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**Jewish Evangelism: A Call to the Church –  
The Pattaya Document and How to Use It”  
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Issue Group #31, “Reaching Jewish People with the Gospel” was the smallest of the strategy working groups at the 2004 Forum. From the beginning our group consisted of six persons but it grew to seven, as Tuvya Zaretsky was “divorced” from his intermarriage group. The other individuals were Ole Chr. Kvarme, Bodil F. Skjøtt, Richard Harvey, Theresa Newell, Susan Perlman and myself. The report is the combined effort of the seven-member team that referred to itself as the Jewish Evangelism Working Session (JEWS); all long-time members of the Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism (LCJE).

As a group we speak for ourselves in the report. LCJE’s *Rules and Procedures* give us no mandate to speak on behalf of the entire LCJE network.

This disclaimer is a good one, for it allows LCJE members who feel a need to distance themselves from something in this report that they cannot agree with a possibility to do so without distancing themselves from the main thing: Jewish evangelism. Thus, the report is not holy writ!

The title “Jewish Evangelism: A Call to the Church” clearly indicates who is the primary target group, namely the Christian church. We know that it will also be read by others.

The length is approximately 25,000 words, which means that it is longer than the report from Pattaya 1980 entitled “Christian Witness to the Jewish People”.

The report consists of five main parts.

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### Notes

#### **An LCWE publication**

The report will be published by the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization (I will come back to this). I see this as a big advantage. I do not imagine that all in the Lausanne Movement will say their amen to everything in the report. Not even to the clear call to share the gospel with Jewish people. But the fact that the report is published by LCWE is a signal to fellow-Evangelicals that our cause cannot be dismissed offhandedly as a sectarian matter. It is worth noting that Jewish evangelism was included in the program at Forum 2004 as one out of 31 “urgent issues most relevant to world evangelization”. Where else is there today an international Christian network, which will include Jewish evangelism as one of the 31 “urgent issues most relevant to world evangelization”?

With this encouraging starting point we members of LCJE – whether we are agency members or individual members – are called upon to make this report known. As I said, we need not agree in everything that it says. But we are convinced that this report has provided us with a useful instrument to once again challenge the Christian church and individuals.

I will take time to read some paragraphs from the part of the report that deals with the fundamental principles. I think it will give all a clear picture of our “yes” to Jewish evangelism and our challenge to the church. For those of you who are familiar with what LCJE stands for there is nothing new. But listen to it as if you were an evangelical Christian who supports the State of Israel politically and financially but who is not so sure of Jewish people’s need of Jesus for salvation.

#### **The conclusion of the Introduction: “A Renewed Call”**

As those who maintain that in the gospel of Jesus alone is salvation for both Jews and gentiles, we realise that we also make ourselves vulnerable to accusations of spiritual arrogance, religious imperialism and supersessionism vis-à-vis the synagogue.

Yet, we affirm that Jewish evangelism, and world evangelism, is not triumphalistic. Genuine evangelisation of Jews and non-Jews is accomplished only by the victory of God, who raised Jesus from the dead and calls all people to Him through faith in the crucified and resurrected Saviour. The evangelist who brings the good news to others needs to receive the same gospel just as much.

We therefore pledge ourselves to encourage the worldwide church to demonstrate a renewed call to share the grace and the truth of the Lord with Jewish people everywhere and to realise afresh the importance of Jewish evangelism.

Much is at stake when some in the church denounce Jewish evangelism. Many do so today without realising the theological and missiological implications of their position. This report will describe some of the most important implications of any failure to evangelise the Jewish people. It will briefly describe the Jewish world, some of the issues facing Jewish believers in Jesus and a variety of current practices in the field of Jewish evangelism.

For what is at stake?

*If Jesus is not the Messiah for the Jewish people then neither is He the Christ for the nations.*

**From the section “Regarding Truth Claims”.**

It is appropriate to ask where did the claim that Jewish people need the gospel for salvation first come from? Did a later triumphalistic gentile church invent it? No! It originated when Jewish disciples of Jesus first preached the gospel to Jewish pilgrims at the Jewish feast of Pentecost. Regarding Jesus, they claimed that “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

The New Testament itself makes the exclusive claim that salvation can only be found through faith in Jesus. Non-Jewish Christians who joined the church subsequently can take neither honour nor blame for the declaration. Hence, Jewish evangelism cannot rightly be labelled as anti-Semitism, anti-Judaism, or supersessionism.

**From the section “Theological Inconsistencies”**

It is beyond doubt that the New Testament witness presents Jesus as the Messiah for the Jewish people. Yet, acceptance of His Messiahship can only be given through faith. Some may hold the view that Jesus was a false Messiah or a failed Messiah. But to claim that Jesus has become irrelevant for the salvation of the Jewish people, and as a result of this irrelevance has become significant for gentiles is – in light of the New Testament testimony – an absurdity. There is no logic to such a claim.

The two-covenant theory and its recent expressions seem a natural solution to the relationship between Judaism and Christianity from a modern Jewish perspective. It is not easy to understand how Christian theologians can advocate it in light of the self-defeating logic on which it rests.

How can the same Jesus be the Saviour for the entire world, on the one hand, and not be the Saviour for the Jewish people of that world, on the other? How can the Jesus who met first His own Jewish people with the radical invitation to receive God’s saving love, and with the equally radical call to follow Him in obedience, be no longer relevant for that same Jewish people? Unless God is inconsistent and partisan, how can He provide a means of salvation that is no longer available or relevant for Jews, but only for gentiles? Non-Jews cannot stake their life on a Jewish irrelevance.

Jesus is not an irrelevant Jew nor is He a Jewish irrelevance. If He is not Messiah for Israel, then He is not Christ for the nations.

*Jesus is either the Messiah for all, or He is not the Messiah at all.*

**From the section “Other Forms of Replacement”**

Based on the New Testament, Jews need the gospel for salvation as much as anyone else does. However, it is puzzling that there are bible-believing Christians who are eager to proclaim the gospel to all other peoples, but who would exclude the people of Israel from evangelistic mission, replacing gospel proclamation with acts of charity. How is it that some Christians even leave the door ajar for a salvation to Israel that is *without* Jesus? A few examples follow.

Christian dialogue with Jewish people can be beneficial. However, dialogue that becomes a replacement for mission does not live up to the command to make disciples.

Christians who aid in the return of Jewish people to the State of Israel show genuine care and compassion. However, if aid and compassion become a replacement for or a hindrance to the preaching of Jesus here and now, then it does not live up to the command to make disciples of all nations.

Christians can lend political and financial support to the State of Israel. However, if such support becomes a replacement for evangelistic mission among Jews, then it does not live up to the command to make disciples of all nations including the nation of Israel.

Eschatological beliefs about the future of Israel in God's plan of salvation are important. However, if such thinking concerning God's future for Israel becomes a replacement for Jewish evangelism here and now, something is wrong. Regardless of how the future of Israel might develop in God's plans, the time for Jewish people to hear of salvation is today.

A false alternative to organised Christian missionary activity is found in the claim that Christian witness to Jews consists only in the loving quality of communal life. But one does not preclude the other. The loving manner of Christian life is a proper discipline, but faith comes by hearing the gospel (Romans 10:17). The church was not birthed solely through the apostles' communal life, but also through their public proclamation of the gospel and their missionary activity.

These evangelical forms of "replacement theology" are obstructions to the advance of the gospel among the Jewish people. They are just as harmful to the cause of Christian outreach to Jewish people as other forms of replacement theology have been for the church's appreciation of Israel's place in salvation history.

### **The conclusion "Jewish Evangelism – for the Sake of Whom?"**

For whom is Jewish evangelism undertaken? Five summary points are outlined.

#### ***1. For the sake of the Jews***

God's continued covenant with the Jewish people does not annul their need of Jesus for salvation. Neither does the covenant imply that they are saved in a manner that differs from non-Jews. Faith comes through the proclamation of the gospel and therefore the gospel needs to be proclaimed to the Jewish people.

A "yes" to Jewish evangelism insures that Jewish people are not deprived of the possibility of salvation through faith in Jesus. There is no basis in the New Testament for saying that Israel has any qualification that provides forgiveness of sins other than through faith in Jesus.

#### ***2. For the sake of the church***

Jewish evangelism leads the church into a close contact with the Jewish people. This is important for the church itself. It forces the church to denounce any form of Marcionism (see chapter 4). A close contact with the Jewish people sharpens the church's understanding of its biblical roots. The roots of the church are to be found in Israel's salvation history. The structure of the church is built upon Israel and the hope of the church is closely connected with Israel. The church has an incomplete self-understanding without Israel.

A "yes" to Jewish evangelism presents the church with a challenge to understand its bonds to Israel and the God of Israel. The fact that these matters are discussed within

the Jewish-Christian dialogue does not exempt the church as such from dealing with them.

### ***3. For the sake of world evangelism***

Jewish evangelism is not a higher calling or more important in God's sight than evangelisation of other peoples. However, theologically and missiologically Jewish evangelism has a unique role to play. Jewish evangelism has maintained that if the people who have been historically closest to God need the gospel for salvation, then all other peoples need the gospel as well.

When the legitimacy and the necessity of Jewish evangelism are questioned, then the door is open to religious universalism. The uniqueness of Jesus would be denied.

### ***4. For the sake of Jewish believers in Jesus***

Jewish believers in Jesus are often ostracised by their own people for their faith in Jesus. They need understanding and support from the rest of the church.

A "no" to Jewish evangelism leaves Jewish believers in Jesus isolated. They would be affirmed by neither the Jewish community nor by the church (see chapter 4).

### ***5. For the sake of God's love and glory.***

Finally and fundamentally Jewish evangelism is necessary for the sake of God's love and His glory. A "no" to Jewish evangelism implies that the death of Jesus for sin was insignificant, and would lead to a great omission from the Great Commission. A "no" to Jewish evangelism withholds God's saving love from the people of Israel. A "yes" to Jewish evangelism opens the door for Jewish people to share in God's glory as revealed in the new covenant or "testament."

The church must consider these matters and again endorse and commit itself to Jewish evangelism.

Much is at stake.

*If Jesus is not the Messiah for the Jewish people then neither is He Christ for the nations. Either Jesus is the Messiah for all, or He is not the Messiah at all.*

These words bring the first chapter of "Jewish Evangelism: A Call to the Church" to an end. My question to you is: Can you use this, will you use this to challenge the church in the contexts where you work?

### **How to Use It**

First: all the Lausanne Occasional Papers (LOPs) will be published "in one volume for libraries, mission headquarters, academics for classroom use, and anyone who wishes to keep a bound copy in his/her personal library. The volume will contain over 1,600 pages and will be published in four books", David Claydon writes. This is fine. But it is not enough!

Claydon also says: "...it is our desire to get all the LOPs online so that anyone can download any or all of them. Prints can be made from the electronic master." This is fine. But it is not enough!

We need our document in printed form, as a small booklet. Other groups will do the same and finance the printing. A printer in Bangalore, India, can do this for us so that

the price for one copy will be approximately one and a half US dollars + postage. Which is very cheap.

We have ordered 1,000 copies. This is fine. But it is not enough! We need many more. We have to make the most of this opportunity. We need to make some noise about Jewish evangelism. Let's give the pastors in our neighbourhood a one-and-a-half-dollar gift – and challenge them to dialogue. Let's give the media in our communities a copy and make ourselves available for interviews. Now let's ... you name it!

We have a singular opportunity. We do not come as sectarians. We give away a booklet, published by a recognized evangelical organization that is greatly respected.

Let's not forfeit this opportunity. We can have these things arranged by 1 May, and we hope we can make some nationwide media take an interest in "Jewish Evangelism: A Call to the Church".

Will you be a part of this in your community. Why not make a commitment here and now, so we can see that we need many more than 1,000 copies from the printer in Bangalore.