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## INTERNATIONAL LCJE REPORT AND PLANS FOR HOLLAND 1991

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### A question you have to answer yourselves

A few months ago I was asked a question by an LCJE member during a telephone conversation. Like many others this member had been invited to give a contribution at this summer's LCJE meeting in Holland. The question was something like this: "Do you think I should still be part of the LCJE work?"

How do you answer such a question? Do you tell him that he is "important", that LCJE will "suffer" if he withdraws, and that such a withdrawal will "harm" LCJE? Perhaps one should say so sometimes. I could have said so to him - in all truth. But I decided to do something else. I simply told him that he alone could answer that question. And then I added that if there was not an international network like LCJE, there would, without any doubt, be people who would form a similar network.

It is a Christian virtue to be something for others. But I would prefer *not* to see LCJE develop into a network where everybody tries to please everybody else, for the result will be a network that is a trivial, useless thing. It is quite all right with me that agency members and individual members ask *themselves* the question: "LCJE - what is there in it for me/us?" If the answer is "very little", it is, nevertheless, possible that this "very little" is sufficient reason to continue. The fact that you who are involved in bringing the gospel to the Jewish people - and you are a minority in this country - face a common charge, namely that of committing spiritual genocide against the Jewish people because you believe that the Jew needs Jesus, that is *for me* sufficient reason why we need a platform where we can meet.

But it should not just be a question of what I *receive* in this network, I must also be willing to *give*. A legitimate and desirable question is: "What am I willing to give and contribute for this network to function better?" Whatever the answer is, I hope that continued membership is not dependent on whether one is invited to be a speaker or whether one has to sit in the audience.

I would like these questions to be part of our discussion this morning. In what direction do you expect LCJE to develop? Susan Perlman and I would like some signals from you to transmit to our next ICC meeting. For these signals to be decoded in a meaningful way it is necessary with a constructive criticism of what has been done so far. Therefore each of us must answer the question: "LCJE membership - what is there in it for me personally or for my organisation?" But it adds to the credibility if another question is also answered: "What am I or what is our organisation willing to give and contribute for LCJE to function optimally?"

That most initiatives require money and resources goes without saying. But it is equally clear that these questions are not just questions about money.

### **The ICC meeting in Budapest**

LCJE's International Coordinating Committee's last meeting was in Budapest in October last year. I would like to read what is written under the heading "LCJE and the Future" from the meeting's minutes:

#### **Current Situation:**

- 1) A network which has heart must have a living and acting heart—there must be better communication on an international level. There is a need for regular meetings of the ICC.
- 2) LCJE's tremendous potential has been limited by the limit in financial resources. There is a need for new ways to solicit contribution to the network from member bodies and members.

#### **Current Challenges:**

- 1) There is a growing recognition of Jewish Evangelism, a growing pluralism and a growing lack of Biblical knowledge as well as a global church growing in areas where people have had no contact with the Jewish people.
- 2) The opening of the Communist world has provided us with a new possibility of sharing the gospel with the Jewish people which again raises the question of the Jewish people and their relationship to the church.
- 3) The challenge of the Muslim world and the Christian West in which Israel and the Jewish people may play a significant role.

#### **The way ahead:**

- 1) Need to sharpen up the development of LCJE in order to make use of the potential of new membership among individuals and agencies.
- 2) Focus upon the deep spiritual aspect of our ministries with regard to a world-wide prayer network and strengthening such a network. Invite others in LCWE to resource the LCJE network in this area of prayer.
- 3) Learning from our past. The Working Paper from our 1986 conference showed much creativity. Instead of thinking only in geographical and hierarchic structures that we think more in symbiotic ways in which we could provide a platform for bringing people of special concerns together so that these people who are resourceful would meet and out of that would grow not only evangelistic enterprises but new initiatives.  
In other words we should be considering allowing networks within the networks - a more flexible structure.
- 4) We should work to have a leadership coming out of Zeist that is not only more active, but more flexible for the pursuit of our objectives.

Additional suggestions from others included putting together LCJE sponsored pastors conferences to focus on the issues of concern to Jewish evangelism, acknowledge spokespersons in the regions, think strategically together, have better communications within the regions and internationally, the opportunities of the east.

Why do we need LCJE today as compared to 1980? Then there was an urgency because

1. There were a number of organizations in our field that did not know one another. Slowly we've been knowing one another.
2. Then Jewish Evangelism was regarded by the rest of the evangelical church as out on the fringe. We are now closer to the center in general Christian thinking.
3. Jewish Evangelism was happening in different geographical places but we were not well informed.

Now there is an urgency because:

1. God is still looking to break the molds of our isolationism.
2. If LCJE didn't exist, we would re-create in several of the regions because it fills a needs for a platform for us to get together through.
3. We are in agreement on the urgency of the evangelistic task among Jews.

It was strongly suggested that the workshop which will run through the Zeist conference for all the mission society directors include the topic of of coordination of mission efforts. The International Coordinator will chair the mission leaders track.

There was input from those present on International Coordinator's presentation. He then summarized.

He first commented on Murdo MacLeod's comments on what God has been doing in history among the nations and with the Jewish people over the last two or three years. In addition to opening Eastern Europe and bringing groups of Jewish people to the West (US, Israel, & Australia), there are a number of other elements. He added that the U.S. and European Christian communities are now asking fundamental questions such as "Do we really want the Jewish people to live in our midst?"

Coming back to two of the five objectives for LCJE (to monitor trends in the Jewish community and to coordinate strategies) they were not as crucial in 1980, but are very important right now and in the next few years.

If ever in recent years the need for a platform for Jewish missions to walk together and think together, it is now. There is a new kind of urgency.

There is need for LCJE to be more specific in the questions we ask in providing a platform for coordination.

There is a need to strengthen the prayer fellowship and the development of prayer partners.

Consideration of LCJE sponsored events where people in their national settings could sponsor pastor's seminars. These events would be designed to promote Jewish evangelism and various agencies in the field would present the case for Jewish evangelism together.

Development of a more flexible network where people with special concerns would take the initiative and use the LCJE name and network to get others together (eg Russian Jews, theological research, messianic music).

Our problem will be in how much we are each limited in our time and energy and finances to contribute to the LCJE umbrella.

I leave this to you for your consideration and reflection.

### **Tightening-up**

Since the latest North American LCJE meeting in St Louis last year there has been done some tightening-up in the LCJE network. They may be listed like this:

1. The maximum number of Bulletins received by an LCJE agency member now corresponds to the amount of money the agency in question pays. It is no longer possible to pay, say, 150 dollars and receive 50 copies, or ask for 50 copies for one's church and only pay the cost of an individual membership.
2. Following the guidelines from 1986 we have not changed the dues to be paid for agency memberships. The lowest dues are \$100 for those agencies with an annual income of less than \$50,000. As of this year the dues for an individual membership have been raised from \$15 to \$25. If a person does not want to be a member or does not fulfil the requirements attached to membership, it is possible to subscribe to the Bulletin. Annual subscription is \$15.
3. New is the possibility of an associate agency membership, an idea which was put forward by you last year in St Louis and which was discussed by ICC at its meeting in Budapest in October 1990. It was agreed that we offer a category of associate membership, with an annual service charge of \$200, for those who by virtue of their denominational constitution cannot hold membership in LCJE. (This could include the Home Mission Board or Evangelism Board of a particular denomination.) I understand the \$200 as a minimum amount! So far none have accepted the offer, but there is still time. It is meant as a help - for Baptists, Lutherans or others - who would like to give financial support without embarking on a course of collision with their own dogma or church politics. I think it is an offer that is hard to refuse!
4. It is also a new thing that one has to pay membership dues in advance, which means mid February at the latest. In the future we are not going to accept "members" who do not pay their dues. A concrete implication of this is that those members who have not paid for 1990 have not received the latest Bulletin. We have mailed the program for Holland 91 to them and asked them to pay their arrears, but if they do not respond, they have heard the last of us. Those who have paid for 1990 but not for 1991 have received the latest Bulletin, but they have also been told that this will be the last Bulletin if they do not pay. If we do not hear from them, they shall not hear from us either.  
This may imply that one third or more of the individual members will be deleted from our list this year. It may seem a drastic measure, but I for one see it as a good starting-point for the future work.
5. Furthermore, it was decided that all members, irrespective of where they live, pay their dues directly to LCJE's international office in Denmark and not via their LCJE Area Coordinator, for example. In that way we create equal conditions for all,

and we avoid the situation that a member who has paid his dues does not receive the Bulletin, because the communication between an Area Coordinator and the LCJE office fails.

It is my impression that this tightening-up corresponds to the wishes expressed by you last year in St Louis.

#### **More members and our efforts to become better known**

In 1990 we got a little more than a handful of new individual members, and the following new agency members: *The Danish Israel Mission*, *The Evangelical Lutheran Free Church in Norway*, *The Finnish Lutheran Mission*, and *Jews for Jesus*, South Africa. In addition to this: *Elisha Ministry* resumed its membership. There were also examples of agencies that reduced their involvement to individual membership, namely two, both American: *Beth Ariel* and *Hebrew Christian Fellowship*.

The sum is simple: In 1990 the Scandinavians did better than you Americans!

In 1991 it is up to you, not just to your coordinator, but to *you* to help organisations and churches to become LCJE agency members.

It is also up to you to make LCJE better known in your area. In connection with this I have a proposal that I would like you to consider.

If we want to become known and if we want our cause to be taken seriously, it is necessary that our publications become known and that they are available in libraries. I look forward to the day when we shall also be able to publish books. In the academic world it is only written words that count and that are taken seriously. At present, we have two publications, the LCJE Bulletin and Mishkan; the latter is edited and published in Israel, with support from LCJE. To my mind these periodicals are not competitors: they are two different periodicals which supplement each other. Mishkan is of a more theological nature than the Bulletin - though I hope that the Bulletin is also theological.

But what is the use if Mishkan and the Bulletin are only known and read by the inner circle of LCJE? They have their natural place, I think, in theological libraries and theological seminars.

Until now we have not been successful in making these libraries so interested in our cause that they are willing to pay for a subscription. Subscription for each of them is \$15.

I would like you to return to your boards with the following proposition - if you have not been authorized to make such decisions yourselves:

\$30 is not a whole lot of money, nor is \$150 - especially not if you spread it over 5 years and consider the size of your budget. And 5 times \$150 is not very much money either if you consider that it can do good in 5 places.

What am I talking about? I am talking about you finding some libraries and theological seminars which would like to receive Mishkan and the LCJE Bulletin for free. You will pay for a test period of, for example, 5 years. You find out what libraries you want to pay for. Then you notify Mishkan and me about the arrangement, so that we can invoice you for the periodicals which are sent to the libraries you have chosen.

This could be the start of something new. We might become known, and people might begin to take us seriously. I hope that you will give serious consideration to this - and act. I have no doubt that there are similar ideas which could be realized with little effort and at little expense, compared to our budgets.

#### LCJE Areas

In 1990 meetings were held in three of the six LCJE areas: here in North America, in Budapest, for Europe, (5-8 October), and in Rishon LeTzion, for Israel, (7 December). As far as I know there were no meetings in the other areas. Andrew Barron, who is the new Coordinator for South Africa, has informed me, however, that there is going to be a meeting in Johannesburg on 23 February this year. I expect to have a report from this in the next issue of the Bulletin.

The European meeting in Budapest focused on the new Europe, and especially the challenge to us from the Eastern European countries and the USSR, countries where up to the outbreak of World War II there was a considerable work to bring the gospel to Jewish people. While trains from Moscow were carrying Russian emigrants to Budapest Railway Station from where they were taken to the airport and flown to Israel, we were sitting in Hotel Budapest occupied with Jewish evangelism in past, present and future. There is a rather detailed description of the meeting in the Bulletin, no. 22, which also has the Budapest LCJE Statement. David Hillen from Ireland wrote a report from the conference to the Bulletin, and he sums up the problems well:

"The Budapest LCJE Statement offers a timely challenge to the churches 'not to let this opportunity pass'. The challenge must also be faced by the Jewish Mission Societies. Ole Kvarme's questions deserve to be answered: 1) How can Societies develop to meet the need? 2) Can we talk about coordination? 3) How should we work with the local and national churches? 4) Have we tried to coordinate with other Mission Societies, e.g. the Slavic Gospel Mission? 5) Charity begins at home - are we at work at home?"

These are not just questions for LCJE Europe. Organisations here in the U.S. are also involved. The question is if we are ready, if we are willing to cooperate or at least to coordinate our efforts.

It was decided that the European Coordinator, Otto Hoevik, should do a "Survey on Jewish Missions in Eastern Europe". The finding of this survey (questionnaires will be sent to LCJE agency members, not to individual members) will be presented at the conference this summer in Holland.

I suppose we can say that the conference in Budapest can be seen as a first little step towards accepting the enormous challenge from Eastern Europe. The next step will be taken in Holland this summer.

Also the LCJE meeting in Israel last December - it was a one-day meeting - included a discussion of how to reach the gospel to Soviet immigrants. A significant effort seems to be done by way of literature. Churches, in Haifa for example, report accession of Soviet immigrants. This important subject will naturally be on the program for the conference in Holland.

At the meeting in Israel the discussion centred on cooperation - or more accurately the lack of cooperation - between foreign mission organisations and local

churches. In my estimation, the problem is so big that it can neither be solved by a snap of one's fingers nor by a few pious words. In my opinion, problems of cooperation are not solved by ignoring the differences which are really there and which are due to differences of dogma and confession. Personally I believe in a certain amount of cooperation and much coordination and prefer this to much cooperation, where cooperation is based on the lowest thinkable common denominator.

Not everybody will agree with me about this, but then it may be a starting-point for a discussion. That there are problems which are due to differences between forceful personalities - in Israel as well as anywhere else - is only to be expected. In my paper tomorrow I shall treat this issue in more detail.

#### **Holland 91**

We might as well refer to this summer's conference in Holland as Holland 91. Woudschoten is too difficult to pronounce for non-Dutchmen! The reason why we call it the fourth international conference is that we regard the consultation in Pattaya as the first. This was followed by the conference in Newmarket, UK, in 1983, and the Easney conference, also in UK, in 1986.

There is no reason to spend time reading the program out aloud to you. It should have reached you by mail and with it a registration form. Registration has to be made before 15 April. If anyone here at this meeting wants to hand it in and pay, they are welcome to do so.

If the speakers confine themselves to the time each of them has been allotted, it will be a fine conference. If they spend more time than that, everything will be chaos. But of course, it will not be chaos. This is a professional conference, and the speakers know what they have to do.

Many exciting themes will be presented in the plenary sessions. There are 20 different workshops, besides a workshop for directors and chairmen, chaired by Ole Chr. M. Kvarme, with the ever relevant theme: cooperation. Each participant can only choose 3 out of the 20 workshops. This is very annoying, but there is a compensation for it. All prepared contributions - from plenary sessions and workshops - will be appear in print. The idea is to print them before the conference and to prepare 5 booklets, one for each day. If the speakers keep their promises, the participants of the conference will receive a booklet each day after the contributions have been delivered orally.

Others, who may not be able to take part in the conference, can order these five booklets. This can be done already during this meeting or on the order form that you will find enclosed the next issue of the Bulletin.

In the latest Bulletin it says, "Holland 91 is no minor event." The future will show if this assertion holds true. Holland 91 does become a minor event if it is not supported by prayer. Everybody can take part in that prayer - even if one is not going to Holland.

Thank you for your attention!

And last but not least: Thank you for inviting me to your meeting. I consider it a privilege.