

Thirteenth North American LCJE Meeting
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International LCJE Report 1996

By Kai Kjar-Hansen

Last year, when we were gathered in Las Vegas, we were looking forward to the fifth international LCJE conference in Jerusalem in June, 1995. The number of participants from abroad was smaller than expected, but due to a considerable number of Israelis the total number of participants exceeded 150. As organizer of the conference it is difficult to evaluate the significance of such a conference, and I am not going to try to do it here either. That there are tensions in a network like LCJE - tensions which are due to different emphases in theological understanding and in missionary strategies, and not least due to strong personalities - is only to be expected. These tensions came out in the open at the conference in Jerusalem. But there were also inspiration and encouragement to continued work.

The conference papers are printed in five booklets entitled *LCJE Jerusalem 95*. These 264 pages give the reader a good insight into the issues that were addressed at the conference. We still have a small number of the booklets, which can be bought for \$18 per set.

As will be known to most of you, LCJE is an international network consisting of individual members as well as agency members. In this latter category belong organisations and congregations. At the end of 1995 there were about 180 individual members and 36 agency members. The number is growing although the growth is modest and slow, for even though we do get new members, there are also people who leave us. And there are still organisations and individuals that we would like to see as members but are not members as yet. Why? That questions needs to be asked again and again. And must be answered by the separate LCJE Chapters. And here in North America by you! And it is up to you to do something about it. For LCJE North America is not governed by the international office in Denmark! Each LCJE Chapter is self-governing.

In recent years we have been pleased to have got contact with groups in East Asia - in the far East, as we say in Europe - which are involved in Jewish evangelism. An independent Japanese LCJE Chapter has been formed. And I presume that within the next few years we shall also see the launching of an independent LCJE Chapter in South Korea. A visit to Korea in November 1995 resulted in three Korean agency members and several individual members. It is now up to LCJE's International Coordinating Committee to integrate these East Asian Christians in our work. And we still look forward to the establishment of a CIS LCJE Chapter!

We also welcome the establishment of national LCJE groups within an LCJE Chapter. This is the case, for example, with Finland in the European Chapter. In England they have similar plans. At the beginning of October I shall be participating in the next national meeting in Finland.

The European LCJE Chapter will be holding its next meeting - at the end of October - in Germany, for the first time.

The Israeli Chapter had a one-day seminar in Yaffo on 1 March this year. The theme was "Internet" - how Messianic Jews in Israel can use it. More about this in the May issue of the LCJE Bulletin.

In England they are working on a book project on Jewish evangelism, with Walter Riggans as editor. It is my hope that this project, when completed, may inspire others to set to work on something similar. I am still looking forward to seeing people in North America give a higher priority to literature on Jewish evangelism, although we all know that such books do not become bestsellers. But if the theological aspect of our work is neglected, then it may have a very damaging effect on all our work now - and not least in the years to come.

Before long we shall have to begin the planning of the sixth international conference - or at least resolve where to have it. In Jerusalem, last summer, it did not seem as if proposals to lay the conference in either South America or South Africa were favourably received. And North America is quite out of the question, for North Americans going to LCJE conferences want to travel! Next month I am going to St. Petersburg, Russia, with Birger Petterson, my good friend and close co-worker in LCJE, to look into the possibilities of having a conference there in 1999. Israel, again, is an option which has not been given up. The decision lies with LCJE's International Coordinating Committee.

If - or rather - when the next international conference will be neither in South America nor in South Africa, the two respective coordinators will be sorry. For either would like to have the conference in their area. But perhaps we can do something for them by helping them to arrange a local conference with support from LCJE International. This will be an item on the agenda next time LCJE ICC meet.

It is the duty of a coordinator *also* to live in the future and take initiatives which can influence the future. But who wants a network in which people think of nothing but future conferences! There is work to be done, here and now - and tomorrow.

May also this LCJE meeting, here in Chicago, contribute to keeping alive the vision to bring the gospel to Jewish people. And let us think and act in the assurance which the apostle Paul expresses so confidently in his letter to the Romans:

For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone. If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living (Romans 14.7-9).