



**LAUSANNE
CONSULTATION
ON JEWISH
EVANGELISM**

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**LAUSANNE CONSULTATION
ON JEWISH EVANGELISM
BULLETIN**



Issue No. 57 (Sept. 1999)



LCJE Bulletin
Issue no. 57
September 1999

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Jewish Evangelism

Editor: Kai Kjær-Hansen
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Printed by LB offset,
8471 Sabro, Denmark

Published February, May, August
and November
Dead-line of no. 58: 1 October 1999
When you send a manuscript,
please send a DOS-formatted disk,
WordPerfect 5.1, and a printout.

Individual membership 25 US \$
annually; subscription 15 US \$,
payable to LCJE

Our bankers are:
Den Danske Bank
SWIFT-address: DABADKKK
Reg. no. 3652
Account no. 4803086338
or cheque drawn on a Danish bank,
and sent to LCJE/Kjær-Hansen
(address on back cover)

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From the coordinator

The Sixth International LCJE Conference at Hofstra University, Long Island, New York, focused on Jewish Evangelism on the eve of the third millennium. The motto for the conference was: Jesus the Messiah is the same yesterday and today and forever. With an assurance like this there is no disaster atmosphere only because we are approaching the year 2000 – and one later when we enter the third millennium.

The atmosphere at the conference was not one of disaster but of joy. Joy because of the privilege to help take Jewish evangelism into a new millennium and a commitment to assume the hard work that Jewish evangelism is. Also in the future.

It was a special joy that approx. 15% of the participants were young leaders under 35 years – a new LCJE generation which committed each other to mutual inspiration and encouragement across national frontiers.

So Jewish evangelism continues. And LCJE continues – Deo volente – even into the the third millennium.

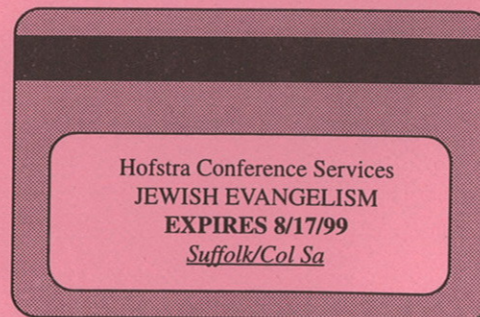
On the meal cards, which the participants used in the university cafeteria, Hofstra University had written: *Jewish evangelism expires 8/17/99.*

But Jewish evangelism did not expire on 17 August 1999 – and will not expire with the coming of the new millennium.

With new courage and new confidence we will assume the tasks which lie ahead of us.

Millennium or not: Yesterday ... today ... in the third millennium ... and forever... he – the Messiah – is the same!

Kai Kjær-Hansen



International Leaders Meet on Jewish Evangelism in the Third Millennium

NEW YORK, USA, August 1999.

The Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism (LCJE) met for its sixth international conference, August 12–17, 1999, at Hofstra University on Long Island, New York. The 130 participants from around the world produced a statement which highlighted developments in the field of Jewish evangelism and sounded a strong note of affirmation for the task of bringing the Good News of Yeshua (Jesus) to the world, including the Jewish people.

The conference participants (both Jewish and Gentile believers in Yeshua) also expressed their solidarity with the Jewish community, in light of recent reports of increased anti-Semitic activity. They pledged to use their influence in their countries to condemn such unChristian behavior.

The delegates met in order to reaffirm their commitment to the evangelisation of Jewish people, to coordinate global strategies, and to exchange information and resources. One resource was the introduction of a new book of demographics, *Facts and Myths About Messianic Congregations*. One of its authors, Bodil Skjøtt of the Caspari Center in Jerusalem, commented, "We wanted to make available some accurate statistics on the messianic movement in Israel and clear up the myths. When these unadorned facts are known, it will surprise many." Other highlights included reports on outreach to the Hassidic community, efforts for reconciliation between Jews and Arabs and the rise of messianic congregations in Israel, Germany and the former USSR.

Lisa Loden, a member of the organisation's International Coordinating Committee, called this gathering "a historic moment in Jewish evangelism." She went on to say, "It's deeply encouraging to see what is going on and very challenging to see what remains to be done and to know that we can do more through a network like LCJE to accomplish God's purposes than by ourselves."

Kai Kjær-Hansen, the international coordinator of LCJE, said, "We're involved in the most important endeavor . We're involved in bringing the love of Jesus to the Jewish people, so that they can bring the love of Jesus to the whole world."

Tuvya Zaretsky, the newly elected president of LCJE, concluded, "We are on the eve of a new millennium and we are excited to see the rise of a new generation of workers in our field taking part in our deliberations. They are ready to meet the challenge of Jewish evangelism in the twenty first century."

New York 99: Jewish Evangelism on the Eve of the Third Millennium

Introduction

The sixth international conference of the Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism (LCJE) met August 12–17. 130 participants from 16 countries convened in New York. The LCJE is a network of organizations and individuals who seek to facilitate and strengthen the gospel proclamation to Jewish people throughout the world. The representatives serve as a catalyst to increase cooperative ventures and to coordinate efforts between mission agencies, Messianic congregations, denominations and theological institutions.

Recent Developments within the Last Decades of this Millennium

- In the last 30 years there has been a significant increase in the number of Jewish people believing in Yeshua haMashiach (Jesus the Messiah) throughout the world, as well as an increasing number of Messianic congregations. The modern movement of Jewish believers in Yeshua cannot be ignored; it has come to stay and will not go away.
- In the former Soviet Union we see a steady increase in numbers of maturing disciples eager and enthusiastic to share their faith. As demographics shift, many are moving to other parts of the world, becoming a strong testimony for the gospel.
- In Germany a number of our brothers and sisters in the Lord are reaching out in love to Jewish people. We are thankful to God for Messianic congregations and house groups that are springing up there.
- In Israel concern for ministry to the Messianic youth is increasing as Messianic Jews consider the importance of the next generation of Israeli believers. Efforts at reconciliation between Israeli and Palestinian believers stand as a testimony to the power of the gospel, giving us glimpses of the peace that only Yeshua can bring.
- Secular media is proving to be an effective tool in reaching people with the good news of Yeshua. In addition the Internet has provided open access for Jewish people to explore the claims of Yeshua as well as countless opportunities for believers to share the gospel through chat rooms and web sites.

We rejoice in the reports of all these developments!

Jewish Identity

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

Those of us who are Jewish share in the challenges confronting our people and stand with them in the need to strengthen and preserve our God-given identity. We also recognize that our faith in Yeshua is seen by many as a threat to Jewish identity and survival. Yet we believe that the core of Jewish identity is tied to a purpose and a divine calling that is fulfilled only in Yeshua—to be reconciled to God and to be a light to the nations for his glory. We therefore reject the commonly held view that Jews who believe in Jesus are no longer Jewish.

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

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

To the Church at Large

We are deeply grieved that, in recent decades, some churches and denominations have stated that Jewish people do not need to hear the gospel. At the same time we are encouraged that the witness of faithful Gentile believers in Yeshua has helped many Jewish people come to faith.

We rejoice in the renewed emphasis some churches and denominations have placed on Jewish evangelism and we urge all churches to recognize their responsibility to witness to Jewish people. We call on churches to respect and affirm the Jewish identity of Messianic believers, whether they worship in traditional churches or Messianic congregations.

In light of recent heinous crimes—such as a man shooting Jewish children in a day school for the purpose of publicizing and promoting violence against the Jews—we implore you to stand with us against anti-Semitism of any kind wherever it is found.

The Millennium Ahead

Without Yeshua haMashiach there would be no millennium to mark. The millennium not only refers back to his birth, but also points to the future—the same Yeshua who proclaimed himself the Messiah of Israel also promised to return. He was, is and will be the only way of salvation for Jews and Gentiles. He is the Lord; the future is his. Therefore we who have found reconciliation with God through Yeshua carry into the next millennium the privilege and obligation to proclaim his reconciling power to others.

Our Hope

As the world prepares to celebrate the year 2000, our hope is that individuals, churches, congregations, denominations and theological institutions will commit themselves to the task of evangelism as we:

- tell Jews as well as Gentiles of the reconciling power found only in the Lord Yeshua
- take advantage of the window of witnessing opportunity as ideologies and trends that failed to keep their promises leave people hungry for truth and open to Yeshua
- devote resources to bringing the gospel to Jewish people in underevangelized areas of the world
- pray fervently for the salvation of Jewish people, for the peace of Jerusalem and for the peoples of the Middle East
- joyfully anticipate and work towards the day when all Israel will be saved
- eagerly await the return of our Messiah.

19 Years Later

By Erwin J. Kolb



Pattaya veterans meet in New York. From left: Erwin Kolb, Ole Chr. Kvarme, Susan Perlman, Jhan Moskowitz, Moishe Rosen, Haya and Menachem Benhayim, Kai Kjær-Hansen and Louis Goldberg. (In Pattaya Haya Benhayim participated in the group with Muslim Evangelization).

We Marvel at what God has Done

Eighteen of us interested in Jewish evangelism from seven countries who were meeting in 1980 as part of a consultation on world evangelization in Pattaya Thailand thought we were making a great statement of faith when in our report we dared to propose the "formation of an international task force" for Jewish evangelism. Nineteen years later we see how God was working in that mixed group from seven different countries who were together for the first time. From that small group that talked about

"arranging consultations," where there had never been any before, God expanded the work into six international meetings, and area meetings in seven regions of the world. The latest International Consultation saw 130 people from 16 countries in attendance.

We Dream Big Dreams

Who could have envisioned in 1980 that in 19 years God would open doors to witnessing to Jews in Germany and Japan, that thousands of Russian Jews would accept Yeshua as Messiah, that messianic congregations would multiply

to 200 in the United States, 80 in Israel and who knows how many all over the world. If God has done all this in the last 19 years, what will he do in the next 19? We cannot begin to imagine, just as the original 19 could not imagine what would happen between 1980 and 1999.

We are Confirmed in Faith

Yeshua promised "I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18), a church of Jews and Gentiles of every nation. He has done it! He will continue to do it!

New York 99: Impressions and Feelings

By David Zadok, Israel



David Zadok (right) in conversation with Stan Telchin.

The sixth International LCJE was actually my first full-time attendance. I joined some of the meetings of the fifth one in Jerusalem. I was excited to attend the conference and was greatly blessed, encouraged by it, and learned much from it. This is a short description of my impressions and feelings.

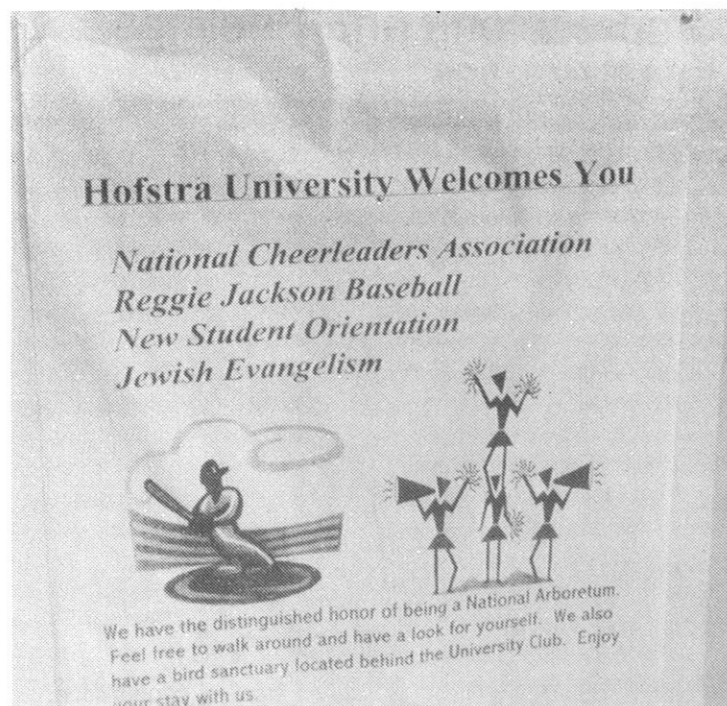
First of all I have to make an important comment to those who worked hard in organizing and putting the conference together. They did a wonderful job. Seems like the six "P" principle applied here much - Prior Proper Planning Prevents Poor Performance. Both the length and the contents of the meetings were well planned. They even thought of having a nice mini bar at the end of the long day of meetings. The business meetings were held and

managed properly by Ole Chr. Kvarme. A very good balance of topics and people were chosen to present their papers on the assigned subjects. David and Lisa Loden together with Ann Hilsden led the meetings worship in a very pleasant and humble way that drew our attention to the Glorified King of the Universe. The songs were well chosen and made us lift up our voices in praising our Lord Jesus Christ. The campus was beautiful and the food plenty and very American. All the meetings including the business ones ended on time, and we were able to finish the agenda that was before us.

At this point I need to say something about the atmosphere of the whole conference. Throughout the conference there was a real

atmosphere of cooperation, sharing of resources, networking, and exchanging business cards and E-mail addresses, and small business meeting related to Evangelism of the Jewish people. I felt a real spirit of unity, certainly much more than before. The comments and questions after the addresses by various people were helpful and were intended to clarify, emphasize a specific point or to find out more about the certain subject.

LCJE provides a network for cooperation among the various ministries and individuals who are involved in Jewish evangelism. That purpose was greatly demonstrated in the conference in New York. The amount of information that was provided in the conference and the papers



that were presented was enormous. At the end of each day all the participants received a booklet that included all the papers that were presented in that day. All together there were five booklets that are a great resource and include all that was shared by the various people and more. Since the speakers had a limited time (they received small notes saying 5 minutes, 2 minutes ...) to present their work or research, they only were able to share the highlight of the work at the conference, but the booklets had the full work. I really recommend the booklets to those who were not able to attend, and would like to get a large view of the Evangelization among the Jewish people.

A few things stood out for me in the conference.

The thing that was most encouraging to me was to see God's hand working mightily among His people. Many Churches, denominations, organizations and individuals are bringing the Good news of salvation to the Jewish people, and many are responding. The number of Jewish believers in Israel and outside Israel is growing on a wide scale. People are not only more willing to bring the Gospel to the Jewish people, but they are also more confident in talking and sharing with their Jewish friends. God's spirit in convincing more and more Jewish people that Christ is the true Messiah, who was promised in the Old Testament.

Hearing that in the past five years over six hundred Chinese have come to faith

and have been baptized in Israel is a real sign of change. How many of us who have been involved in Jewish evangelism would have thought that a time would come when Gentiles from far lands would come to Israel, hear the Gospel and repent? There were also various reports on the fact that evangelism among the Jewish people and especially in Israel is becoming more bold, and been carried out by more and more people. Jewish Christians are not afraid now to talk about their faith in the neighbourhood, in their jobs and of course among their family members. These are signs of a new era that we live in. And some of the old timers testified to that.

Another encouraging report for me was in regard to ministry among the Hasidim. That kind of ministry needs much love, patience and creativity, and there are people out there who are involved in that work and are seeing breakthrough on that frontier as well.

One of the encouraging aspects of the conference was to see not only people from America, Europe and Israel participating, but also people from Japan, Hungary, France and other places that are involved or are interested in starting Jewish evangelism in their congregations and countries. Seems like more and more people are seeing the call to bring the gospel to the Jew first.

On the evenings of the conference there were various spontaneous activities that were organized by the various participants - what was called late-evening options. On one of the evenings the reformed people gathered together for meeting and networking. Those of us who attended the meeting were surprised to see the number of people who attended. It seems like about 10% of all the conference participants came from a Reformed background. At the end of the meeting we were able to set up a network called RAJE! - Reformed Association for Jewish Evangelism. The purpose of

the network is to support, encourage one another and to promote Jewish evangelism among the various Reformed churches.

At the end of my short report (I also received a small note, 25 more words) I want to congratulate the new president Tuvia Zaretsky and the new members of the ICC (International Coordinating Committee). My prayer is that all those involved in this work, including the International coordinator and the area coordinators, will continue to be visionary and will lead it into the new millennium.

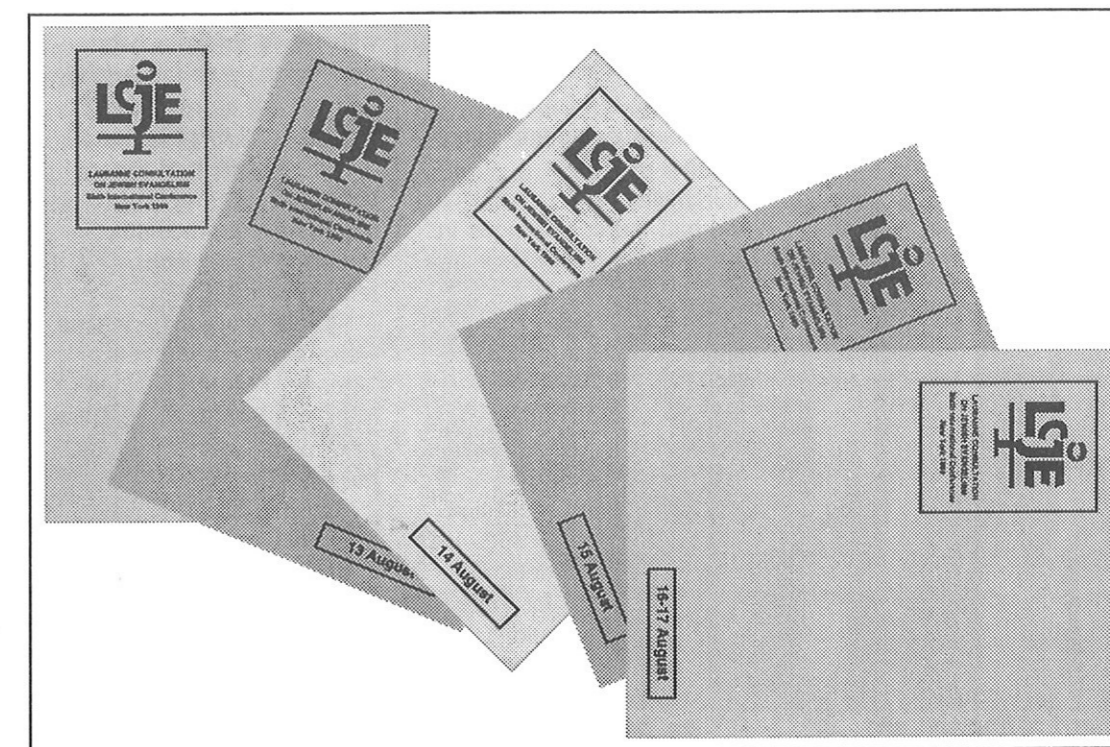
With Blessings of Shana Tova,
David Zadok, Israel

Booklets

If you missed the New York 99 conference, don't miss the conference booklets!

With a few exceptions the five booklets contain all the papers from the plenary sessions at the conference, a total of 289 pages. It is a remarkable collection of material for further reflection and research.

The price per set is USD 15 (+ postage). With the order of more than 10 sets, the price is USD 12 per set (+ postage). The order must be sent to: LCJE Int. Ellebækvej 5 DK-8520 Lystrup, Denmark Fax +45 8622 9591 E-mail: lcje-int@post3.tele.dk



From York to New York

By Tony Highton, General Director, The Church's Ministry Among Jewish People

For many years the main gathering I've attended in Summer has been in the ancient walled city of York in England. Fifteen years ago God called me to take a public stand for biblical truth against the views of bishops and others who were denying credal doctrines; tolerating homosexual practice and marginalising Christ in multi-faith worship. With the support of many clergy voters I became a member of the General Synod of the Church of England which in Summer meets at York University.

But this year the main gathering was in New York at Hofstra University, namely LCJE. What a difference! It was all about the vital issue of evangelism, and Jewish evangelism in particular. Here was a bishop – Ole Kvarme – publicly associating himself with the evangelism of Jewish people. Sadly, many of our bishops and other church leaders follow the politically correct line of disapproving of such evangelism.

Within the last twelve months, after 31 years in parish ministry, God called me to become General Director of the Church's Ministry amongst Jewish People. He made it clear I had completed my previous prophetic ministry within the Church of England and should hand over the baton



Tony Highton

to others. I had become so used to parish ministry and the wider national ministry. In addition, based on our experience of radical ecclesiological renewal in the parish, my wife and I had produced practical resources for leaders to facilitate churches moving into every-member-ministry, intercession and evangelism and had led conferences in many countries. We became used to that too.

Now, however, in my mid-fifties, I was being called to start again in a ministry where I lacked experience in various areas. I was being asked to consider leading a mission with an honourable 190-year history. Little wonder I argued with God for three months that he couldn't possibly be calling me. But he was!

Then, back in March, I saw the programme for

LCJE. I read through the speakers' names – some of them so experienced and well-known – and felt out of my depth. Things improved over the months, and I felt more confident. But I still wondered how I would get on at LCJE. I needn't have been concerned.

On arriving at Registration, I bumped into Moishe Rosen, one of the people I particularly wanted to meet. He began to offer some helpful advice from his own long experience with Jews for Jesus. Almost immediately I met Sue Perlman who, like Moishe, was welcoming and helpful. I had arranged to have lunch with David Brickner, who now leads Jews for Jesus, and we got on really well together. All this happened within two hours of my arriving. I had begun to experience the warmth, friendliness and rich resources of LCJE.

These early experiences were repeated as I met leaders of other missions from various countries. They were all so welcoming and helpful.

I had gone to the conference totally committed to Jewish evangelism and determined to re-focus CMJ on it. Over my 31 years in parish ministry I could not rest if we were not effective in evangelism and in making the church welcoming and

relevant to unbelievers. Much as I value and respect the deep spirituality and theology in Judaism, I am convinced that Jewish people need the Messiah. However I had questions about methods in Jewish evangelism. Given the sensitivities of Jewish people, especially after the Holocaust, were methods like door-to-door visitation or street work appropriate? It had seemed right to change from such methods to a lower-key approach in our parish in recent years. But the new methods did not seem very relevant to Jewish evangelism.

I had listened carefully to those who said visitation and street work weren't culturally appropriate in England. They simply annoy people and don't do any good, I was told. And that opinion wasn't entirely absent at the conference. But before going to LCJE, I had come to my own view that street work is

appropriate in certain areas. In fact I had been out with our London Ministry Team outside St Paul's Cathedral in London the day before flying to New York. The "Tell a Tourist Campaign" was clearly relevant and helpful, not least with Israeli tourists who seem quite open. At the conference we heard that most Israeli believers came to faith outside Israel, and that was added confirmation.

But what about door-to-door visiting? I listened carefully. In the few busy months since my appointment I hadn't met John Ross and Paul Morris from Christian Witness to Israel, another of the older British missions. But I heard Paul tell of his visiting an ultra-orthodox area of London two afternoons a week where he normally had one good ten-minute conversation and several shorter positive chats. Another speaker told a similar story. If that could

happen in an ultra-orthodox area that had to be confirmation of the relevance of visitation.

There is one important question to be answered by those who criticise street work or door-to-door visiting or leafleting. What more effective methods do they suggest? How do we reach the great majority of Jewish people if we don't use those methods? Friendship evangelism is often the answer given. This is a great method but it will reach very few people.

I came away from LCJE quite convinced that all these methods are right in principle. The only question is to know which method to use at a particular time or in a particular place. But I shall continue to listen to those who suggest new methods. Other methods were mentioned at the conference, which is one of the great benefits of LCJE. But they were for occasional use and



The Liberated Wailing Wall inspired great joy (and deep sadness about those Jewish people who do not know the Messiah), writes Tony Highton.



There was good time at the conference for interaction between the speakers and the audience. Three are here lined up for comments and questions.

therefore not a replacement for the older methods.

Another concern I had was training of staff, including in witnessing. I was going to research the British scene to find out which missions did serious and intensive training. At LCJE I learnt that Paul Morris had already done that and discovered Jews for Jesus was the only one. I spent some time talking with Karol Joseph, who is in charge of training for Jews for Jesus in the US. She was most helpful and offered practical assistance to CMJ.

The other great value of LCJE was networking. In addition to the mass of information conveyed in the sessions and public discussions, meal times and other breaks afforded extensive opportunities for meeting people from other ministries. I learnt who was doing what and where, which

was valuable to facilitate co-operation and to avoid wasteful overlap in ministry. For instance, we are considering expanding our educational ministry in Jerusalem, so it was important to dialogue with Torkild Masvie of the Caspari Centre which affords study facilities in the city. I learnt of resources, methods and experiences which was really useful, not least in avoiding "re-inventing the wheel," for example, producing materials which someone else has already produced. My only suggestion would be to include a substantial session, without a set agenda, for the heads of missions.

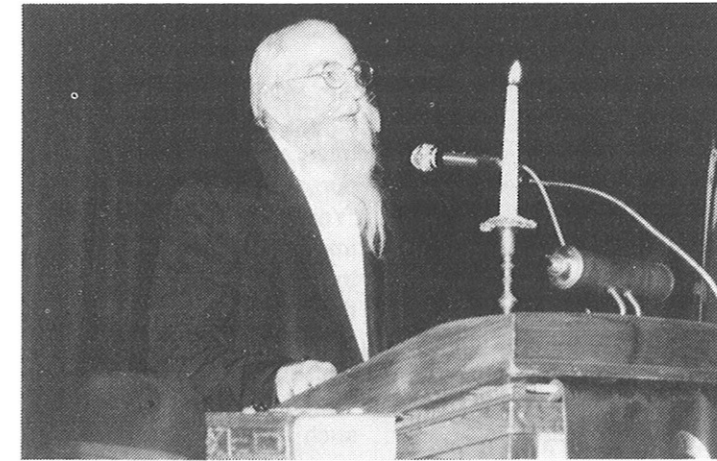
It is my conviction that to fail to network in ministry is to be lacking in wisdom and perhaps even humility. LCJE is a first rate network.

I was impressed with the gentle but helpful discipline

exercised over the conference by Kai Kjær-Hansen, Bodil Skjøtt and Ole Kvarme. And I enjoyed the fun and humour – the morning dramas and the funny stories. The Liberated Wailing Wall inspired great joy (and deep sadness about those Jewish people who do not know the Messiah). That grief was repeated when late evening in tour of New York we visited the base of Rabbi Schneerson's followers. It was so sad to see their zeal without knowledge of the true Messiah.

I had been on a very steep learning curve (I think it was almost vertical!) since April, ably assisted by my colleagues and friends like Richard Harvey. But LCJE added significantly to my education – and my circle of friends and contacts. It came just at the right time for me. I'm glad I was in New York rather than York.

Yeshua – our Brother and Lord



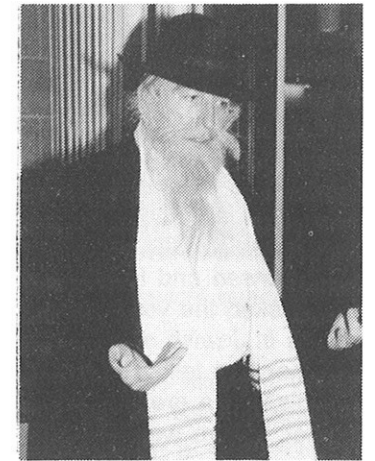
Joseph Rabinowitz died on 17 May 1899. Dr Phil Goble, New York, played Rabinowitz at the New York conference – and spoke on behalf of Rabinowitz' on the theme of *Yeshua – Our Brother and Lord*.

On 23 January 1899 Rabinowitz held his last service in Kishinev in Moldavia, in the south-eastern part of Russia. He had been attacked by malaria and gone on a journey of convalescence to the Tyrol. On 22 April he returned to Kishinev but had to take things easy in order to regain his health. "But the return to malaria-filled Kishinev was a fatal mistake," his son John later writes. In May, one hundred years ago, Rabinowitz's daughter Rachel sent a telegram to friends in London saying: "Father passed away peacefully, May 17, one o'clock morning. Pray for family."

Rabinowitz made the question of Jesus a Jewish matter and thereby provoked the Jewish world. He complicated the situation for the Jews who had converted to Christianity in order to get rid of their Jewish identity, and he insisted towards Gentile Christians that it was not a sin to continue to be a Jew after one had come to believe in Jesus as the Messiah.

Indeed, Rabinowitz is still worth paying attention to – and to commemorate now one hundred years after his death.

I have two subjects with which I have been absorbed through my ministry: one, the Lord Jesus Christ; the other, Israel. Israel needs her brother Yeshua. I continue to see myself as a brother of my Jewish people – after my brother Yeshua met me in



Jerusalem.

Indeed, Yeshua Achinu, Jesus our Brother. When I first introduced the term, an American kinsman and fellow-believer criticized me for it. He thought that I depreciated the Lord's greatness. But of course I did not do that. I wrote to him and said this, among other things:

Do you not know, my dear brother, that your brethren after the flesh, the blind Talmud Jews, continue to besmirch the person of the Lord ...? So that they shall not continue, like their fathers, to gnash their teeth and stop up their ears so as not to hear the name of Jesus, it is necessary to use the same method as the early believers, i.e. to remind them of some "home" truths. This is exactly what Peter and Stephen did in Acts 3 and 7 by quoting Deut. 18:15 with the phrase "one of your brethren".

A Report from the Young Leadership Network of the LCJE

By Derek Leman, Light of Messiah Ministries, Atlanta, GA, USA

Our group began with a suggestion, was confirmed by a call, and quickly developed into an energetic network. During the 1999 International LCJE, Kai Kjær-Hansen and Bodil Skjøtt asked the young leaders in Jewish missions to gather and talk. Thinking that this was a great idea, we met. Before we could even have our first meeting, however, Dan Juster addressed the conference with a call to raise up the next generation of leaders in Jewish work. By the time thirteen "twenty-somethings" and "thirty-somethings" got together that night, the suggestion had become a call to action. Before the meeting was over, the call became a network, full of energy and enthusiasm.

In the course of three formal meetings, and a few informal as well, we all felt that the task of raising up

and empowering the emerging generation of leaders in Jewish evangelism was ours as a group. As young people involved in Jewish evangelism, we knew that we could reach out effectively to three groups: teenagers, college students, and young missionaries already in the field. We made plans together to reach out to teenagers and college students with the call to Jewish evangelism. We also made plans to involve other young missionaries in the work of LCJE for the purpose of encouraging them to stay in Jewish evangelism.

As a result of our meetings and of the input of young missionaries, the European Regional LCJE decided to appoint a Youth Coordinator. In the North American Region, the new director, Theresa Newell,

has asked for input from the young missionaries. We have also committed ourselves to preparing a "Youth Track" at the next International LCJE, a place to bring potential recruits to the field of Jewish evangelism. North America and Europe have also raised the possibility of holding such a "Youth Track" at the next regional meeting. We all committed together to do whatever we can to get more young missionaries involved in the work of LCJE.

While our older colleagues were joking around with us about being a "revolution" at the International LCJE, we were hoping that we could be faithful to become a godly "revolution". We are the future of Jewish missions and we too must empower those who will follow us. The fields are still white and age to age our God is the same.

Something is growing in Hungary

By Henrik Nordborg, Danish Israel Mission

Two young people from Hungary, Ferenc Kozma and Csaba Krasznai participated in the LCJE New York 99 conference. For them it is a very new thing to be involved in Jewish mission, and their enthusiasm and eager-

ness to do something for the Jewish people is almost contagious. Last summer (1998) they started an organization called "Nachamu Ami" (Comfort My People). Perhaps "organization" is too big a word to use about five

people getting together in this pioneering work. But they have invited others to a new meeting this fall and hope that at least 20 people will show up and commit themselves to being involved in the work of "Comfort My

People". The goal is to reach out to the about 100,000 Jews living in Hungary.

When God answered

Often books have opened the eyes of people. When Ferenc first got hold of one of the books in the Zion Chronicle by Bodie Thoene, he could not stop until he had read all five books.

Ferenc says, "The books inspired me. I wanted to do something for the Jews, but I found no support in my own Reformed Church background. My church is not open to Jewish mission and would prefer to ignore such initiatives."

And he continues: "I had studied theology in Budapest but had moved to Debrecen, the second largest city in Hungary. One day I happened to discover that the professor in missiology had announced a subject for a prize essay. The assignment was to 'write a paper (60-70 pages) on the challenges of Jewish Mission in Hungary'. I was overwhelmed. Since reading the Zion Chronicle I had been on fire. But was this just my idea. This contest was God's answer to me," says Ferenc bursting with enthusiasm.

As Ferenc wrote the paper it also became clear to him that he was the one to start up this new work in Hungary. His evangelical professor liked his paper and encouraged him in his vision that it was possible to start up a new work for the Jews of Hungary. The official



Young Hungarians with a vision for Jewish evangelism - Csaba Krasznai (left) and Ferenc Kozma.

response of the Reformed university was rather to remain silent and hope the initiative would die.

Denying his Jewish roots

Ferenc and Csaba have known each other since 1993, but their friendship got a new dimension last summer. Csaba was invited by Ferenc to a meeting concerning the possibilities of starting a Hungarian Jewish mission. It turned out to be the right time.

Csaba had just reached an important point in his life. He had accepted his Jewish roots although his father had done all he could to deny this. At the university Csaba loved learning the Hebrew language. He found that more exciting than the Jewish people.

Csaba says, "It was taboo in my family to talk about the Jews. My grandfather was very rich, and everybody in the village were very negative towards him and would call him "the crazy Jew" and similar names. People were very hard

towards the family.

In 1997 Csaba received a scholarship to study mission and evangelism at an American university. He continues, "I left for Washington, and there I received letters from Ferenc telling me about his new discovery. It meant that my own work on missiology at the university began dealing more and more with issues related to the history of Jewish mission. I visited Messianic Jewish congregations in the States and was able to resolve my negative attitude towards my own Jewish background. It was therefore very encouraging for me and a perfect timing when Ferenc invited me to the meeting last summer. I look forward to getting involved in the very important work of sharing the gospel with Jewish people in Hungary."

We can only hope that the new network of young leaders involved in Jewish mission can support and be challenged by what God is doing through these two young men in Hungary.

Let's keep the Legacy of Jewish Missions Alive

By Rich Robinson, Jews for Jesus, San Francisco

Suppose you wanted to find Jewish missions periodicals from the 19th century related to children's ministry? Or what if you wanted to locate testimonies of Jewish believers in Jesus from the 1700s and 1800s? How about if you needed to research the history of Jewish missions in the early part of this century in the Lutheran churches in the U.S., or in the Christian Reformed Church? Possibly you could obtain some of this material via Inter-Library Loan -- if you even knew what to ask for.

The problem is simply that there is a wealth of material about Jewish missions "out there" -- scattered in libraries throughout the world, in missions archives, in private collections. At the risk of making up a statistic, I suspect that 99% of the material is unknown or inaccessible to 99% of those involved in Jewish evangelism. And as a legacy of Jewish missions and Jewish believers in Jesus, it is in danger of being neglected if not entirely lost (as in fact happened to a good deal of material in Continental Europe during the Second World War).

At LCJE International this past August, I had the opportunity to present one solution to the problem. I followed the model of a work

already in progress on the Internet, Project Gutenberg. This secular project utilizes an ever-growing corps of volunteers to preserve and make available in digital format out-of-copyright works of literature. The volunteers locate materials (for instance, the works of Shakespeare), scan them into computers, and put them through two proofreads, after which they are posted on the Internet and freely available to the public.

Following this model, I propose that Jewish missions and interested friends recruit volunteers, who in turn can recruit others. Some will have access to scanning equipment, some will not. Some will have word processors or typewriters. Some will love proofreading or typing.

The idea is simple in theory. First, locate the materials. I have already compiled a database of about 500 books, periodicals, missions reports and tracts located in libraries throughout the U.S. and U.K. (since English is my first language, I concentrated initially on English-language items). One would also expect to find materials particularly in German institutions as well as in Israel and other countries.

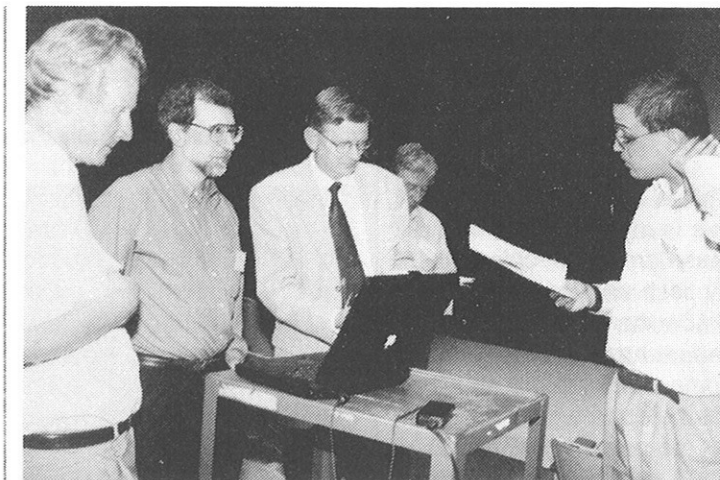
My database is far from

complete. The most recent item I have listed is "The Enrichment of the Church and the Results of Jewish Missions" by Elias Newman, a 23-page booklet published in 1944 by the Zion Society for Israel. (I restricted the ending dates to the earlier part of this century.) The earliest item is by John Foxe, "A sermon preached at the christening of a certaine Jew" first published in 1570! In between is a wide variety of items, some book-length, some as short as an evangelistic tract. Perhaps my favorite of all is the booklet dated 1634 with the intriguing title, "A false Jew, or, A wonderful discovery of a Scot: baptized at London for a Christian, circumcised at Rome to act a Jew, re-baptized at Hexham for a believer, but found out at Newcastle to be a cheat: being a true relation of the detecting of one Thomas Ramsey." And then, besides individual books and pamphlets, there are the decades of missions magazines and newsletters published by the mission societies as well as by churches and denominations that were active in Jewish missions.

Once an item is located, a volunteer obtains it, or a photocopy of it. Where possible, the item is scanned as plain text and sent through an OCR (optical

character recognition) program, or else it is retyped. It is then sent out to another volunteer to be proofread, and a final proofreading is done by a third volunteer. Oftentimes the same volunteers can swap work to be proofread. Once completed, the final product is ready to be put on CD-ROM or online as a public website or a private intranet. A text indexing program indexes the full set of texts, which can then be searched by word, person, institution, or Bible verse. Imagine searching through 300 years of Jewish missions material to find all mentions of "Isaiah 7:14" and what was written about that passage. Or searching for "Jean Gedalieu," a missionary to the Jews who worked in San Francisco, where I am writing this article, in the first decade of this century -- and whose house I can drive past if I can only locate the article that mentioned her address!

Such a project is important not only for researchers, but to preserve the legacy of Jewish evangelism and Jewish believers in Jesus. It is easiest to produce this material in the European languages. Hebrew, Yiddish, Russian and other languages that do not use the Latin alphabet present greater difficulties, but the problems are quite solvable. After all, one of the most widespread languages today on the Internet is Japanese!



Jorge Quiñónez (right) is explaining his project while (from left) Torkild Masvie, Rich Robinson and Matthias Dahl are listening.

At LCJE, a number of people came up to me expressing interest in such a project, from various mission leaders who have access to their own historical archives to the volunteer who handed me her e-mail address and told me that she loves to proofread. Thanks to all who indicated interest. I will be in touch as the initial stages of the project develop. And thanks to those who suggested additional ways to approach such a project, for example, by utilizing students in the classroom. Of course many readers of this Bulletin were not present at the conference. If you are one of those readers and either (1) have access to a scanner and OCR software; (2) enjoy using a word processor or typing (some materials will not scan well and need to be keyed in); (3) enjoy proofreading with the attention to detail that takes -- then contact me at

rarob@aol.com. And if you are a technical person with experience in electronic preservation of this nature, or a teacher/professor interested in involving your students, please get in touch as well. Let's keep the legacy of Jewish missions alive!

Special offer!

New members are offered the quarterly LCJE Bulletin for the rest of 1999 and the whole of 2000 for USD 35. Please contact LCJE International for an application form. LCJE International Ellebækvej 5 DK-8520 Lystrup Denmark Tel +45 8622 6470 Fax +45 8622 9591 E-mail lcje-int@post3.tele.dk

ISRAELIS IN AMERICA: A Question of Destiny

By Bill Bjoraker, Operation Ezekiel, Pasadena, CA

"This is my home.
This is my country.
These are my people.
My flesh and blood.
I know them by heart.
I am at home.
Home. . . Home.
Let me out.
Let me out of here!"

J. Lind, in *The Trip to Jerusalem*.

Have you heard any sabra Hebrew spoken on the streets lately? There is a new Jewish diaspora today. It is not one caused by military invasion like the Babylonian Exile (586 BCE) or that following the Roman destruction of the Second Temple (70 CE). Nor is it a forced expulsion like that from Spain in 1492. No. It is rather a voluntary Israeli diaspora from Eretz Israel to the cities of North America.

Emigration from the State of Israel by native-born Israelis increased markedly after the Six Day War (1967), and even more dramatically after the Yom Kippur War (1973). They came by the thousands in the 1980's yuppie boom. Though "yerida" (opposite of "aliyah") has slowed in the 1990's, there is nevertheless sufficient numbers of Israelis in major cities such that a critical mass exists,



Bill Bjoraker

especially in New York (80,000+) and Los Angeles (50,000+). Many Israelis have "made it" here and have settled in for the long haul. Others will be drawn after them from Israel in years to come.

Why do they come? Migration is not a new activity for Jewish people. Sociologically, economically, it's not hard to understand; its push-pull. The struggles of life in modern Israel have effectively pushed many out. The Intifada in the 80's, the Russian aliyah in the 90's have produced intolerable conditions for many. On the other hand the pull of the American Dream has lured many for whom the Zionist Dream had become a nightmare. Expanded career horizons for talented and energetic people in a small country. Security. Adventure.

Forbidden fruit. Escape. Hey, Israelis are human too.

It is a diaspora that the American Jewish community does not like to recognize. You can hear them, "We send millions of dollars every year to the Jewish national homeland, and you come here?!" To which challenge, the diaspora Israeli is likely, and convincingly, to retort, "Listen, I lived 25 years in Israel. Served in the army. I've paid my dues. Why don't you Americans go pay yours while I stay here for a while and send money to Israel every year? Nul!"

Even without such guilt tripping, diaspora Israelis carry a residual guilt about leaving the Jewish national home. After all, they drank Zionist ideology with their mother's milk. Ask any Israeli here if he/she is going back to Israel someday, and they will inevitably say, "yes." Ask, "When?", and few will have set any concrete dates. The fact is many will live out their lives and die here.

But should they feel guilty? In the light of Jewish history and values need they?

Don't get me wrong. I am sympathetic to Zionism. I am committed to the existence and flourishing of the State of Israel. I rejoice in Israel's 50th anniversary. Being

non-Jewish, I invested eight years of my life living and working in Israel. Could I have been granted citizenship, I may well have embraced it.

What are the real issues here? I will contend there is a message for us all in this phenomenon of the Israeli diaspora.

Rabbi Joseph Telushkin tells the story,

"In 1939, a Viennese Jew enters a travel agent's office and says, 'I want to buy a steamship ticket.'

"Where to?', the clerk asks.

'Let me look at your globe, please.'

The Jew starts examining the globe. Every time he suggests a country, the clerk raises an objection. 'This one requires a visa' . . . This one is not admitting anymore Jews. . . . The waiting list to get into that one is ten years.'

Finally the Jew looks up. 'Pardon me, do you have another globe?'"

Right. Antisemitism is tragic. But there is a profound truth herein with which Jewish experience resonates: ultimately this world is not our true home. We are destined for a home more grand than anything this world can offer in the short span of threescore and ten years we are allotted in it. We are sojourners; merely passing through this world. We need reminders of this so that we live our lives in

the light of it, and make decisions that will ensure that we secure our true destiny. Israelis in America remind us of this.

I learn from my Israeli émigré friends, who realize that New York or Los Angeles is not their true home. They live somewhat lightly invested while sojourning here, knowing that someday they intend to return to their true home. I learn from them that this is also not my true home. I am a sojourner. I will not invest too deeply in the systems of this world for it is passing away, and I shall pass away from it.

The Greatest of Jewish Heroes Testify

Is this idea foreign to Jewish thought? Not at all. Let's look at some of the greatest Jewish heroes:

Avraham Avinu, our Father Abraham; the father of the Jewish people. He was called "Avram ha Ivri" (Abram the Hebrew) (Genesis 14:13) because he left Ur of the Chaldees and crossed over (from the root 'avar' in Hebrew, "crossed over.") rivers and deserts in response to the call of God. The Torah says the people of Israel were to recite at the festive assemblies, "A wandering Aramean was my father. . . and he went down to Egypt." (Deuteronomy 26:5) Abraham made yeridah" and went down to Egypt. He traversed the Land from north to south, and for economic reasons,

sojourned in Egypt. He spent more time outside the Land of Promise than within it. The only land he ever owned there was a burial plot for his wife Sarah in Hebron. The father of the Jewish people lived as a resident alien. Many Israeli émigrés live as such today in America.

Yet Abraham was a man of hope, a great expectation, and a destiny which transcended the earthly Land of Canaan. God had promised him that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore. Abraham and his family were not rooted in the land, but lived in confident expectation that God would fulfill His promise of the land. He trusted toward a land not yet possessed. But because the promise was not fulfilled in his lifetime, he concluded God would fulfill it afterward.

He looked beyond the earthly Promised Land. He never sunk his tent pegs down too deeply, knowing that where he sojourned was not permanent. Though he would not have used these terms, he was yearning for the "Jerusalem Above", the "Heavenly Zion."

And Abraham believed the promise of God that through his seed ("zerah" in Hebrew, in the singular number), "all the families of the earth will be blessed." (Genesis 12:3).

Have the Jewish people in their long diaspora or in the modern State of Israel really fulfilled this destiny of

blessing "all the families of the earth"? Or in later language, being a "light to the Gentiles"? Or was it to be through one singular seed from out of the descendants of Abraham who would fulfill this?

After the Akedah, when Abraham passed the test of being willing to sacrifice his son, The Almighty indeed implies exactly this saying, "In your seed (zarah) shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." (Genesis 22:18).

Father Abraham would definitely be thinking of his son who was intended for sacrifice at this point. Abraham knew God had a plan much bigger than that of his descendants merely possessing the Land of Canaan.

How about Moses? Moshe Rabeinu. This great Deliverer and Lawgiver of the Jewish people; one of the greatest men of all time. In Midian, Moses identified himself as a "ger" (sojourner) in that he named his son "Gershom", because he said, "I have been a stranger ("ger") in a strange land." Moses had the burning bush encounter outside the Land of Israel. This encounter was destiny for Moses. It is chutz la aretz (outside the Land) where Moses lived out his dramatic career as one of the greatest men of faith of all times. All of western civilization is his debtor.

Yet he died, never having set foot in the Land of Promise. God's intended

destiny for him was something far better. And it was he who solemnly announced to the people of Israel that God had told him, "I will raise up a Prophet from among your countrymen like you, and I will put my words in his mouth, and he will speak to them all I command him." (Deuteronomy 18:18). Who is this Prophet? Only the promised Messiah could fulfill this role of being like Moses in his role as Deliverer and Lawgiver for Israel and impacting all of civilization, a "Light to the Gentiles".

Some of the greatest leaders of this and the coming generation of Jewish people may be emerging among them here in chutz la aretz. Israeli sojourners in America today are also having divine encounters and realizing their true destiny as they receive this Prophet, the Messiah.

Consider Naomi. During the period of the Judges (12th-11th cent. BCE), "push and pull" caused the Israeli couple Elimelech and Naomi to "make yeridah" to Moab. After a ten year sojourn in the diaspora she became a "returnee." The deaths in her family in the diaspora had embittered her, but it was there that she also met the gentile Ruth, who became her daughter-in-law. This was destiny for Naomi. It was through Ruth that the "goel" (kinsman redeemer) was born. The women of Naomi's home

town, Bethlehem, exclaimed, "May he be to you a restorer of life and a sustainer of your old age." (Book of Ruth 4:15). They named him Obed and he became the grandfather of King David, from whose seed the Messiah would come.

The Israeli, Naomi found spiritual renewal there in the diaspora. She found Geulah in the Gola. She discovered that her true center of identity, her true destiny, her true home, if you will, was ultimately spiritual. And it was wrapped up in being associated with the line of the Jewish Messiah. The Greater Seed of Abraham. The Prophet of whom Moses spoke.

Then there is Queen Esther. It is in the diaspora that her moment of destiny emerges. As genocide hangs, like the "Sword of Damocles" over the heads of the Jewish people, she steps forth and risks her life for the salvation of her people. She is successful and is forever celebrated, a true Jewish heroine. Yet the salvation for which she was instrumental was but temporal. Tragically, other near genocides would follow.

It is only the Messiah of Israel, whom she foreshadowed, who would accomplish an eternal salvation for Israel and the nations.

Do You Have Another Globe?

The Messiah would come and make atonement for sin

by actually going through with the sacrificial death which Isaac foreshadowed in the Akedah. He is the Lamb of God. The Death Angel passes over all who have availed themselves of the atonement he wrought in his death and resurrection. He has conquered death for all who trust in Him. All who perceive the identity of this Greater Seed of Abraham; all who listen to this Prophet of whom Moses spoke, the Jewish Messiah, indeed inherit eternal life and enter in to their true destiny of being citizens of the "Jerusalem Above."

This is not an escape; this is God's offer and intended destiny for us. The question of the Viennese Jewish man from 1939 is answered in the affirmative by the Messiah— Yes, there is another globe. It is the eternal Kingdom of God, which is the destiny of all who repent of their sins and trust in the Messiah. They are justified before God, spiritually renewed and heirs of the "Heavenly Zion."

"Glorious things are spoken of you, O City of God. . . . But of Zion it shall be said, 'This one and that one were born in her'; and the Most High Himself will establish her. The LORD shall count when He registers the peoples, 'This one was born there.'

"Then those who sing as well as those who play the flutes shall say, 'All my springs of joy are in you.'" (Psalm 87: 3, 5-7).

True Jewish Destiny
Eretz Israel is the religion of many American Jews . But Israel is for many of us a faith before it is a place. A transcendental view of Eretz Israel fares much better here in America than it does in the sweaty facts of the daily grind in Tel Aviv and Haifa. If the presence of Israeli sojourners here in America causes American Jews to ponder the question of the true center of their identity and their divinely intended destiny, thank God they are here.

Zionism or Eretz Israel as a faith is a temporal and inadequate identity center for Jewish people. Abraham looked beyond it. Moses reached his destiny never having entered it. Naomi found spiritual renewal while sojourning outside it. Esther was an instrument for the salvation of her Jewish people while living in the diaspora. The center of identity for these Jewish greats was the God of Israel, trusting and anticipating toward the Messiah of Israel, not primarily in the Land of Israel.

So who is the real Jewish Messiah and Savior of the world? The weight of evidence from the Hebrew Scriptures points to only one figure in history. Tracing through biblical history we see He is the Seed of the Woman (Genesis 3:15), the Seed of Abraham (Genesis 12:3), Shiloh, from the tribe of Judah, from whom the scepter shall not depart, and

to whom shall be the obedience of the peoples (Genesis 49:10), the Seed of David, to whom God promised a throne and whose Kingdom He would establish forever (2 Samuel 7:12-13), the Shepherd of Israel destined to be born in Naomi's and David's city of Bethlehem (Micah 5:2), the Suffering Servant of the LORD who would die "for the sins of my people" (Isaiah 53:8), the Messiah who was to die before the destruction of the Second Temple (Daniel 9: 26).

He is the greatest Jew who has ever lived. He has made the God of Israel known to millions of gentiles. Having emerged from the midst of the chosen people, He is the true "Light to the Gentiles". He is Jesus of Nazareth.

Realize your true destiny through Him. Come to your true home in and through Him. Thousands of Jewish people today are doing just that. The decision you make regarding Him now will determine your eternal destiny.

And next time you hear sabra Hebrew spoken in the streets, let it remind you of your true destiny.

Elections at the Sixth International LCJE Conference



The old ICC (from the left): Kai Kjær-Hansen (International Coordinator), Ole Chr. Kvarme (President), Susan Perlman and Tsvi Sadan (Committee Members).

Changes in the International Coordinating Committee (ICC)

Perhaps some will see it as a sign of a crisis that three out of four ICC members, namely Ole Chr. Kvarme, Susan Perlman and Tsvi Sadan, did not want to stand again as candidates for ICC. However, their decision does not spring from dissatisfaction with LCJE, on the contrary if anything. While Tsvi Sadan, who has been a member of ICC for one period, wants to have more time for his Ph.D studies, both Ole Chr. Kvarme and Susan Perlman have been part of the LCJE leadership right from the beginning of the network in Pattaya 1980.

After 19 years in LCJE's leadership they think it is time for an infusion of fresh blood.

As International Coordinator I want to, on behalf of LCJE, to express our thanks for the energy they have devoted to LCJE. I am convinced that the fact that they are no longer part of the LCJE leadership does not mean that these persons are no longer involved in Jewish evangelism.

And then I am looking forward to cooperation with LCJE's newly elected president, Tuvya Zaretsky, North America, and with the two committee members Lisa Loden, Israel, and Pirkko Säilä, Finland.

The four of us - and the area coordinators - all need your prayers so that we may lead LCJE well into the new millennium!

Kai Kjær-Hansen



The new ICC (from the left): Kai Kjær-Hansen (International Coordinator), Tuvya Zaretsky (President), Lisa Loden and Pirkko Säilä (Committee Members)

Thanks to the outgoing coordinators

The outgoing area coordinators are the following: John Ross, Europe, Kenichi Nakagawa, Japan, Fred Klett, North America and Peter Clarke, South America.

ICC expresses its sincere thanks for the fine work done by these area coordinators.

The new area coordinators

For the period up to the next international LCJE conference, the following were elected as area coordinators: Lawrence Hirsch, Australia/New Zealand, Hartmut Renz, Europe, Arthur Goldberg, Israel, Teiichiro Kuroda, Japan, Theresa Newell, North America and Elijah Gould, South Africa. So far no area coordinator has been found for South America.

The Danish LCJE team

The Danish team which has supported and assisted the international coordinator up through the 90's, namely Birger Petterson and Flemming Markussen (office and Bulletin) and Bodil F. Skjøtt (secretary for ICC), have promised the coordinator to continue.

New Directory on the way
LCJE's latest *International Networking Directory* appeared in 1992. It was prepared by Susan Perlman and included not only LCJE members but also a number of individuals and agencies involved in Jewish evangelism around the world.

We are now going to prepare a new directory which will only include individuals and agencies that are members of LCJE. Birger Petterson will be in charge of the new LCJE Directory. According to plan it will appear at the end of 1999 - and will be updated once a year.

New LCJE brochure on the way



The newly elected area coordinator for North America, Theresa Newell, is together with Susan Perlman in the process of preparing a new LCJE brochure. The brochure will be enclosed the next issue of the LCJE Bulletin.

Art show - a success

Melissa Moskowitz was in charge of the art show at the New York conference. She says: - In the end, there was almost \$1500 in sales, with 22 artists participating.

In all the years I've done the art shows for Jews for Jesus, we never had one that was as successful for the artists involved.



Proposed Actions By the General Meeting

1. LCJE and Coordination of strategies

WE RECOMMEND that the ICC consider how to improve the role of the LCJE as a platform for leaders in Jewish missions and in the messianic Jewish movement to coordinate their strategies, share their resources and develop cooperative efforts.

2. LCJE link with LCWE and denominations

WE RECOMMEND that the ICC and the area coordinators strengthen the ties of the LCJE to the LCWE and to missiologists worldwide as well as making proper representation to the leadership of denominational churches.

3. LCJE and Youth

WE RECOMMEND that the ICC and the area coordinators of the LCJE consider how to facilitate fellowship of young people with a calling to Jewish evangelism, and that the ICC consider to invite one or more representatives from its younger members to its meetings on the same basis as area coordinators may participate in the ICC meetings.

4. The Purpose Statement of the LCJE

WE RECOMMEND that the ICC discuss the purpose statement of the



Conversation and networking between the papers characterized the conference in New York.

LCJE, report on this discussion to the next general meeting and then also bring necessary proposals for change that may strengthen the roll of the LCJE network as we want to bring our commitment to Jewish evangelism into the next millennium.

5. Jewish evangelism and democracy in Israel
The General Meeting of the LCJE Expresses—its gratitude and support for the work of MAC in this respect,—and call to its members, friends and churches worldwide to do the same, to be alert to

future developments in this respect, and to enlist support as broad as possible for the continued work of MAC.

Note:

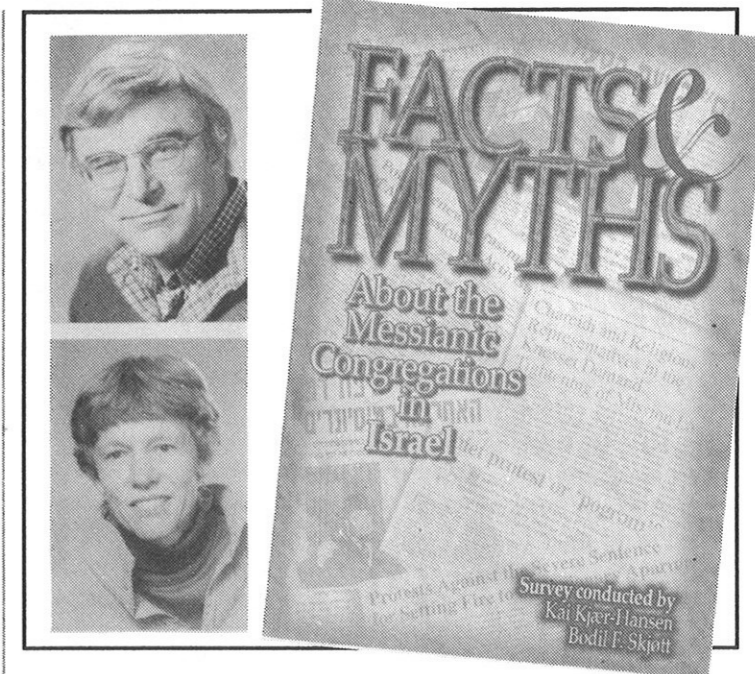
Point 5 resulted in some debate among the participants. The President, Ole Chr. Kvarme, clarified that the statement about MAC stands as an expression of the support of the group but is not part of the conference statement. Participants were encouraged to take it back to their organizations and supporters.

Facts & Myths About the Messianic Congregations in Israel A survey conducted by Kai Kjær-Hansen and Bodil F. Skjøtt

Book Review by Richard Harvey, Tutor in Hebrew Bible and Jewish Studies
at All Nations Christian College, Ware, UK

Have you ever wondered just how many Jewish believers in Jesus there are in Israel, or how you might go about answering the question? If you have ever been confused by the multiplicity of "educated guesses" that are put forward to answer the question, or at a loss when asked the question by others, then *Facts & Myths About the Messianic Congregations in Israel* is for you!

There have probably always been Jewish believers in Jesus living in Israel, but from the time of the early church historian Eusebius of Caesarea, (260–339 c.e) estimates of their number have been hazy, to say the least. From the re-establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 to the present day interested observers have noted a steady increase in the numbers of groups and individuals who identified as Jewish and believing in Jesus, from the hundreds to the thousands. Yet attempts to describe this growth were frequently fragmentary, anecdotal and impressionistic, leaving room for a considerable mythology to grow up about what was really happening. A wide variety of intelligent guesswork often took the



place of hard analysis, with a certain amount of exaggeration inevitable in all but the most conservative of accounts.

Now *Facts & Myths* has changed the situation for good. It is a fascinating and valuable resource; a phenomenon that could, according to some, be "counted on the fingers of two hands" now requires a book-length treatment. If it is both the recording of events and the events themselves that make up "history", then this book confirms that the modern Messianic movement in Israel is here to stay, and cannot be ignored. What Kjær-Hansen and

Skjøtt have achieved is no mean feat. Through telephone surveys, personal interviews and previously available material they have put together the most accurate, up-to-date and comprehensive picture of the state of the Messianic movement in Israel. Concentrating primarily on congregations and fellowships of Jewish believers in Jesus, they have also, for the sake of comparison, added sections on International Congregations that include Jewish believers, Hebrew Catholics (from whom the Messianic movement has much to learn), non-aligned

groups and others such as Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons.

Their primary aim has been to quantify as precisely as possible the actual numbers of Jewish believers in Jesus. Such an attempt is fraught with methodological and perspectival issues, requires diplomacy and tact in pursuit of the task, and raises important questions about Messianic Jewish (and non-Jewish) identity and self-understanding that require theological tolerance and sensitivity. But Kjær-Hansen and Skjøtt have clearly explained their presuppositions and procedures, so that anyone questioning their findings can readily see how they have arrived at their conclusions, and can repeat the process, should they choose. What has been produced is both a labour of love and a *tour de force* of diligent research. Here, clearly, and for the first time in the history of the movement, is a mapping of the Messianic movement in Israel, group by group and region by region.

The authors have sought to give accurate details of the size, age and history of the 81 groups, their mix of adults and children, Jew and non-Jew, member and visitor, their language preference and degree of Jewish identification. The current state of the Messianic scene in Israel is described, looking carefully at the history of each group, the training of each leader,

the style of worship, confessional stance and "feel" of each congregation. By providing such a composite history of so many groups and individuals the authors have put together not just a "who's who of the Messianic movement" and a digest of "what is happening in Israel", but a valuable resource for the formulation of evangelistic and congregational strategy, and for missiological and theological reflection. *Facts & Myths* does not seek to answer just the question of numbers, although that question is given priority, and the figures summarised and tabulated on pages 70-79 are food enough for a hungry soul longing for reliable information on the real size of the messianic movement. The authors also address a series of issues in the survey which all provide data on the history, expression and theological concerns of Jewish believers and their congregations. In the detailed histories of the 81 groups and their leaders, the authors cover many of the key missiological questions as to the health of the movement.

The survey gives, where available, details of each group's basis of faith, legal status, degree of opposition, preferred languages, breakdown of membership and a host of other details such as their style of worship, leadership structure, financial

accountability, views on women in ministry, and association with other organisations. Issues affecting the future of the movement such as the integration and involvement of Russian believers, and the provision for children, are well emphasised. A particular challenge arises in the need for ongoing theological reflection and the formulation of Messianic Jewish theology as a serious enterprise of contextualisation and authentic Jewish discourse. The authors in putting forward such a survey helpfully invite the movement to respond on these issues, so that if and when they do the next survey in twenty years time, progress will be seen to have been made.

Similarly the authors raise certain "home truths" of which we should take note. The need for growing unity, the ongoing follow-up of those who move on from one group but fail to join another, the fact that so much growth has occurred through immigration rather than direct evangelism, are all issues to be pondered. The influence of expatriate denomination organisations, and the way "independence" is understood, are also pressing issues that will not go away.

The work will not be without its critics, and Kjær-Hansen and Skjøtt have sought to allay some concerns in advance. This first edition

contains some gaps and editorial flaws in typography and cross-referencing which will hopefully be corrected in further editions. Requests for confidentiality of the locations and identities of groups and individuals have been honoured where requested, even at the expense of a certain "scholarly price." The very act of doing such a survey may be seen as *chutzpah* by some, and the authors have allowed a certain fluidity by using the figures given them by the leaders of the groups, making estimates where necessary rather than seeking to carry out head-counts. This feature means that the method of the survey itself, reflecting group leaders' estimates of numbers, will also be

questioned, but in practice no other method would have been sufficiently well-received to have generated so much helpful information. By placing the available data on record for all to see, a note of sober realism must now be added to any discussion of the messianic movement, both by its opponents and its supporters. The agenda of the authors is also apparent, in the type of questions that they ask, and in their reactions to some of the responses they received. As sympathetic participant-observers they urge the messianic movement on to greater unity, integrity and theological maturity. We do well to heed their challenges and to respond accordingly. A similar survey of the Messianic movement in the

USA and elsewhere would also throw up helpful pointers for growth, and perhaps the authors may wish to co-ordinate a future 'World Messianic Handbook'! So *Facts & Myths* is a landmark in the history of the Messianic movement in the land of Israel, and a significant contribution to the understanding and development of an authentic, indigenous and mature expression of faith in Yeshua as Messiah of Israel. Anyone who is seriously concerned with Jewish evangelism and the development of Messianic Judaism will need to acquire a copy and master its contents, both for reference to what is happening today, and for stimulus for the future.

MEETINGS

LCJE North America

The next meeting will be held in Atlanta, 13-15 March, 2000.

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Facts & Myths About the Messianic Congregations in Israel

Israel: UCCI/Caspari Centre, 1999 ISSN 0792-0474, published as a double issue of Mishkan: A Forum on the Gospel and the Jewish People, Issue nos. 30/1999 and 31/1999.

320 pages, US \$ 25. To be ordered from: mishkan@caspari.com