

The Reformation and its impact on Jewish-Christian relations and Mission

The 11th European Conference of the Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism Conference Statement

Over eighty participants from 12 countries, including Israel and USA, gathered in Berlin on August 14-17, 2017 to exchange information and reflect on the impact of the Reformation on Jewish-Christian relations in the past, present and future. They issued the following statement:

We, the participants of the 11th European Conference of the Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism (LCJE), as Jewish and Gentile followers of Jesus the Messiah, are grateful to Martin Luther and the Fathers of the Reformation who opened the doors for all believers to read and understand the Bible as the true and only authoritative, revealed Word of God

We affirm that salvation is available by grace to all who believe in Jesus as their Messiah and Lord. This message was delivered first to the Jewish people and is still necessary today for the Jewish people first, and the Gentiles (Rom. 1:16).

We reject:

- Martin Luther's statements of condemnation against the Jewish people as completely contradictory to the teachings of the Bible
- Ongoing anti-Jewish and anti-Semitic preaching and teaching within the churches arising from incorrect understanding of the Jewish people, their faith, lifestyle and religious practice. We regret the Church's ignorance and misunderstanding of its relationship to the Jewish people through the biblical-covenant.

We rejoice:

- That Protestant agencies and churches throughout centuries have actively shown God's love through words and deeds towards the Jewish people, especially in Europe
- In the openness of the Jewish people towards the Gospel of Jesus the Messiah and the growing number of Jewish people who believe this Good News, both in Israel, Europe and worldwide
- That Jewish and Gentile Believers are active together in world evangelism and therefore are fulfilling the call to restore Israel and be a light to the nations (Isaiah 49:6).

As we celebrate with gratitude the 500th anniversary of the Reformation and consider its heritage, we cannot and will not allow ourselves to ignore Luther's statements against the Jewish people and the impact of those words through history.

Therefore we challenge churches and individual believers:

- To speak respectfully and truthfully about the Jewish people and to repudiate all forms of anti-Judaism anti-Semitism, both historic and contemporary
- To acknowledge the biblical-Jewish roots of the Christian faith and the familial relationship between Jewish and Gentile Believers (Rom. 11:18).
- To accept and advocate for the identity of Jewish Believers in Jesus/Messianic Jews as fully Jewish, and at the same time fully belonging to the Body of Jesus the Messiah

- To share the Gospel – in both words and deeds – with their Jewish friends, neighbours, and acquaintances because we believe that “the Gospel is the power of God to salvation to all who believe; to the Jew first and also to the Greek” (Rom. 1:16)

We thank God for loving us so much that He sent His Son, the Messiah Jesus, to die for our sins and rise again from the dead so that all humanity, both Israel and the nations can be reconciled to Him.