



# Resolution on Christian Zionism and Jewish Evangelism\*

By Kai Kjær-Hansen

The following resolution was passed at the 26th annual meeting of the Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism – North America, held in Phoenix, Arizona, March 2–4, 2009. It reads as follows:

## **Resolution on Christian Zionism and Jewish Evangelism**

The Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism – North America affirms those Christians who have a love for the Jewish people and wish to bless Israel. We affirm those Christians who stand as friends of Israel and recognize her rightful place in the Land. We also affirm the many Christian ministries that bless Israel without compromising a clear proclamation of the gospel.

We believe that calling the Jewish people to accept Jesus (Y’shua) as the Messiah both of Israel and all nations is the biblical mandate and natural loving response to the belief that there is salvation only through personal faith in Jesus Christ. Yet, we recognize that some aspects of Christian Zionism, as practiced today, work to the detriment of the Jewish people inasmuch as they undermine Jewish evangelism. We believe they can dilute the gospel message by offering comfort apart from Christ, discourage evangelical Christians from witnessing to their Jewish friends and divert gospel resources which could be channeled toward Jewish evangelism.

Therefore, we call on the leading proponents of Christian Zionism today to be transparent with Christians on whether Jewish evangelism is present in their theology. We also call on the evangelical Christian press to provide informative reports on those Christian Zionist organizations, who identify as representatives of evangelical Christianity, yet work to discourage Christians from bringing the gospel to Jewish people. We also call on all those who count themselves as evangelicals to demonstrate their love for the Jewish people by bringing the good news of Y’shua the Messiah to them.

\* The resolution sprang from a paper that David Brickner, Executive Director of Jews for Jesus, presented at the LCJE conference in Phoenix. Brickner’s paper, “How Christian is Christian Zionism? An Update on Its Uneasy Interaction with Jewish Mission and Evangelism,” will appear in the next issue of *Mishkan*.

## Eschatology and Moral Considerations

A similar resolution, issued by LCJE Israel in 1989, was entitled “A Statement on Christian Zionism” (published in, e.g., *Mishkan* 12 [1990]: 6–7). After these twenty years, the frontiers are still sharp. The LCJE Israel 1989 statement concludes with these words:

We therefore call upon the Church throughout the world not to abandon its central calling to preach Christ. Political support for Israel must not come in place of preaching the gospel to all nations, to the Jew first and also to the gentile.

When the 1989 statement was published in *Mishkan*, it was accompanied by an introduction by Baruch Maoz, then coordinator of LCJE Israel, with the headline “The Christian Embassy in Jerusalem,” cf. *Mishkan* 12 (1990): 1–5. In it he contends, among other things:

It is readily acknowledged that not all evangelical bodies must be involved in evangelism. Indeed, some such bodies definitely should not. Their callings are different, and should be conducted accordingly. There would be no difficulty if the Embassy issued a statement to the effect that, while it believed in the necessity of evangelism per se, it did not itself engage in such activity.

About his own relationship to Zionism, Maoz says in the same context:

I am an adamant Zionist, committed to the support of Zionism and convinced of the basic morality of its position. I am further convinced that the land of Israel was promised to the people of Israel and that we have every right – moral, political, and legal – to have a state of our own in this land. I am prepared to defend that state with my life.

But the Christian Faith is not equal to Zionism and those who oppose my Zionist conviction are not necessarily poorer Christians than those who support it. It is distressing to see how an originally secular political platform (albeit, not without its religious origins) has come to be identified in the midst of some with the very basics of the gospel. Zionism stands and falls on the merits by which all and any political views must be tried. An Arab Palestinian who opposes a Jewish State, or who wishes to create a Palestinian entity alongside Israel, is not one whit lesser a Christian because of his aspirations. I may disagree with him (and I do), but he and I shall have to discuss our differences on more than eschatological grounds. Nor can eschatology be allowed to replace moral considerations. Morality and the fear of God are major issues in eschatology.

Not all will agree with Baruch Maoz on these viewpoints. His main point, that our differences in these matters should be discussed “on more than eschatological grounds,” is a salutary challenge. I must admit that I share it.

