of this 'lost Gospel'. Let us pray that many more outside of our ranks may also 'find' and embrace this Gospel of the priority of Jewish evangelism!

CEO Meeting **SAVE THE DATES:** The next CEO conference is now scheduled for May 8-12, 2017. The location is yet to be determined.

In our sure hope for the coming salvation of Israel. *Jim Melnick*
Isaiah 45:17: "Israel shall be saved by an everlasting salvation..."

Front cover photo: Group photo of attendees at LCJE Tenth International Conference in Jerusalem (August 2015)

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Barry Barnett Returns to Israel!

By Jim Melnick, LCJE International Coordinator



Dan Sered

Alison Barnett

Barry Barnett

Jim Melnick

(Ben Gurion Airport, August 10, 2015)

Returned to Israel!

On August 10, 2015, just a few days before the opening of the LCJE 10th International Conference in Jerusalem, Barry Barnett successfully returned to Israel. He and his wife Alison were welcomed by a small group at Ben Gurion Airport, where we awaited word in the Arrivals Hall that Barry's attempt to return to Israel would be successful. Besides his successful Israel Supreme Court case, Barry also carried with him a letter from the Ministry of Interior authorizing entry into Israel following a previous deportation order that barred him from the country for up to ten years (for more on Barry Barnett's story and legal case, please see LCJE Bulletin, November 2013, Issue #114, pp. 4-6; and November 2014, Issue #118, pp. 4-5)

Implications

Although Barry's return to Israel is a great step forward, full victory remains incomplete. Justice has yet to be served. Nevertheless, his legal team worked very hard to bring things to this point, and for that, his supporters are very thankful. But, in order to enter Israel, Barry was required, for example, to retain a large bond promising that he would not 'work' in the country based on the terms of his tourist visa. This was an absurd claim from the very beginning of this entire episode, and yet the Israeli government has maintained this fiction - as if Barnett is somehow poised to 'work' in Israel and must be formally barred by government order from doing so!

However, that continues to

be the legal game that is being played. It apparently gives some cover to the anti-missionaries and immigration officials who appear to have colluded to violate Barnett's civil and religious rights in the first place. As far as is known, none of those officials has been reprimanded or called out for what they did - beyond the publicity of the Israel Supreme Court case itself.

Nevertheless, we rejoice that Barry was finally able to return to the Land of Israel without further hindrance. For that we give the Lord all the praise!

*Jim Melnick
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Rabbi Daniel Zion

Pioneering Insider Witness within the Traditional Jewish Community in Eretz Yisrael

By Bill Bjoraker, PhD

Associate Professor of Judeo-Christian Studies, William Carey International University, Pasadena, California, specialist in oral strategies in education and mission, and adjunct professor in the Messianic Jewish Studies Program, The Kings University, Gateway, South Lake, Texas

Editor's Note: At the 10th International Conference in Jerusalem, Bill Bjoraker masterfully wove together a series of stories and testimonies of many of the early Messianic Pioneers in the Land of Israel. Since our conference time was limited, many of these stories by necessity had to be abbreviated. The amazing story of Rabbi Daniel Zion and the Jews of Bulgaria, is one such story, which Bill shares with us here in much greater detail. J.M.



Bill Bjoraker

*No, not I; no, not I, only you are Yeshua in me.
Only you bring me before the God of my fathers,
Only you can heal me from every evil illness,
No not I, No not I, only you are Yeshua in me!
Only you teach me to love all creation,
Only you teach me to love even the enemy,
No not I, No not I, only you are Yeshua in me!
For this reason I will stay in your love,
For ever will I be within your will,
No not I, No not I, only you are Yeshua in me!*

— Rabbi Daniel Zion

Introduction

Born in 1883 in Thessaloniki, where there was a large Jewish community, Rabbi Daniel Zion became the answer to the plea from many Jews who had immigrated into Bulgaria after the Balkan war in 1912. In answer to a plea in 1918, to “send rabbis,” the head of the yeshiva in Thessaloniki sent his son Daniel (age 35) to serve the Jewish community in Sofia. Daniel served the community well as a rabbi in the 1930s and was eventually chosen to be the Chief Rabbi of Bulgaria during the early years of WWII.

Early Years as a Rabbi Embracing Yeshua as Messiah

In the early 1930s, a Christian mystic, Peter Dunnov, invited Rabbi Zion to visit him. Daniel was impressed with the spiritual disciplines that Dunnov practiced, one of which was praying at sunrise. Sometime during this period, Daniel was praying at sunrise and saw a vision of Yeshua the

Messiah. He asked other rabbis what it meant. They couldn't say, so he finally went to the Bulgarian Orthodox metropolitan bishop Stephen, who wisely told him to forget about Christianity and to focus on Yeshua.

Rabbi Daniel never converted to the religion of Christianity per se, but instead continued living an orthodox Torah observant life. His faith in Yeshua as Messiah became known in Sofia, but he was such a respected rabbi, who lived a strictly orthodox/Torah observant life, that his opponents couldn't do much against him. Though he did not preach about Yeshua from the podium of his synagogue, each Shabbat afternoon Rabbi Zion studied the New Testament with a small group of Bulgarian Jewish community leaders in his home.

Saving the Bulgarian Jewish Community, 1943–1944

It is not an overstatement to say that Rabbi Daniel was a key

agent in saving the Bulgarian Jewish community from the Nazis. When in 1943 the Bulgarian government began the expulsion of Jews, Rabbi Zion called the Jewish people to gather in the central synagogue in Sofia to pray for the edict to be rescinded. When they came out of synagogue, they were attacked with truncheons, and 250 men were arrested. But, due to the good relationship that Rabbi Daniel Zion had cultivated with the Metropolitan (archbishop) Stephen of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, he was able to ask Stephen to intercede with the king, Tsar Boris III.

When there was talk of shipping the Jews to Germany, Rabbi Zion and his secretary wrote a letter to the King begging him in the name of Yeshua not to allow the Jews to be taken out of Bulgaria. In the letter he told the King he had seen a vision of Yeshua who told him to warn the king against delivering the Jews to the Nazis. The next day, King Boris was to

go personally to meet with Hitler. In Rabbi Daniel's sermon on the Shabbat after they visited the King's palace, he said,

Do not be afraid, dear brothers and sisters! Trust in the Holy Rock of our salvation ... Yesterday I was informed by Bishop Stephen about his conversation with the Bulgarian king. When I went to see Bishop Stephen, he said: "Tell your people, the King has promised, that the Bulgarian Jews shall not leave the borders of Bulgaria." When I returned to the synagogue, silence reigned in anticipation of the outcome of my meeting with Bishop Stephen. When I entered, my words were: "Yes, my brethren, God heard our prayers" (<http://www.petahtikvah.com/Articles/RabbiDanielZionChiefRabbiBulgaria.htm>)

The Bulgarian King never did comply with German demands for Jews to be deported to concentration camps. Although more than 10,000 Jews were sent to provincial Bulgarian cities, and 3500 to labor camps (not death camps), 2300 Jews were allowed to remain in Sofia. The Bulgarian Jews were not murdered in extermination camps like was the case for so many other European countries.

During the Nazi occupation, while he was still Chief Rabbi, the Nazis would take Daniel out and publically flog him, in front of the Great Synagogue in Sofia. Bulgarian Jews knew their rabbi (Daniel Zion) took the stripes that were intended for all Bulgarian Jews. They remembered the cattle cars packed with Jews from Thessalonica and Greece traveling through Bulgaria en route to death camps. The Bulgarian Jews sought to help their fellow Jews in any way they could. They knew that their rabbi had spared them from a similar fate, taking the punishment for them. What they didn't know was the vision

that Rabbi Zion had before he met with King Boris. As a result, Rabbi Zion received full credit for saving the Jews of Bulgaria, for which he received many beatings.

After the War

After the war Rabbi Zion knew that there was no future for the Jewish people in Bulgaria, even though the Bulgarian people had bravely defended the Bulgarian Jews. With communism coming to power, Rabbi Zion realized that the only place of sanctuary for the Jewish people was in Israel. He organized the Jews of Bulgaria, who respected him as the man who kept them alive during the Holocaust. Standing before them, he said, "My brothers, my dear sisters, we are now going to make mass aliyah [immigration to Israel]. We are going to go up to the Land of Israel. We are going to ascend to our destiny." They followed en masse. Rabbi Zion came to Israel as a hero. His followers were willing to listen to their rabbi's explanation that their lives had been saved by Yeshua. (<http://www.petahtikvah.com/Articles/RabbiDanielZionChiefRabbiBulgaria.htm>).

Later, the government of Israel officially thanked Bulgaria for its defiance of Nazi Germany. This story was kept secret by the Soviet Union, which took control of Bulgaria after war. The communists would not publicly recognize the role of the King and the Church in saving the Jews, as the royal and church leaders were considered to be enemies of communism. As a result, the documentation of the story of the Bulgarian Jews only became available after the end of the Cold War in 1989. The number of 48,000 Bulgarian Jews was known to Hitler, yet not one was deported or murdered by the Nazis." (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Jews_in_Bulgaria).

Life in Israel (1949–1979)

In Israel, Daniel Zion was immediately accepted as the rabbi of Bulgarian Jews. Even though a rabbinical court stripped him of his rabbinical credentials because he refused to stop talking about his faith in Yeshua, he continued to be a rabbi first in Jerusalem, then in Jaffa. At the same time, he continued to live and worship as an orthodox Jew, while leading orthodox synagogues.

Although he did not preach openly about Yeshua in synagogue services just as he had done in Sofia, each Shabbat afternoon Rabbi Zion continued to study the New Testament with a select group of Bulgarian Jews in his home and often any who wanted to join them.

Rabbi Zion gave a radio interview in Jerusalem in the 1950s on the national Israeli radio station, in which he expressed his faith in Jesus as the Messiah. This was most probably the first of its kind witness to Yeshua on Israeli radio. According to Jacob Gartenhaus, a Jewish believer who worked with Southern Baptists and was later the Director of the independent International Board of Jewish Missions:

God opened the door through "Kol Yisrael," the official radio broadcasting station of Israel, for Rabbi Daniel Zion to preach the Good News of the Lord Jesus Christ, the One and only True Messiah of Israel, from the inspired, preserved, inerrant word of God. This was the first time that any person was given the privilege of preaching the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, the true Messiah, on "Kol Yisrael." (<http://www.messianicgoodnews.org/rabbi-daniel-zion/>).

Legacy

Rabbi Daniel Zion came to faith through a vision and never went through the tunnel of cultural and religious conversion, thanks to the wisdom of his friend, Stephen, the Archbishop of the Bul-

garian Orthodox Church. The wise Archbishop told him he did not have to convert to Christianity but could simply embrace Yeshua as Messiah, and that is what Rabbi Zion did. Would that there had been many Christian clerics over the centuries with Stephen's view; how many more Jewish people might have embraced their Messiah?

The Apostle Paul stated a principle in I Corinthians 15:46, "First the natural, then the spiritual." Though he was speaking of the first Adam and his natural descendants and the last Adam (Christ) in his resurrected body and the spiritual bodies those who follow Him will receive, there is a sense in which this principle applies to Rabbi Daniel Zion's life work as well— first, he saved Jews physically from physical death during the Holocaust and also brought the message of salvation from spiritual and eternal death to many of his Jewish people. His actions in saving them from the Nazis won him the respect to be heard when he spoke the message of the Gospel of Messiah Yeshua, and how they could be saved through him. Thus, Rabbi Zion's life is a living message to the truth that God cares about both human flourishing and shalom in *Olam ha zeh* (This World), and about eternal salvation in the *Olam ha ba* (The World to Come). Both social/humanitarian action and evangelism are aspects of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God.

In 1979, Rabbi Zion went to be with Yeshua at the age of 96. The Bulgarian Jewish community in Israel gave him full military and state honors. His casket stood in the center of Jaffa with a military guard and at noon was carried by hand all the way to the cemetery in the city of Holon. He was buried as the Chief Rabbi of Bulgarian Jews who saved them from the Nazi Holocaust. He was 100 % Jewish and 100 % follower and disciple of Yeshua the Messiah (<http://www.petahtikvah.com/Articles/RabbiDanielZionChiefRabbiBulgaria.htm>).

Rabbi Daniel Zion's Spiritual Identity

Rabbi Daniel never converted to "Christianity" as a religion. He embraced Yeshua as Messiah and re-

mained faithful to a Torah-observant life style. His religion was always traditional Judaism, but his *faith* was in Messiah Yeshua. In this sense, he was not a "Messianic Jew" as we usually define them in the contemporary Western and American movement that has emerged since the 1970s. He lived before the modern Messianic Jewish movement. Nor was he a "Hebrew Christian" (as Jewish believers in Jesus used to be called before the modern Messianic movement), because he did not identify culturally as a "Christian." He never had to re-affirm his Jewish identity or religion - he never lost it. He was born, raised and lived out his life as a traditional Jew. He would be more accurately described as living and bearing witness to Yeshua as an "insider" within traditional Judaism.

Are there many such insider witnesses today within traditional synagogues in the State of Israel? There are some, but they would necessarily be not widely publicized. However, we should pray for them as one form of witness that God is using.

Rabbi Daniel's story has been a hidden one that needs to be told to the broader Jewish community and to the world, a story of faithfulness and courageous witness through living and suffering for the Messiah he loved. His life story put to film would make a fascinating movie. As far as we know, there are no standard biographies in book form that have been written about him, only articles. Further research needs to be done by interviewing living descendants of families who were members of the synagogue community of mostly Bulgarian Jews of Jaffa that Rabbi Daniel led from the 1950s-1970s.

While in Israel in August 2015, I heard and rumbled about (and actually met with one) young Messianic Jewish Israelis who have experience in film-making who do indeed aspire to produce a movie of his life. May they be encouraged and empowered to succeed, *b' ezrat Ha Shem*.

Bill BJORAKER

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Bibliography

A more detailed account of the story of Rabbi Daniel Zion can be found on Rabbi Joseph Shulam's website from which much of this account is taken: "Rabbi Daniel Zion: Chief Rabbi of Bulgaria during World War II" <http://www.petahtikvah.com/Articles/RabbiDanielZionChiefRabbiBulgaria.htm>

Messianic Good News: <http://www.messianicgoodnews.org/rabbi-daniel-zion/>

Netivyah Bible Instruction Ministry: <http://www.netivyah.org/article/rabbi-daniel-zion-zl/>

Videos on youtube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-83wBkb2cNo>

https://search.yahoo.com/yhs/search;_ylt=AwrTcdfiM_9V6fgAgrMnnIIQ?p=youtube+Rabbi+Daniel+Zion&fr2=sb-top&hspart=mozilla&hsimp=yhs-003

LCJE: The Next Generation

By Dan Sered, New ICC Member and Jews for Jesus Israel Director

Editor's Note: The Next Generation night during the 10th International Conference in Jerusalem was held on August 19, 2015.



Dan Sered



Small Group 31

Overview

During the LCJE international conference we took an entire evening session to contemplate the LCJE and the next generation. I think that everyone agrees that this is an important topic, because if we do not invest in the next generation, then the LCJE will die with us. As a network that is committed to strategizing ways more Jewish people will consider the Gospel, the next generation becomes a vital group if we indeed want to keep current and culturally relevant. As part of the evening we heard from three speakers: Eli Birnbaum, Jaime Hilsden and Michael Hedrick. They are not necessarily experts in reaching the next generation, nor would they define themselves as representatives of 'the next generation,' but the author found them to be in a unique ministry position to offer us, the LCJE network, some advice and insights. I want to encourage you to check out their papers online (see <http://lcje.net/Indexof-Papers2015.html>).

Questions for Small Groups

Another aspect of the evening,

and on one that I wish to focus, was a time of reflection and discussion in small groups around five leading questions. I want to take this opportunity to thank those conference participants who stayed and brainstormed around the tables discussing these questions. For those who were not present at the conference, the questions were as follows: 1) What are the strengths that we have, as the LCJE, in fostering the next generation in Jewish evangelism? 2) What are some weaknesses that the LCJE has in fostering the next-generation? 3) Brainstorm and list actions that we can take to prepare the next generation for the future of Jewish ministry. 4) If you were to time travel back to 1983, to the first LCJE international conference, what paper would you give that generation to help them raise up and prepare the next generation? 5) If you were to attend the 20th LCJE conference, what would confirm to you that we have been successful in raising up the next generation? All responses from each group were collected and are hereby summarized with my own comments and

observations.

LCJE's Strengths

The LCJE network has many strengths that can benefit the next generation of workers in Jewish ministry. Among the strengths that were listed by the groups include: partnerships, connections, availability, brainstorming ideas, global diversity, accessibility, and breadth of ministry exposure. In summary, and not surprisingly, our greatest strength and what we can offer the next generation is that we are a network; not an organization. We have the advantage of being global and fluid. The LCJE is what we make of it, so let's continue to be a Gospel-centered movement that exists to bring the Kingdom of God to our Jewish people.

LCJE's Weaknesses

In order to be able to improve and grow, one must know where it falls short. You can't understand the grace of God without the admission that you are a sinner. Similarly, we must agree that we are not perfect and that we have some weaknesses. Some of the weaknesses that were men-

tioned in the LCJE's fostering of the next generation include: a lack of mentorship/discipleship, lack of conference topics that address training; not enough time for fellowship; that we are too overly structured, too closed, too focused on non-evangelistic ministry, not having many young people in attendance, and too academic over practical.

It seems to me that our overall weakness is that we are not focusing enough on building relationships. If you read the papers that were presented, it seems obvious that the next generation is seeking more and deeper relationships. Around the tables, as we discussed these issues, we felt that our own lack of focus on relationships both between ourselves at the conference (i.e. not enough time for fellowship) and as topics presented in our own ministry of Jewish evangelism deters the next generation from being more engaged and involved in LCJE. As we look to the regional conferences and the 11th LCJE international conference, it is my hope and prayer that building and fostering relationships will be a focus for us. At the next conference we should have more times of fellowship built in to the program, as well as more times of discussion and brainstorming paper topics that are related to building deeper

relationships within the Jewish community.

Actions to consider

Among the actions that were listed as we prepare the next generation for the future of Jewish ministry were the following: invite more participants, focus on social media, construct the conference with more of a relationship component, provide scholarships, bring more big names, avoid jargon language, create a mentoring program, have more Gospel preaching, discuss the question 'What makes Jesus good news to your generation?'. As I read this, I pray that we will be able to implement these suggestions. I know that the LCJE leadership welcomes more suggestions and input.

Unfortunately, we are bound by time and there was not much of it for the discussion groups to discuss the last two questions. In particular the fourth question: 'What paper would you give in the 1st international conference to help them in raising up and preparing the next generation?' The fifth question asked: 'What would confirm that we have been successful in raising up the next generation if you were to attend the 20th LCJE international conference?' The responses were: the majority of the delegates

being Jewish; if held in Jerusalem, that the session would be conducted in Hebrew, with the children and grandchildren of the next generation leading worship, presenting papers and encouraging their next generation.

Continuing to Explore

To conclude, I think that we need to continue to explore and develop ways for us to build up and encourage the next generation. At the LCJE conference I was impressed and encouraged by Bodil Skjøtt and the Danish Israel Mission (DIM). The vast majority of the DIM delegation to the conference was made up of young adults, and I also discovered that Bodil has young adults on her board of directors of the DIM. I do not know of any other ministry that has that. This is an example for us - namely, if we want to have young adults involved in the LCJE, let's give them opportunities to attend and to lead. Sure they will make mistakes, but we make mistakes all the time. If I were to attend the 20th LCJE international conference, what would confirm to me that we were successful in raising up the next generation would be if the majority of attendees and LCJE leadership, the ICC and regional coordinators, would be under the age of 35.

Dan Sered

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SOME SAMPLE RESPONSES from SMALL GROUPS:

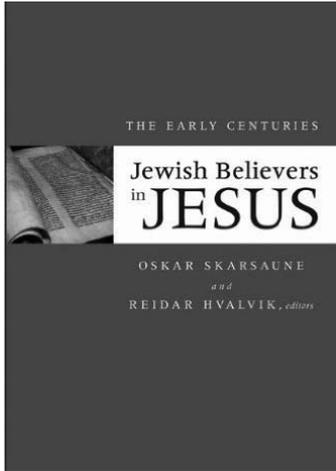
Brainstorm and list actions that we can take to prepare the next generation for the future of Jewish ministry:

- Pair people together
- Deconstruct the conference with more relational component
- Mentoring program and personal mentoring
- Invite more participation
- More Gospel preaching

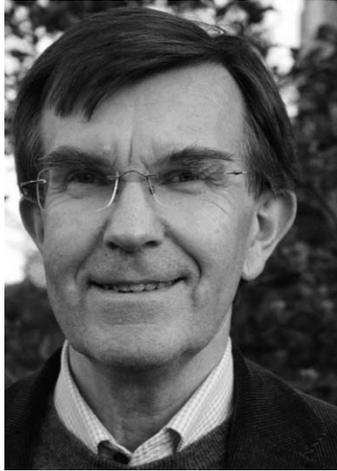
Update on the “*Jewish Believers in Jesus*” Series Report on Progress and Plans

By Dr Oskar Skarsaune
MF Norwegian School of Theology, Oslo

Editor's Note: Dr Skarsaune was unable to attend the LCJE 10th international conference in Jerusalem, but his paper was read by the Norwegian Church Ministry to Israel (NCMI) General Secretary and CEO, Rolf Gunnar Heitmann.



Jewish Believers in Jesus



Dr. Oskar Skarsaune

Overview

The work is presently planned as a five-volumes series, the series title being, *Jewish Believers in Jesus*. This comprehensive history of Jewish Believers in Jesus will be the first since Hugh J. Schonfield's *The History of Jewish Christianity: From the First to the Twentieth Century* (in two volumes, London: Duckworth, 1936). Schonfield covered the whole history in 250 pages, and his book is no more than a summary overview, sometimes flawed by errors of fact and judgement. It is therefore fair to say that *Jewish Believers in Jesus* will be the first ever of its kind.

The First Volume

The first volume, *Jewish Believers in Jesus: The Early Centuries*, with Oskar Skarsaune and Reidar Hvalvik, editors, was published by Hendrickson in 2007. In addition to the two editors, 14 other top-rate scholars in Norway,

Sweden, Finland, Germany, England, the USA and Canada covered the subject for the period 30 C.E. until ca. 500 C.E in 930 pages. The book received many favorable reviews by scholars, but more importantly, I received many emails and letters from Jewish believers who told me how important the volume was to them personally in molding their own Jewish identity as believers in Jesus and in knowing they were not the first to do so.

Work on the Second Volume

Work on the second volume is presently progressing at good speed; the projected deadline for print-ready manuscript is 2017. The provisional title is Skarsaune, Hvalvik eds., *Jewish Believers in Jesus: The Early and High Middle Ages* (ca. 500 – 1300 C.E). There will be four or possibly five contributors in this volume, including myself as chief editor and main author.

The Issue of Forced Baptisms

Since the title of all five volumes is *Jewish Believers in Jesus*., the special challenge of the medieval period is the new phenomenon of forced baptisms. Can Jews who were baptized under threat of exile or death be counted as believers in Jesus? Let me just make the following comments: First of all, forced conversions were not the order of the day during the medieval period. In the centuries covered by the second volume, we mainly find forced baptisms in the seventh century in Visigothic Spain, and the baptisms that took place under the Rhineland massacres of Jews during the first year of the first crusade, 1096. In both cases, most forced converts were allowed to return to Judaism when the rounds of persecution came to an end. There is no way of knowing how many of those forcefully baptized chose to remain Christians in spite of this license to return to Judaism, but we are probably not speaking of very large numbers. Occasional use of force happened elsewhere and at different times, but not on the large scale of the Spanish and Rhineland persecutions.

Most converts during the period covered in the second volume were voluntary converts and thus qualify as Jewish Believers in Jesus. The forcefully converted who chose to remain Christians are a special case, and recent scholarship has shown that they should not only be seen as pitiable victims, but as interesting people who forged a new bicultural identity for themselves. In the projected third volume,

this category will take on even greater significance, especially with regard to the Spanish and Portuguese Marranos. The more I have seen into this history, the more interesting it becomes.

The third volume is projected to cover the period ca. 1300 – 1600 C.E. Around the turn of the fourteenth century the Jews had been expelled from England, and there had been significant expulsions from France and Germany as well. The Jewish history in

Spain came to a dramatic climax with the expulsions from Spain in 1492 and Portugal in 1494. On the other hand, new cities and countries were opened for Jewish settlement, and the three centuries treated in this volume saw much Jewish expansion, creativity and renewal.

Fourth and Fifth Volumes

At the present stage of planning, the fourth volume will cover the 17th and 18th centuries, and

the fifth will cover the 19th and 20th centuries. Being 69 years of age, I foresee that the completion of this large project will be realized by others than myself.

With warm greetings to you all,

Oskar Skarsaune
Oskar.Skarsaune@mf.no

The Second Volume: Jewish Believers in Jesus: The Early and High Middle Ages (ca. 500 – 1300 C.E.)

Provisional outline (as of 18 June 2015)

Part One: Introduction

Oskar Skarsaune, Oslo, Norway

Part Two: Jewish Believers within the Orbit of the Late Roman Empire

1. *Legal and Theological Presuppositions*
Oskar Skarsaune, Oslo, Norway
 1. *Roman Tradition and Christian Theology
in the Theodosian Code*
 2. *Gregory I and Western Canon Law*
 3. *The Pragmatism of Kings and Princes*
2. *Byzantium*
*Oskar Skarsaune, Oslo and Isaiah Gruber,
Jerusalem, Israel*
3. *Italy*
Oskar Skarsaune, Oslo, Norway
4. *Germany*
Oskar Skarsaune, Oslo, Norway
5. *France*
Oskar Skarsaune, Oslo, Norway
 1. *Merovingian France (ca. 500–751)*
 2. *Carolingian France (751–987)*
 3. *Capetian France (987–1328)*
6. *Spain*
Oskar Skarsaune, Oslo, Norway
 1. *Visigothic Spain (456–711)*
 2. *Muslim Spain (711–1030)*
 3. *Christian Spain (1030–c. 1300)*

Part Three: Jewish Believers North of the Late Roman Empire

7. *The British Isles*
Oskar Skarsaune, Oslo, Norway
8. *Poland and Middle Eastern Europe*
*Tomasz S. Kolodziej, Washington D.C.,
United States of America*
9. *Russia*
Isaiah Gruber, Jerusalem, Israel
10. *The Jews of Caucasus*
Øyvind Steinnes, Sande, Norway

Part Four: Jews East and South of the Roman Empire

11. *The Syriac-Speaking Area*
Øyvind Steinnes, Sande, Norway
12. *Arabia*
Øyvind Steinnes, Sande, Norway
13. *Nubia and Ethiopia*
[Not yet decided]

Part Five: Conversion and Converts: Attempt Towards a Typology

Oskar Skarsaune, Oslo, Norway

Messianic Resources for Jewish Evangelism

Compiled by Barry Rubin, Messianic Jewish Publishers and Resources

Editor's Note: Barry Rubin was unable to attend the 10th International Conference in Jerusalem. In his stead, David Zadok presented the PDF version of his presentation, but we were unable to show the PowerPoint due to technical problems, as noted. Both files have now been posted to our LCJE.net website at the links shown below.



Overview

At several recent LCJE conferences, I've given updates on the latest and greatest publications for Jewish evangelism. Because my organization is not only one of the leading Messianic book and bible publishers (*Complete Jewish Bible, God's Appointed Times and Customs, a Messianic Passover Haggadah, A Messianic Commentary on Jude*, etc.), but also provides the most extensive catalog of its kind, I'm in a good position to know what's new in our world of Messianic resources for Jewish evangelism and am always glad to share this information with the LCJE.

PDF and PowerPoint Presentations

Unfortunately, I was unable to attend the conference in Jerusalem, primarily due to the fact that my daughter was in the last few days of pregnancy prior to the conference, and I wanted to be

there for the bris. We did send a PowerPoint presentation and a PDF, but, unfortunately, the former did not get shown due to technical problems. I'm able to include a link to that presentation here (at the end of this article). You can review these products online as desired and contact the publisher or provider. Nearly all the product slides on the PDF version provide the websites of the organizations that produce or distribute the resource.

Messianic Jewish Publishers and Resources

As you know, Messianic Jewish Publishers and Resources (formerly The Lederer Foundation) focuses on books and bibles to reach Jews with the message of the Messiah and teach Christians about the Jewish context of Christianity. We do this by carefully choosing which authors and books to publish or include in our catalog.

Our authors are tops in our field: Drs. David H. Stern, John and Patrice Fischer, David Friedman, Daniel Juster; Rabbis Russ Resnik and Barney Kasdan; Mission leaders, Drs. Mitch Glaser, Arnold Fruchtenbaum, and Sam Nadler; scholars like Drs. Michael Rydelnik, Jeff Seif and Joe Shulam...just to name a few. They represent most of today's major Jewish missionary organizations and academia. The PowerPoint presentation presents works by many of these outstanding men and women.

E-Books

In addition to printed books, nearly all our books are available as e-books from the major distributors. Just pull out your favorite reader (Kindle, Nook, or any other) and download any one of these excellent works. We are amazed at how important e-books have become in today's world.

Bible software packages

Most of our books are offered by bible software companies, such as Logos, BibleSoft, Bibleworks, Oak Tree, and many more, either separately or as part of a bundle. Soon, the CJB will be offered through YouVersion. These software packages make bible study more interesting and effective for those working in our field, those considering Yeshua, and anyone who is new to the Messianic faith and way of life.

Foreign language licensing

We have licensed publishing rights to many of our books so that they can be read in languages besides English—Spanish, Portuguese, German, Korean and many more. We're helping to get the message out to many in foreign lands. We also can license books that we carry but don't ac-

tually publish. So, depending on what country you serve in, you might find our resources available in print. We also keep copies of these books that you can order through:

www.messianicjewish.net

Messianic commentary series

We've also launched a Messianic commentary series (see slide 9 in the PowerPoint presentation). We're looking for more authors to write commentaries, starting with the Brit Hadashah. Contact: editor@messianicjewish.net if you'd like to contribute to this resource. We already get responses from pastors and Christian scholars who, many for the first time, have finally been able to understand Paul's letters, for example, that were a mystery to them before.

So, enjoy the PowerPoint Presentation. You can use the link below to access it.

Also, let us know if you have any books you would like to see published and/or distributed. We can help you.

Barry Rubin

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Messianic Resources for Jewish Evangelism PDF and PowerPoint presentations:

www.lcje.net/MessianicResources_2015.pdf

www.lcje.net/MessianicResources_2015_PPT.pptx

Next LCJE CEO Meeting: 8-12 May 2017

Location: To be determined

Visit the Lausanne Movement website:

www.lausanne.org

The 'Lost Gospel' of Jerusalem¹

Jim R. Sibley, PhD, Israel College of the Bible

Editor's Note: This paper was presented at the LCJE 10th international conference in Jerusalem in August 2015. It has been edited slightly for publication in the Bulletin. It is also available online at LCJE.net

Overview

A Google search of the phrase, "lost gospel," will result in over 53,000,000 hits. The problem with these claims to have discovered a lost gospel is that they have been found outside of the Bible. Nothing claiming to be a "gospel" can have any authority or credibility if found outside of God's Word. But the question I want to raise is this: Is there a sense in which a vital aspect of the gospel has been lost or overlooked *within* the Scriptures? I believe it has. The lost gospel of Jerusalem is the lost gospel of the apostles, the original understanding of the gospel, some of which has indeed been lost.

My thesis is a simple one: it is that Scripture teaches that the Jewish people should not only be a continuing priority in evangelism and missions, but that this priority is intrinsic to the gospel itself. It is not simply that this priority characterized the ministry of Paul, as recorded in the book of Acts; neither is it merely that this priority is still valid today;² it



Jim Sibley

is that this priority is intrinsic to the gospel itself. Ultimately, this is the case, because it is rooted in the promise of the fathers, as recorded first in Genesis 12:3b: "In you all the families of the earth will be blessed."

What I want to do is to demonstrate exactly how the Scriptures conceptualize this priority as "the gospel." I will try to do this by examining several Scripture passages.

Jewish Priority according to Paul in Romans 1:16

No passage is more commonly used to support the priority of the Jewish people in evangelism and missions than Romans 1:16.³ It is something of a central verse for those of us in Jewish ministry, and four years ago at our meeting in England, I predicted that the verse would receive attention again, and here we are! Even though Romans 1:16–17 is generally identified as expressing the central theme of the epistle to the Romans,⁴ the priority of Israel that is expressed in this verse has not received the attention it is due, even by our own membership.

Here Paul says: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek." The word translated "first" in this verse (πρῶτον) is in the neuter gender. The more common masculine form (πρῶτος) most often pertains "to being first in a sequence" or "to prominence."⁵

1. This paper is adapted from "Israel and the Gospel of Peter, Paul, and Abraham," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, forthcoming.
2. Some commentators completely ignore this priority. E.g., see Charles H. Talbert, *Romans*, Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2002), especially 35, 41, 81–82.
3. E.g., Stuart Dauerman, speaking at the Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism (LCJE), claimed: "A recent search of LCJE on-line resources located thirty-two documents quoting this text." Stuart Dauerman, "To the Jew, of Course!" (paper presented to the Ninth International LCJE Conference, High Leigh, England, 7–12 August 2011), 1. In contrast, A. F. Walls, writing on "The First Chapter of the Epistle to the Romans and the Modern Missionary Movement," does not mention Rom 1:16 and thus apparently does not consider it relevant to "the modern missionary movement." (A. F. Walls, "The First Chapter of the Epistle to the Romans and the Modern Missionary Movement," in *Apostolic History and the Gospel: Biblical and Historical Essays Presented to F.F. Bruce on His 60th Birthday*, ed. W. Ward Gasque and Ralph P. Martin, Exeter, England: Paternoster, 1970, 346–57).
4. E.g. see C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975), 87; Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 29; and Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 29.
5. Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed., ed. Frederick William Danker (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 892–93.

However, although the neuter, πρῶτον, may also express priority of sequence or prominence, it provides the only way to express priority of degree, "in the first place, above all, especially."⁶ The word is used in this sense also in Matthew 6:33, where Yeshua says, "But seek first [πρῶτον] His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."⁷ Evidence for this understanding of πρῶτον in Romans 1:16 may be found both in the context and in the grammatical structure of the verse. Attention first will be given to the contextual evidence for understanding the verse to express a continuing priority of degree for the Jewish people in missions and evangelism—i.e., "to the Jew especially."

The Context

The place of Israel in God's economy is never far from Paul's thought in Romans. In Romans 1:2–3, Paul says that the gospel was "promised beforehand through [God's] prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh." Michael G. Vanlaningham comments, "Rm 1:2–3 appears to show the special relevance of the gospel to the Jewish people because it has its roots in the Hebrew Scriptures."⁸ Paul, in explaining his eagerness to preach the gospel in Rome (Rom 1:15), gives a theological rationale that

includes his understanding of the gospel and the priority of the Jewish people in verse 16.

Paul returns to this priority in Romans 2:9–10, using virtually the same phrase (Τουδαίῳ τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἑλληνι) two additional times. In Romans 4, Paul explains how righteousness can be imputed by faith to both Jews and Gentiles. In the climactic conclusion of the doctrinal section of the epistle (i.e., Romans 9–11),⁹ Paul deals with this very issue of the Jewish people and their place in the plan and purposes of God. In chapter 15, Paul, in his appeal for unity in the church, recapitulates by saying, "For I say that Messiah has become a servant to the circumcision on behalf of the truth of God to confirm the promises given to the fathers, and for the Gentiles to glorify God for His mercy" (Rom 15:8–9a). Finally, he also adds that gentile believers should feel a sense of indebtedness to their Jewish brothers and sisters (Romans 15:27).

Since the role of Israel in God's redemptive plan for both Jews and Gentiles is found in the introduction, in the statement of the theme of the epistle, in a discussion of the final judgment, in the explanation of "the promise to Abraham or to his descendants" (4:13), in the climactic portion of the doctrinal section, as well as in the practical instructions to the church, how could Israel not be of prime significance?

Scholars from different traditions, from both before and following E. P. Sanders and the New Perspective on Paul and who represent a variety of positions, have recognized the centrality of the issue of God's dealings with Israel. Richard Hays claims that "Paul's argument is primarily an argument about theodicy . . . The driving question in Romans is . . . 'How can we trust this allegedly gracious God if he abandons his promises to Israel?'"¹⁰

Approaching Romans from a slightly different perspective, J. R. Daniel Kirk claims to have sustained the same point. He says, "Romans functions as a defense of the faithfulness of the God of Israel to the promises contained in Scripture."¹¹

Nils Alstrup Dahl claims that Rom 1:16 is "the encompassing theme for the whole main body of the letter," and that Rom 9–11 is an exposition of "to the Jew first" in Romans 1:16.¹²

Along this line, Thomas R. Schreiner, following Cranfield, Fitzmyer, Moo, and others, concludes: "The priority of the Jews was not merely a historical reality that had now lapsed for Paul. The place of the Jews in the outworking of salvation history was still crucial, and Paul attempts to work out this issue in chapters 9–11."¹³

In light of these contextual ob-

6. Ibid., 894. Matt 6:33; Rom 1:16; 2:9–10; and Acts 3:26 are also cited for this usage.

7. I have also addressed this in "The Great Conviction Behind the Great Commission: 'To the Jew First,'" paper presented to the Southern Baptist Messianic Fellowship, August 3, 1992, Dallas, TX and "The Blindness of Israel and the Mission of the Church" (Ph.D. diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2012), 245–48.

8. Michael G. Vanlaningham, "Romans" in *The Moody Bible Commentary*, ed. Michael Rydelnik and Michael Vanlaningham (Chicago: Moody, 2014), 1745.

9. See Brian J. Abasciano, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament in Romans 9.1-9: An Intertextual and Theological Exegesis* (London: A & C Black, 2005), 34–36.

10. Richard Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 53.

11. J. R. Daniel Kirk, *Unlocking Romans: Resurrection and the Justification of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 216. Kirk understands the Resurrection to be the hermeneutical key to the epistle and he writes from a supersessionist perspective, both of which are debatable, but beyond the purview of this article.

12. Nils Alstrup Dahl, "The Missionary Theology in the Epistle to the Romans," in *Studies in Paul: Theology for the Early Christian Mission* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1977), 82.

servations concerning the role of Israel in God's purposes, a number of scholars are in agreement with Bauer that the use of πρῶτον in Romans 1:16 should be understood as expressing priority of degree, rather than merely historical sequence.¹⁴

Bent Noack, for example, claims that Romans was written to explain Paul's delay in visiting Rome.¹⁵ The reason that he, the apostle to the Gentiles, should postpone a visit to Rome, the center of the gentile world, in order to go to Jerusalem required an extended theological treatment of the subject of the priority of Israel, not only in his mission, but in all Christian missions. Thus, for Noack, the issue of the Jewish people in God's plan is to be considered, structurally, the main channel (or, "current") of the epistle. His reading of the context also informs his understanding of πρῶτον.¹⁶

For Noack, Paul is not using "first" with reference to historical sequence, but with reference to priority of degree. If so, to some extent, Romans becomes a sustained commentary on Paul's declaration to the leaders of the synagogue in Pisidian Antioch: "It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first [πρῶτον]."¹⁷ In Romans

1:16, if πρῶτον is to be understood as a continuing priority, it also very well may be, chronologically, the first thing that is done. But the focus here is on "first," in reference to degree—"to the Jew especially." Though the gospel is for all (τε . . . και, see also Rom 3:29), it is especially (πρῶτον) for the Jewish people. Mark A. Seifrid adds, "This qualification of the gospel as 'for the Jew first,' by which Paul introduces his gospel, is integral to it and is *not* overturned or reversed by the surprising work of God among the Gentiles."¹⁸

The Grammar

Evidence for the continuing priority of the Jewish people in evangelism and missions may also be sought in the grammatical structure of the verse. Following Paul's denial that he was ashamed of the gospel, he states the nature of the gospel as the reason for his boldness. He says, "for it [the gospel] is (ἐστίν) the power of God unto salvation to all who believe, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."

Since the controlling verb is ἐστίν, attention must be given to the use of the present tense and to the structure of the verse. Since Paul declares that the gospel "is the power of God for salva-

tion to all who believe," the present tense could be described as either a gnomic or a customary present. While some would make the case for one or the other, the differences are relatively insignificant, for he is stating timeless, universal truth.¹⁹

As the verb that governs the remainder of the verse, ἐστίν ("is") must have the same sense for all of the dependent phrases that follow. The datives also suggest a certain grammatical parallelism: The gospel is the power of God for salvation "to everyone who believes, to the Jew first." On the basis of the use of the present tense in this verse and this grammatical parallelism, Paul must also be stating timeless, universal truth when he says that this gospel is "to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile." One way to emphasize the significance of both πρῶτον ("especially") and ἐστίν ("is") would be to paraphrase Romans 1:16 as saying, "As long as the gospel is the power of God for salvation, *it is especially so* to the Jewish people, and also to the Gentiles."²⁰ If Paul were speaking only of a historical priority in the final phrase, then he would also be speaking only of a historical priority in the former phrase. In other words, if the gospel was to the Jew first (but is not so any

13. Schreiner, *Romans*, 62. See also Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 91; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation and Commentary*, The Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 129, 257 (full footnote abridged. Ed.)

14. See Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 893.

15. Bent Noack, "Current and Backwater in the Epistle to the Romans," *Studia Theologica* 19 (1965): 155–66. One need not agree with his proposal regarding the occasion of the letter to accept his observations regarding the text. 16. *Ibid.*, 163.

17. Acts 13:46 (emphasis supplied).

18. Mark A. Seifrid, "'For the Jew First': Paul's Nota Bene for His Gentile Readers," in *To the Jew First: The Case for Jewish Evangelism in Scripture and History*, ed. Darrell L. Bock and Mitch Glaser (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2008), 24. Emphasis is in the original.

19. Verbal aspect in New Testament Greek has been a topic of significant debate in recent scholarship. Some claim that aspect is foreign to equative or stative verbs. Others claim that gnomic aspect only applies when the subject is divine (full footnote abridged. Ed.)

20. See, Noack, "Current and Backwater in the Epistle to the Romans." See also, e.g., Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 90–91; Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 68–69; Mark D. Nanos, *The Mystery of Romans: The Jewish Context of Paul's Letters* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1996), 21–40; and Schreiner, *Romans*, 62.

longer), then it was the power of God unto salvation to all who believed (but is not so any longer). Clearly, this is not the case!

The Gospel According to Abraham

This creates some tension, however. How can the gospel be “the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes,” and at the same time be for the Jew especially? The answer is found in Genesis 12:3: “. . . in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.” With this, John R. W. Stott says, “God made a promise to Abraham. And an understanding of that promise is indispensable to an understanding of the Bible and of the Christian mission.”²¹ Among many others, William J. Dumbrell agrees and says, “By way of Abraham and Israel, God enters into the world of the nations.”²² In other words, the promises made to Abraham and to his descendants were for the ultimate purpose of reaching the nations. The tension between God’s universal aims and His election of Israel, however, has been interpreted poorly by many. As Christopher J. H. Wright says: “It is a tension that has generated many unsatisfactory attempts to resolve it in either direction—by drawing from it a kind of univer-

salism that loses touch with the particularity of God’s redemptive work through Israel and Christ, or by accusing Israel of a chauvinistic exclusivism that neglected God’s wider concern for other nations.”²³

The promises of Genesis 12:3, particularly the key phrase, “in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed,” are repeated two additional times to Abraham (Gen 18:18 and 22:18), then to Isaac (Gen 26:4), and to Jacob (Gen 28:14). Though slightly different words may be used, this crucially important phrase may be divided into three concepts. In reverse order, they are:

- (1) “will / shall be blessed,”²⁴
- (2) “all the families / nations of the earth,” and
- (3) “in you / your seed”

The blessing spoken of here was not merely a material blessing, but harkens back to the promised solution for the problem of mankind’s sin.²⁵

H. C. Leupold says, “A blessing so great that its effect shall extend to ‘all the families of the earth’ can be thought of only in connection with the promised Savior.”²⁶

This promise reverberates throughout both the Old and

New Testaments. Psalm 67, for example, says, “God be gracious to us [Israel] and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us — Selah. That Your way may be known on the earth [or, “in the Land,” בְּאֶרֶץ], Your salvation *among all nations*. . . . God blesses us, that *all the ends of the earth* may fear Him” (vv. 1–2, 7, emphasis supplied).²⁷ Israel is blessed so that the nations may be blessed.

Since this is based on Genesis 12:3, the blessing prayed for here is the blessing of salvation.²⁸ The psalmist prays for Israel’s salvation so that God’s salvation may be known “among all nations.” If the desire is to see the nations come to the knowledge of salvation, attention must be given to prayer for, and witness to, the Jewish people. The last words of David, recorded by Solomon in Psalm 72 reflect this same idea. The blessings of the Son of David are to be extended to “all nations” (v. 17), so that “the whole earth [may] be filled with His glory” (v. 19).

Through Isaiah, God says of Israel and its Messiah,²⁹ “It is too small a thing that you should be My servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also make you a light of the nations

21. John R. W. Stott, “The Living God is a Missionary God” in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*, ed. Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1981), 11.

22. William J. Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation* (Nashville, TN: Nelson, 1984) 78, as cited by Robert L. Saucy, *The Case for Progressive Dispensationalism: The Interface Between Dispensational and Non-Dispensational Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993), 41.

23. Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible’s Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006), 222.

24. Some translations of Genesis 22:18 and 26:4 have “all the families of the earth will bless themselves.” (full footnote heavily abridged. Ed.)

25. John Sailhamer points out that the “blessing” promised in Genesis 12:3 is tied to the original “blessing” of all people in Genesis 1:28. John H. Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative: A Biblical-Theological Commentary*. Library of Interpretation (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 139.

26. H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1942), vol. 1, 413. See also, John Piper, *Let the Nations Be Glad! The Supremacy of God in Missions* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 183.

27. This psalm, by the way, was not only written here in Jerusalem, but was written for use in the Temple in Jerusalem. Thus, its association with Jerusalem is longstanding.

28. See Mathews, *Genesis* 11:27–50:26, 117–18.

29. This second of the “servant songs” may also refer to the Messiah.

so that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth" (Isa 49:6). Here, again, Israel is the channel through which salvation is taken to the nations of the world, in keeping with Genesis 12:3.³⁰ Again, notice carefully what Isaiah writes in chapter 62:

"For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not keep quiet, until her righteousness goes forth like brightness, and her salvation like a torch that is burning. *The nations will see your righteousness, and all kings your glory; and you will be called by a new name which the mouth of the LORD will designate* (Isaiah 62:1–2, emphasis added).

He is raising his voice for Zion's sake, for Jerusalem's sake, until she has received salvation, so that the nations and all kings will see her righteousness, and will presumably come to know that same salvation.

Returning to Genesis 12, notice one other fact about this marvelous promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: it is not completely fulfilled with the crucifixion and resurrection of Yeshua. Instead, in a sense, the death, burial, and resurrection of Yeshua, along with the subsequent empowerment of the Holy Spirit, *make participation in the fulfillment of this promise possible*. With the

New Covenant, the blessing of the Abrahamic Covenant is finally made available to the nations. It is not fulfilled until "all the families of the earth" are blessed with the message of salvation. In other words, *this promise provides the very rationale for a world-wide mission*.³¹ Thomas Schirrmacher says, "The promise to the patriarchs, that all people will be blessed through their offspring, is again and again quoted and mentioned as proof for world mission."³² Indeed, more than any other passage it provides the basis and the motive for Paul's missionary theology and method.

Yet, much of the literature on the biblical basis of missions approaches the history of Israel in such a manner as to render it nothing more than a history of failure. There is little awareness that the promises to Abraham depend upon the faithfulness of God, not the faithfulness of Israel. Bryant Hicks, for example, says, "The sad reality is that Israel's understanding and response to this commission from Yahweh never rose to a very high level."³³

Therefore, he refers to the Jewish people as "the obstreperous, blaspheming Jews,"³⁴ and as "this wicked nation."³⁵ Israel, however, was never intended to serve as a foil for the "righteous" Gentiles, but instead, as a mirror in which

the nations could see their own wickedness.

Many approach the biblical basis of missions almost as if Israel were God's "Plan A" that utterly failed, and the church is His "Plan B" that is finally succeeding. The problem is in their failure to recognize the "divine passive" in Genesis 12:3. God promised, "In you, all the families of the earth *will be blessed*;"³⁶ He did not say, "You are to bless all the families of the earth." It is not that Israel failed to obey God's commission, but that God has not yet completely fulfilled His promise. Kenneth Mathews says, "The verse in context indicates that the Lord, not Abram, is the dispenser of blessing for the nations. Abram has no exclusive claim on God's blessing; rather, God has exclusive claim on Abram and on all those who submit to his God."³⁷ It is a grave mistake to conceive of God's plan as contingent upon the obedience and faithfulness of His people, whether one is speaking of Israel or of the church.³⁸

Peter and Paul on the Gospel According to Abraham

If the Scriptures teach that the Jewish people are to be a continuing priority in evangelism and missions, how can it be said that this priority is intrinsic to the gos-

30. The same concept may be found also in Isa 51:1–6.

31. John Piper's book, *Let the Nations Be Glad! The Supremacy of God in Missions* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), is excellent regarding the doxological motive for missions and takes its cue from this psalm, though it does not recognize the central point—that the nations will be blessed through Israel. In fact, references to Israel have been omitted from his citations of Scripture.

32. Thomas Schirrmacher, "Romans as a Charter for World Mission: A Lesson in the Relation of Systematic Theology and Missiology," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 10 (1993), 160.

33. Bryant Hicks, "Old Testament Foundations for Missions" in *Missiology: An Introduction to the Foundations, History, and Strategies of World Missions* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1998), 56.

34. *Ibid.*, 51.

35. *Ibid.*, 59.

36. Emphasis is the author's.

37. Mathews, *Genesis* 11:27–50:26, 115.

38. Some see contingency in Gen 18:19, and therefore grounds for understanding the Abrahamic Covenant as conditional (as, e.g., Bruce K. Waltke, with Cathi J. Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001], 269). (full footnote abridged. Ed.)

pel? For most Christians the gospel is all about the death, burial, and resurrection of Yeshua—the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world; it is that “Messiah died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures” (1 Cor 15:3–4). In no way should the message of the gospel change; however, the gospel may include more than the message itself. Paul refers to this message of salvation as “The blessing of Abraham” (Gal 3:14), and in Romans 10:8, he calls it “the word of faith.” For Peter and Paul, this message of salvation was certainly central and could be referred to as “the gospel which I preached” (I Cor 15:1), but the term “gospel” may encompass more than the message itself.

The “promise made to the fathers” (Acts 13:32, cf. 26:6) gives rise to the New Covenant, the gospel, the church, and its mission. What do Peter and Paul have to say about this “gospel of Abraham”—the promise of Genesis? One of only two times this promise is cited in the New Testament is in Galatians 3:8. As the Apostle to the Gentiles, Paul had a burden for their salvation—so, one should have expected him to emphasize “all the nations/families of the earth” in this ancient promise. He strongly insisted that Gentiles did not need to become Jews in order to be saved. Perhaps unexpectedly, in Galatians 3:8 Paul refers to this promise from Genesis 12:3 as “the gospel”! Here, he says, “The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith,

preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, ‘*All the nations* will be blessed in you.’” Paul is emphasizing that the message of salvation was for Gentiles, as well as for the Jewish people. In fact, he goes on to say, “Messiah redeemed us . . . in order that in Messiah Yeshua the *blessing* of Abraham might come to the Gentiles” (Gal 3:13–14). Yet, in Galatians 3:8, Paul is not speaking of the “blessing” itself as the “gospel,” but the fact that “all the nations” would be blessed. In other words, Paul is taking the phrase “all the families of the earth” to make the point that salvation is for Gentiles as well as Jews, and he is calling it “the gospel.”³⁹

The only other place where this promise to the fathers is quoted in the New Testament is in Acts 3. Speaking in the Temple in Jerusalem, Peter emphasized “in you” to express Jewish priority. He said to a crowd that was entirely Jewish, in Acts 3:25–26: “It is *you* who are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant which God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, ‘And *in your seed* [i.e., “in you”] all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’ For *you first* [πρῶτον, as in Rom 1:16], God raised up His Servant and sent Him to bless you by turning every one of you from your wicked ways” (emphasis supplied). Peter is quoting this key clause from Genesis 22:18. But here, Peter is emphasizing the third aspect of the gospel, listed above (“in your seed”) and “you first,” in order to establish the necessity of a Jewish priority that required Yeshua going to the Jews in the first place, or especially.⁴⁰ Both Peter and Paul are

referring to the same promise in Genesis, although with different emphases! So here we have Peter, Paul, and Abraham in perfect harmony!

When a man returns from the mailbox, he might say, “We received a letter from Mom,” and his wife would probably have a mental image of an addressed envelope, with a cancelled stamp, and a message inside. Later, if she were to ask, “What did the letter say,” then reference would be to the message itself. The same elasticity is found in the term “gospel.” It could refer to the message of salvation itself, or it could refer to the tripartite promise repeated five times in Genesis, the “promise of the fathers” (see Acts 13:32; 26:6; and Rom 15:8).

For Peter and Paul, the gospel apparently included:

- (1) the blessing of salvation (as promised in Genesis), but it also included the other two parts of this promise from Genesis, namely,
- (2) “all the nations,” that is, it included both Jew and Gentile, and
- (3) “in you,” that is, in Abraham’s descendants, the Jewish people.

In Romans 1:16, Paul brings these ideas together, even though he does not quote this key phrase in the Abrahamic Covenant. Here again, the same three elements are present that were observed above:

- (1) “the power of God unto salvation” (the promised blessing);
- (2) “to everyone who believes” (“all the families / nations of the earth”); and
- (3) “to the Jew first” (“in you / your descendants”).

Furthermore, Romans 1:16 is

39. Emphases in this paragraph and the following one are those of the author.

40. In Acts 3:26, the case for taking πρῶτον (“first”) as expressing priority of degree is not as clear, but it can still be made on the basis of his quotation of Gen 22:18 in the previous verse. The promised “seed” (“in your seed”) ultimately has reference to Yeshua, as God’s “servant” (Acts 3:26), but this does not negate the broader referent, “you who are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant which God made with your fathers,” i.e., the Jewish people. How else can Peter derive Jewish priority from this quotation from Genesis?

not speaking of missionary strategy, *per se*, but of the very nature of the gospel. Paul is answering the implied question, "What is the gospel?" He says, the gospel "is," and the phrases which follow speak to the nature of the gospel itself. Far from being a temporary methodology in missions, or a method that was unique to Paul, he is revealing something foundational about the gospel itself. He is saying that the gospel is:

(1) God's power unto salvation, (2) that it is for "all who believe," and (3) that it is "to the Jew especially."

J. Lanier Burns says, "In Romans, Paul emphasizes 'to the Jew first' in accordance with a biblical priority that had endured from Abraham's commission to bless the world through the chosen fathers Isaac and Jacob."⁴¹ Seifrid puts it this way: "Gentile faith rests on a gospel that belongs first to Jews."⁴² This is the lost gospel of Jerusalem—the gospel of Jewish priority and gentile inclusion.

If the New Testament includes the universality of the gospel (as in Gal 3:8) and the priority of the Jewish people (as in Rom 1:16), any view of the gospel that ignores these emphases reflects a deficient understanding of the gospel. Therefore, one would be justified in concluding that if a message does not offer "the power of God unto salvation" (Rom 1:16) through faith alone in the death, burial, and resurrection of Yeshua (1 Cor 15:3–4), it is not the gospel. Likewise, if this salvation is not for Gentiles, as well as for the Jewish people, it is not the gospel (Gal 3:8). Finally, neither is this salvation to

be considered the gospel if it is not for the Jewish people especially. This is the "lost gospel of Jerusalem"—the gospel of Jewish priority and gentile inclusion.

In other words, we have a universal mission, because the gospel is especially for the Jewish people. The church is now sharing in the blessings of Israel, and one of the greatest blessings is having the opportunity to bless "all the families of the earth." Yet the gospel itself requires that we maintain a particular concern for the Jewish people, for if the gospel is not especially for the Jewish people, can it really be for anyone else?

This priority should have an impact on the church's strategies of missions and evangelism, as well as its prayer life. Of course, this raises some practical questions. Some Christians live in areas with no Jewish population. How can this priority be expressed in such circumstances? Since it is not "first" sequentially but in degree, this priority can be expressed in prayers for the salvation of the Jewish people (see Rom 10:1) or in financial support (see Rom 15:26–27).

For Peter, the blessing of salvation was to run on two tracks: Jewish priority and (he would later learn) gentile inclusion. For Paul also, the blessing of salvation was to run on two tracks: Jewish priority and gentile inclusion. In this, they both were in perfect harmony with Abraham who saw the blessing of salvation running on two tracks: Jewish priority and gentile inclusion - and that's the gospel! Understanding the importance of Jewish priority in missions and evangelism and implementing that priority in the

witness of the church will restore a biblical emphasis, bring God's blessing (Gen 12:3), and may result in a stronger remnant of Jewish people who come to know their Messiah. In any case, we need to reassert the lost gospel of Jerusalem, and there can be no more fitting place from which to do it than here, in the City of the Great King!

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41. J. Lanier Burns, "The Chosen People and Jewish Evangelism," in *To the Jew First: The Case for Jewish Evangelism in Scripture and History*, ed. Darrell L. Bock and Mitch Glaser (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2008), 156. See also Michael Rydelnik, "Did God Really Say that the Gospel is to the Jew First?" *The Chosen People*. January 1991, 8–11.

42. Seifrid, "For the Jew First': Paul's *Nota Bene* for His Gentile Readers," 31.

UPCOMING LCJE MEETINGS

LCJE North America
22-24 February 2016
Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas
Crowne Plaza Arlington
700 Avenue H East
Arlington, Texas 76011

LCJE AustralAsia
20-23 June 2016
Stanwell Tops NSW
The Tops Conference Center

ICC Meeting
12 February 2016
Tel Aviv

CEO Meeting
8-12 May 2017
Location to be determined



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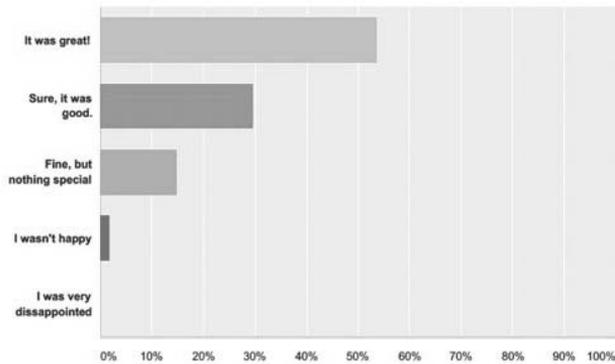
Sample Survey Results — 10th International Conference

By Jim Melnick, LCJE International Coordinator

Editor's Note: I again thank Yoel Ben David for producing and Dan Sered for helping facilitate the following online survey of the 10th International Conference. Here are a few sample results. The survey was sent to all conference participants, whether they were LCJE members or not. The full survey with more questions can be downloaded from the main LCJE.net webpage.

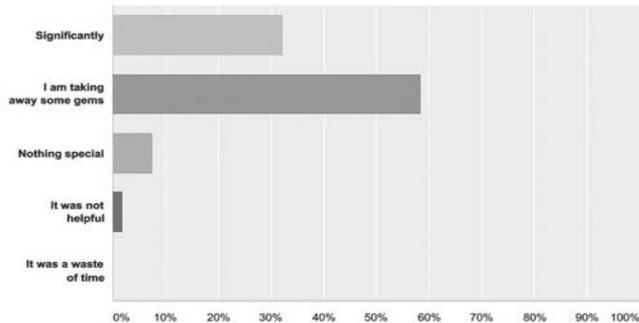
Q2 Were you satisfied with the conference

Answered: 54 Skipped: 0



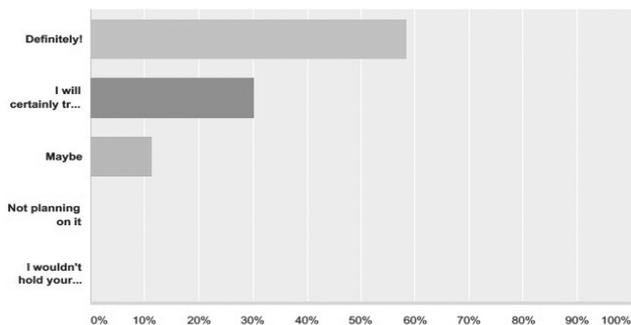
Q4 How helpful was it to your ministry?

Answered: 53 Skipped: 1



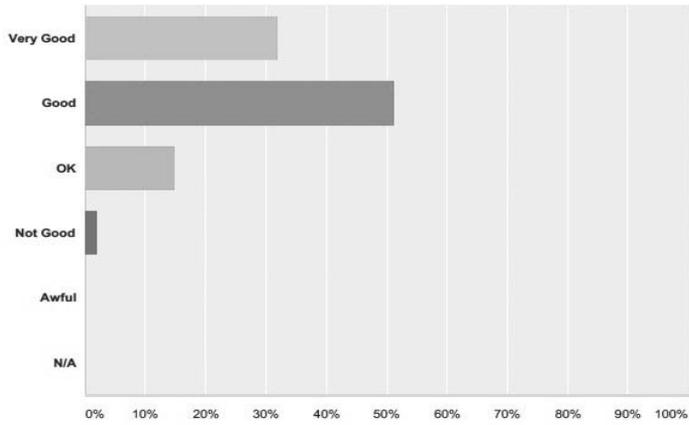
Q5 Are you likely to come to another LCJE International?

Answered: 53 Skipped: 1



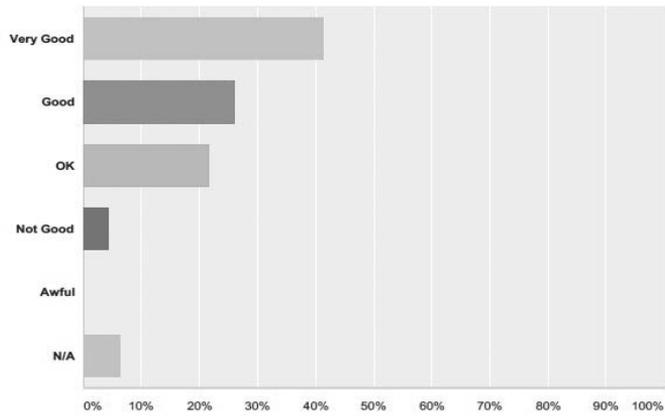
Q18 Choice of speakers

Answered: 47 Skipped: 7



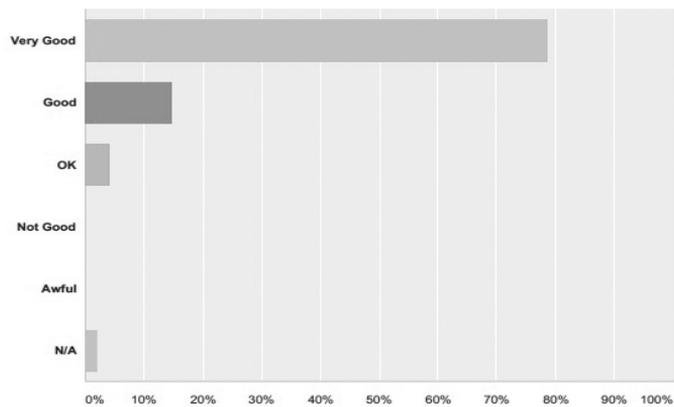
Q20 The choice of splitting into two tracks

Answered: 46 Skipped: 8



Q22 Responsiveness of the conference staff

Answered: 47 Skipped: 7



Photos from Jerusalem — LCJE 10th International Conference



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Conference photos by Bob Mendelsohn: 1. Joel Rosenberg; 2. David Zadok, LCJE Israel Coordinator and Country Host, opens the conference; 3. The Rabinowitz-Lichtenstein skit with Rob Styler and Murray Tilles; 4. Kai and Bodil respond to the skit; 5. Ann Hilsden and Irit Iffert lead worship; 6. Susan Perlman interviews David Harley, the first LCJE International Coordinator; 7. AustralAsian participants at the conference; 8. Jim Melnick and Tuvya Zaretsky after their re-election as LCJE officers; 9. Messianic pioneer Chaya Ben Hayim; 10. Honorees Lisa and David Loden; 11. Conference registration staff (Christine, Yulia, Jeannie and Jennifer); 12. Honorees David and Martha Stern; 13. Lausanne Movement Vice-chair Grace Mathews speaking at the LCJE 10th international conference; 14. Conference prayer leaders Robyn and Mark Warren.

Networking Jewish Evangelism



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