

**Twenty-fourth North American LCJE Meeting
San Antonio 16-18 April, 2007**

International LCJE Report 2007

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Two weeks ago we said *Chag Sameach* to each other before Pesach. Eight days ago we said Happy Easter/Passover. Although it is too late, at this the twenty-fourth North American LCJE meeting, to say *Chag Sameach* or *Happy Easter/Passover*, then it is not too late to greet each other with the proclamation: *Jesus is risen. God raised Jesus from the dead.*

It is never too late to proclaim that Jesus is risen. On the contrary, something is definitely wrong if this proclamation is not constantly made. Without the proclamation “Yes, he is risen indeed, God raised him from the dead” there is no reason to have an LCJE, a Lausanne Consultation on *Jewish Evangelism*. No evangelism – and therefore no Jewish evangelism either – if Jesus’ earthly remains lie in a grave in Jerusalem today.

Can I get an “amen” to this?

So there is something of fundamental importance that unites us now that we have come together under the theme of “Jewish Evangelism and the Body of Messiah” and also to discuss a resolution entitled “An Appeal for Unity”.

We who are involved in Jewish evangelism know very well that many Jews as well as Christians dissociate themselves from what we are doing. That we have learned to live with, for Jesus is risen! In the year that has passed Mark Kinzer’s book *Postmissionary Messianic Judaism* has cast doubt on what some messianic Jews really think of evangelism. This is a question that is debated in various forums. I think it is important to reach a clarification about this – even if it may take some time.

That other people seek to raise doubts about Jesus’ bodily resurrection is something we have recently got an example of through James Cameron’s film *The Lost Tomb of Jesus*. Jesus and his family, or the dust of them, is supposed to rest in ossuaries in Jerusalem. The fact that the movie had its world premiere shortly before Easter is due to careful planning. There is nothing wrong with timing, nor with the timing behind the publication of the Gospel of Judas in Coptic and English at Easter 2006.

In different ways both the Gospel of Judas and Cameron’s film *The Lost Tomb of Jesus* are anti-Easter. There is nothing new in that. Similar things have been said before. The movie is not “documentation” but sensation and speculation. But now I have already started on something that I am going to comment on at the opening meeting prior to the Eighth International LCJE conference at Lake Balaton this summer.

Of course we are willing to deal with such issues seriously in an LCJE context since it is something that has received much focus and makes some believers uncertain. But fundamentally: our involvement in Jewish evangelism is based on our belief in Jesus’ bodily resurrection. This is a statement of faith that is not open to discussion. How we understand it and how we best formulate it is something that we can talk about and debate.

Jesus is risen, yes, he is risen indeed! And if he is not, then let’s disband LCJE – the sooner the better!

Short LCJE update

Since the last North American LCJE meeting in 2006 in Pittsburgh there have been LCJE meetings in Germany, Finland and Japan. Outside the framework of LCJE, although as a result of networking within LCJE, a group of Lutherans had their second International Conference on Jewish Evangelism in August 2006 in Norway. In Berlin, in September, another group held their First International Conference of Russian-speaking Messianic Ministry Leaders. Jews for Jesus ended their “Behold Your God” campaign in New York. As LCJE coordinator I am happy that such arrangements take place, also where LCJE is not directly involved.

We have approximately 130 individual members.

The number of agency members is 22.

I have to say that 2006 has very much been marked by the upcoming international conference in Hungary, this summer, with work on the program, contact to speakers, and last but not least, efforts to find a suitable venue.

Each International LCJE conference has its own story, so to speak. Here is the short version.

From Budapest to Lake Balaton

At the LCJE meeting in Pittsburgh last year I said about the conference in Hungary: “Unfortunately we have been giving misleading information in the LCJE Bulletin about the dates for the conference. The conference will be held from the 9th to the 14th of August 2007 – Deo Volente!”

But it was not to be like that. On our return to Denmark from Pittsburgh Bodil F. Skjøtt and I take contact to Hotel Agro with reference to our contract of March 2005 – just to keep up the connection, you know. But at Hotel Agro in Budapest they were unable to find the contract – they said! In June we then go to Budapest only to be told that the hotel has been booked by a different group in the same period obviously for a big festival (and probably at a better price). We start looking for other hotels in Budapest, but those we can find are at a much higher price. We then change the time of the conference to 19-24 August – and succeed in getting a contract.

In mid-November 2006 we are informed by a potential Hungarian speaker, who had planned a conference for 2008 at Hotel Agro, that the hotel has been sold to be converted into a nursing home. We get our Hungarian LCJE representative to look into it, and quite right: Hotel Agro confirms this after our representative has been at the hotel.

I now felt at the end of my tether. We examine if it is possible to have the conference in Berlin, in Warsaw or in Krakow – but it will be at a much higher price. We finally get in touch with Melba Tours, led by the good Baptist Peter Barbarics, and give him the assignment to hold on to the time and the price somewhere else in Hungary.

In the beginning of December 2006 we are back in Hungary. We go to Hotel Helikon, Keszthely at Lake Balaton. After negotiations we sign a contract again, now guaranteed by Melba Tours. And the members of LCJE are told about these changes in mid-December.

I suppose I should still say “Deo Volente!” – but God, please, no more surprises about contracts, please!

So the Eighth International LCJE conference 19-24 August 2007 will be held on the banks of Lake Balaton.

The good book tells us not to worry. I must admit that I was rather worried in mid-March when we had not even 20 registrations. But after a subtle reminder, registrations started pouring in about 1 April, which was the deadline. I expect that we will be over 150 persons. If a few people should have second thoughts about not having registered per 1 April, we may still be able to squeeze them in. But it is urgent.

Now I have begun to look forward to the conference. The theme is “Jewish Evangelism – Telling the Story”. According to the program we are going to hear a lot of stories.

Thanks to Theresa Newell

I cannot conclude this short report without mentioning that this is the last time Theresa Newell as North American LCJE coordinator leads a North American LCJE meeting – assisted by her Admiral Bruce. Thank you both, Theresa and Bruce. Theresa has been area coordinator these last eight years and she has performed her job with much energy and great faithfulness. Theresa stops as LCJE NA coordinator but I am convinced that it is not the end of her involvement in Jewish evangelism.

I am looking forward to a stimulating meeting here in San Antonio with the theme “Jewish Evangelism and the Body of Messiah”. When we pray, listen to papers, when we debate, converse, eat and have fellowship with each other, let us do it in our shared faith and conviction that Jesus is risen.

Indeed, he is risen. For Jews and for the rest of us.