

LOOKING BACK ON THIRTY PRODUCTIVE YEARS  
OF THE NORTH AMERICAN LCJE: 2008–2011  
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I have been asked to bring a report on the four years in which I served as Coordinator for the North America chapter of LCJE. I can do that, but it will require me to violate an old Hebrew maxim—often practiced by our membership, but seldom (if ever!) verbalized: .LCJE בשאר נשאר, LCJE בקורה מה שקורה, which being interpreted is: “What happens at LCJE, stays at LCJE”! In my defense, however, I can only add that my report will be very selective; there are still some things we will carry to our graves!

Theresa Newell, whose distinguished tenure was fresh in my mind, passed the baton to me. With fear and trepidation, I realized my first meeting was only about seven months away in April, 2008! Theresa was very gracious in helping me with the transition. Kathi Graham agreed to handle not only the secretarial responsibilities, but also the financial and bookkeeping ones. She also agreed to take responsibility for registrations and nametags. Altogether, this was a huge job, and a real life-saver for me! She set up a checking account, a credit card, and arranged for us to be able to use *Caspari*'s non-profit umbrella. She was always available for counsel, advice, and prayer, though she usually worked behind the scenes. LCJE members owe a huge debt to her for her labors. Olivier Melnick not only generously allowed us to use his artwork, but did all of the design and layout for the programs. *Ariel Ministries* printed and delivered them to the meeting.

About seven months earlier, at the International Conference at Lake Balaton, Hungary, we had been encouraged to give priority to enlisting the active participation of younger adults in LCJE, and this became an emphasis in Boston that would last for at least the next several years. Young leaders held a meeting to brainstorm ways to involve others, and Michael Hedrick compiled their ideas. This is a document which really should be reviewed again. However, just as with all of our meetings, the opportunity to get to know one another and to “compare notes” was also extremely valuable for the younger leaders who were present.

The first meeting, which was also the 25<sup>th</sup> meeting of the North America chapter, was to be held in Boston, and we soon identified a good venue, chose the theme: “Jewish Evangelism: For Zion’s Sake,” and invited our “guest speakers.” The program filled out nicely, and Kai Kjaer-Hansen and others reminded us that the first American missionaries to what we now know as Israel had left from Boston in 1819—189 years earlier. The conference was well-attended, and plans were put in motion almost immediately for 2009.

In 2009, the meeting in Phoenix was hosted at the Crowne Plaza, and *Jewish Voice Ministries International* extended warm hospitality. The theme for this conference was “Jewish Evangelism: Against All Odds.” The meeting was characterized by excellent papers, and Rob Styler and Cathy Wilson presented a poignant dramatic look at the perspectives of both Jewish and Gentile believers. David Brickner presented a paper, “How Christian is Christian Zionism?” that stirred attendees to draft and adopt a resolution on Christian Zionism and Jewish evangelism

that encouraged Christian Zionist organizations “to be transparent with Christians on whether Jewish evangelism is present in their theology.”

In 2010, we met at the Doubletree Hotel in the Buckhead area of Atlanta, and the theme was, “Consider Yeshua.” Murray Tilles and *Light of Messiah Ministries* extended a warm Atlanta welcome and assisted with local arrangements. Dr. David Allen of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary led our Bible studies and also delivered a paper on the Epistle to the Hebrews. Moishe Rosen had prepared a paper, but, due to poor health, he was prevented from coming, and Gary Hedrick presented it on his behalf.

The theme chosen for 2011 was “Jewish Evangelism: Until He Comes!” and the conference was held at the Union Station Marriott in St. Louis. The venue proved to be popular with those who attended, but attention to the theme was shared with concerns regarding Jewish evangelism in the context of the international missions community. Kai Kjaer-Hansen drew attention to “Jewish Evangelism at Edinburgh 1910, Edinburgh 2010, and Cape Town 2010.” A panel discussion, led by Tuvya Zaretsky, also considered the LCWE conference at Cape Town in 2010 and statements associated with it.

Those who came to the meeting in 2010 had requested that Dr. David Allen be invited back to lead our Bible studies in 2011, and once again, he was well-received. In addition, we were honored to have Dr. Paige Patterson, President of Southwestern Seminary, speak at the concluding banquet.

Unfortunately, just prior to the beginning of this meeting, I received news of my mother’s death and had to leave. Tuvya Zaretsky and Theresa Newell stepped up and offered their assistance, for which I am personally very grateful. This was also the meeting at which I felt I needed to resign in order to complete my doctoral program. What a blessing when Gary Hedrick accepted the will of the attendees, and I was able to hand off to him.

During these years, several groups have held meetings in connection with our annual conferences. Jews for Jesus, Chosen People Ministries, CMJ-USA, the Lutherans, and others have held such meetings either before or afterwards. This adds value to our annual meetings, and it introduces new people to the network that is LCJE. Together with a continuing emphasis on involving more of our younger leaders, this is a trend to encourage.

Serving as Coordinator, even for a few years, is not sufficient to pay the debt I owe to LCJE, its individual members and member organizations, for the encouragement and assistance I have received over the years.