

The Lausanne Movement: Israeli-Palestinian Reconciliation

Tuvya Zaretsky

Thursday, August 20

The Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism (LCJE) is listed as an affiliated network with the international Lausanne Movement ([«http://www.lausanne.org/networks»](http://www.lausanne.org/networks)). We are one of 36 groups that are specialized evangelism practitioners. The Lausanne website link to our LCJE web page states, "Sharing the gospel with Jewish people was the beginning of world evangelism."

Among the other special issue networks, Lausanne lists evangelism to *Islam* ("The fastest growing religion in the world") and *Reconciliation* ("Reconciliation to God is inseparable from reconciliation to one another"). Reconciliation between former enemies, who have been reconciled to God in the Messiah Yeshua, is a powerful testimony to the gospel that transforms lives. Therefore, note that Lausanne encourages reconciliation ministry for the sake of honesty and integrity in evangelistic testimony. That is one of the intended outcomes from the *Cape Town Commitment*.

Cape Town Commitment

The 2010 International Lausanne Conference in Cape Town, South Africa, framed reconciliation in terms of peace that is established in Messiah Jesus.

The Cape Town Commitment (CTC) Part II is the section that seeks to take the theological reflections in Part I and put them into practical application.

Cape Town Commitment Part II. B is titled, "Building the Peace of Christ in our Divided and Broken World." Point one in that's section reads:

Reconciliation to God is inseparable from reconciliation to one another. Christ who is our peace, made peace through the cross, and preached peace to the divided world of Jew and Gentile. The unity of the people of God is both a fact (He made the two one),¹ and the unity of the people of God is a mandate ('make every effort to preserve the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace'). CTCII. B.1.

The statement further describes God's plan as including ethnic reconciliation among the Lord's redeemed humanity.

¹ That is Jew and Gentile, and in our context, apply that to Jew and Arab/Palestinian

Reconciliation: Outcome of salvation and necessity to evangelism

In 1974, the Lausanne Movement was called into being by leading evangelicals who saw a need for renewed evangelistic efforts. It sought to mobilize and encourage evangelism, defined as the *Whole Church* taking the *Whole Gospel* into the *Whole World*. The power of God in Christ changes lives. Those changed lives will hopefully impact their societies and potentially lead to spiritual awakenings or renewal movements.

Messianic Jews and Palestinian Christians bear similar burdens. We wish to introduce the love of God in Messiah to our own people and especially our families. Our testimonies are not always well received. We can also bear an added complication of witness when faith in Jesus is regarded as belonging to the enemy. Evangelicals from Ireland experience similar complications to a united body of Christ as believers there contend with categories of *Protestant/Catholic* or political rule under *Northern Ireland/Southern Ireland and Britain*.

In 2010 at Cape Town, the Lausanne Movement embraced our peoples b featuring Shadia Qubti and Dan Sered, a Palestinian woman and an Israeli man, together on the plenary program. They each gave eloquent testimony to "The Peace that Christ Made."

Lausanne Movement Efforts to Encourage Reconciliation

Doug Birdsall encouraged me in Cape Town when he sent word that he hoped LCJE could help as participants in the testimony of reconciliation through Christ between Jews and Arabs. Grace Mathews and Chris Wright, chair of the Cape Town Theology Working Group, have been instrumental in quietly bringing together Messianic Jews in our network and Palestinian Christians.

Earlier this year, the Lausanne Movement, brought a small group of Palestinian Christians and Messianic Jews to the island of Cypress. They hosted the Lausanne Initiative on Reconciliation in Israel/Palestine (LIRIP). The vision is to promote reconciliation first within the body of Christ and then a combined testimony to our wider communities in Israel and Palestine. The Lausanne network seeks models of gospel-based, Christ-centered reconciliation to build up the Lord's Body and have a prophetic impact on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Further meetings are planned.

Earlier this year, Michael Oh published a letter in response to a controversial guest article in *Lausanne Global Analysis*. He wrote with great Christian charity and sense of fairness. His desire is that difficult issues can be

discussed and solutions could be prayerfully sought as a joint effort among believers. I should point out that Michael lives and serves the cause of Christ in Japan, a nation that historically persecuted his Korean people. He lives that reconciliation testimony.

An LCJE Vision for Reconciliation

In my opinion, our LCJE regional networks need to intentionally include reports, testimonies and discussions focused on the reconciling love of Christ. We cannot tell our Israeli and Palestinian brothers and sisters how to solve their political tensions. We all need a developed Messianic-centered outlook to counter nationalistic tendencies and ethnocentrism both here in the Land and abroad in the Diaspora. For example, has the European LCJE network reached out to French Evangelicals, French speaking Arab evangelicals and French Messianic Jews in discussion about the context for evangelism in France?

We could help by creating opportunities for listening to one another. We could all benefit from thinking theologically and practically about and the love of Messiah and reconciliation the context of Israeli-Palestinian believing communities. I encourage participation with our friends in the Lausanne Movement who seek to create safe opportunities where understanding can be increased, forgiveness can occur and reconciliation might be nurtured. Ultimately, the cause of Jewish and Palestinian evangelism is served.

I urge our LCJE members to affirm the initiatives that are already in motion. Where possible, encourage those who are called to be involved in the LIRIP. If you are able, highlight statements in the Cape Town Commitment, like "Building the Peace of Christ in our Divided and Broken World" Part II.B.1.

As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the Lord surrounds His people. By His grace, I hope we can see our redeemed ethnic communities as one people in the Body of Messiah for the gospel's sake and the salvation of our nations.

Tuvia Zaretsky
August 2015