

# Fourteenth North American LCJE Meeting Philadelphia, 3-5 March, 1997

## International LCJE Report 1997

By Kai Kjær-Hansen

1996 was a quiet year, seen from LCJE's international office in Denmark. This is partly due to the fact that we have not yet begun the planning of the Sixth International LCJE Conference, which is scheduled for 1999. But the International Coordinating Committee (ICC) plans to meet 22-23 June in Jerusalem.

The financial situation is stable, even if we did come out of 1996 with a small deficit. The membership is also stable: 34 agency members and approximately 180 individual members (this number includes complementary members). In this connection I would like to remind you that at last year's North American meeting in Chicago, it came as a surprise to some participants that there were only about 60 North American members of LCJE, and people said last year that they wanted to do something about this in order to increase the number of members. I do not know what has been done - what I do know is that the number of North American members has not increased since the Chicago meeting!

This is the first time in LCJE's history that we have annual reports from the seven Area Coordinators. They are published in the latest LCJE Bulletin (no. 46, February 1997). There is much to be pleased with in these reports, which I will not comment on here, but a close-reading of the reports also reveals that we have areas where LCJE is more impressive on paper than in reality.

The LCJE Bulletin is printed in a number of 750. I repeat what I have often said: The editor is pleased to receive contributions on Jewish evangelism - be it theory or practice, also news about Jewish evangelism, anything stimulating and informative for the task we are involved in. Constructive criticism is also welcome. Self-criticism is most welcome!

Susan Perlman was LCJE's representative at a meeting arranged by the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization (LCWE) in Stuttgart, February 1996 (cf. the LCJE Bulletin no. 44, May 1996). LCJE recognizes its affiliation with LCWE. In short: we believe that we need them and that they need us. The basis of LCJE membership is that the members can embrace the Lausanne Covenant. Susan Perlman observes that "We (LCJE) have one of the most developed networks in the Lausanne body." Perhaps that says more about the Lausanne body than it does about LCJE - but let us nevertheless be glad that our little network functions.

As International LCJE Coordinator, I attended meetings in Israel, Finland, and Stuttgart in 1996.

I am pleased that Finland now has a national LCJE which strives to keep evangelism on the agenda in Israel organizations and among friends of Israel that sometimes tend to forget to put it on their agenda or who give it a low priority. I hope that this example set by the Finns will serve as inspiration in other places in the world.

I am also encouraged that in such a difficult place as Germany there are organizations which do not just talk about evangelism but also help to establish congregations for Jewish believers in Jesus.

And then let us not forget that 1996 was the year when the Southern Baptist Convention in the USA adopted a resolution on Jewish evangelism. Even if this positive resolution does not contain anything which is decisively new, it is nevertheless remarkable that such a big denomination dared to issue it. In the LCJE Bulletin (no. 46, November 1996) I voiced our congratulations. I would like to thank Jim Sibley for the input he has given so that the resolution could be passed. For a period Jim Sibley was a member of LCJE's International Coordinating Committee. I am not saying that LCJE should be credited with the resolution of the Southern Baptists, but it is a good example of LCJE related persons bringing their influence to bear in their respective denominations.

The reactions to the resolution of the Southern Baptists were prompt. I am sure Jim Sibley will comment on that at our meeting, but allow me to repeat the words which I wrote in the LCJE Bulletin on that occasion:

The Southern Baptists - and the rest of us - need not be unduly worried that we are accused of bombing the relationship between Jews and Christians back to the dark Middle Ages. There is much for us in this relationship to be ashamed of. But we are not ashamed of the Gospel - the good news from Israel's God to the Jews first - and then to us non-Jews.

The matter is simple: If the Gospel does not mean anything for Jews today, then why should it mean anything for the rest of us today?

Thank you for fellowship, encouragement, prayers. Let us stand together and not be ashamed of the Gospel. Dark Middle Ages or not!