

The Ecumenical Theological Research Fraternity in Israel



Rev. Canon William Broughton & Prof. Eliyahu Schleifer

The 40th Anniversary Celebration

On November 30 the Fraternity celebrated her 40th anniversary at the premises of the Salesian Theological Institute/Ratisbonne, together with so many Christian and Jewish friends. The evening included music, speeches, a PowerPoint presentation, some hors d'oeuvres and even a special toast!

A President's Welcome

Dear Friends of the Ecumenical Theological Research Fraternity,

It is for me a great honour to welcome you this evening as our guests at the Ratisbonne Institute for our celebration of the 40th anniversary of the Ecumenical Theological Research Fraternity in Israel. Looking back at the past 40 years we notice with joy and gratitude that they are filled with many beautiful events and experiences. Nevertheless, even after 40 years of existence the Fraternity has kept a young and lively spirit. When it was founded, people hardly could imagine that four decades later the Fraternity would still be blossoming, full of life, and offering such a variety of activities. The Fraternity has during the four decades of its activities opened new ways of encounter. It has shown in reality how to build bridges here in Jerusalem, and beyond the city's borders, and also how to foster friendship between Christians of different denominations as well as between Christians and Jews. Looking at the addresses of our friends I

discover with astonishment how many of them live today scattered all over the world, but still keep in contact with the Fraternity.

As the name already shows, the ETRFI has intentionally chosen an intellectual approach to deepen mutual knowledge of each other, and to foster dialogue and studies of our different religious traditions. We all know that it is not on superficial emotions or moods that one can build a solid and lasting foundation for a common future. Serious encounter demands first and foremost an honest endeavour of studies, trying to understand one another better and to respect the differences. Therefore the annual theological conferences and studies of the ETRFI have contributed greatly to such a better mutual understanding, and appreciation of the diversity of our traditions. But more than that, common studies enable also personal relationship and friendship, which are at the heart of our life. Many of us who are members of the ETRFI – and I

The prayer of Bishop

Aris Shirvanian:

Psalm 122

"I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord!' Our feet have been standing within your gates, O Jerusalem!"

In this issue:

Page 1-2 Welcoming words by Fr. Dr. Thomas Maier, WF

Page 2 Musical Interlude by Prof. Eliyahu Schleifer

Page 3 Greetings from Dr. Coos Schoneveld

Page 3 Greetings from Rev. Dr. Wesley H. Brown

Page 4 Greetings from Fr. Joseph Stiasny

Page 4-5 "Hebrew for the Churches?" by Archpriest Alexander Winogradsky

Page 6 Contact Information

40 Years

include myself - have experienced how studies have helped us to make personal friendships grow during the past years. With all our diversities we have learned to appreciate one another, respecting the richness of our differences.

Dear friends, it is for me a pleasure on this occasion to thank all those who have given their hearts and energy to make the Fraternity fully alive and to put into practice what the name means - a real fraternity. I would like to include in my thanks all those who were working during the last forty years as presidents, secretaries, administrators, and members of the steering committee. Some of our dear friends have already entered into God's kingdom: among many others on a

long list, we remember in a particular way Father Bruno Hussar, Abuna Isaak Jacob, Father Johannes Dusing, Father Laurentius Klein. May God grant them a rich recompense for their work for unity and mutual understanding.

The list of our living friends is still longer. Let me mention just some of them. We remember with gratitude Father Marcel Dubois, Father Joseph Stiasny, Abbot Nikolaus Egender, Sister Ibolya Glancz, Sister Lucy Thorson, Åke Skoog, Coos Schoneveld, Bill Broughton, Sister Abraham and many others who have contributed to the growth of the Fraternity. They have given - and still give - their best to keep the spirit of the Fraternity alive, not only by words but also by deeds. I am still too young to remember all of them and surely I have forgotten many of our friends. Therefore I ask for forgiveness if I cannot enumerate each one of them. Nevertheless I would like to mention with special thanks our Secretary Dr. Petra Heldt and Natalie who are working so discretely in our office and Elio who is our bursar.

Dear Friends, I am full of gratitude towards all of you who have been faithfully present in our conferences, in our study activities, recollections and outings during the past years. What we are today has been built on the vision and energy of those who have preceded us. Speaking about life also means speaking about "change" and "challenge". To move is always a challenge and, in a certain way, a new beginning with new chances.

During the last forty years the Fraternity was welcomed in different places, by different institutions. The Jerusalem University College, the Dormition Abbey, the Swedish Theological Institute, Eliash Street, the Ratisbonne Centre, the Holy Land University... and this evening the Ratisbonne Institute of our Salesian Brothers. We are deeply grateful to all of them for welcoming us this evening and for our annual conferences.

So let us pray that this year of our 40th jubilee may be a blessed one for all of us.

A Musical Interlude

Some authentic Jerusalem sounds were provided by Prof. Eliyahu Schleifer, Director of Cantorial Studies at Hebrew Union College.

"The first was Psalm 122, melody by Shemuel Rivlin (1915-1994). Rivlin was a sixth generation Jerusalemite. His grandfather, Joseph Rivlin, was a pioneer who was one of the first Jews to settle outside of the walls of the Old City. He (Joseph Rivlin) headed the group of seven families who built the Nachalat-Shiv'ah quarter (near Zion Square) and a street is named after him. The father of the composer, Shlomo Zalman Rivlin, was a famous cantor who taught hundreds of cantors in Israel and abroad. As a native of Jerusalem, Shemuel Rivlin tried to bring into his melody the flavors of the east, the views of Jerusalem as an Oriental city with many eastern musical cultures.

The second was Psalm 23 sung to a Hasidic melody. In some Christian (mainly Protestant) denominations Psalm 23 is regarded as part of the burial and memorial ceremonies. Jewish Reform liturgy also assigns the psalm to the same ceremonies. Orthodox and especially Hasidic Judaism regards Ps. 23 as a song for the sacred meals of the Sabbath.

Hasidim like to sing it especially during the Third Meal, which is celebrated just before dusk. The dimming light seems to fit the shadow image of the psalm and they are reflected in the character of the melody, but the main idea of the psalm is still God who prepares a table for the righteous persons.

The third was Psalm 118: 21-24 as is sung in the Portuguese Synagogue of Amsterdam. The great Portuguese Synagogue of Amsterdam was established in 1675 by Marrano Jews from Portugal who fled to Amsterdam, where they were able to return to their old faith. The melody is probably from the late seventeenth century it has two sections and each verse is sung twice.

The last was Psalm 118:26-29 in a melody by Yaakov Bergman (1950-). Bergman, an Israeli composer living in California, intended to adorn these verses with a style which imitates Renaissance compositions. The piece is constructed around the opening verse "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord..." which serves as a refrain. This setting is sung at the synagogue of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion.



Bishop Aris Shirvanian
& Fr. Goosan Aljanian

Greetings from Dr. J. Schoneveld, ETRFI Executive Secretary 1971-80

On the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Ecumenical Theological Research Fraternity in Israel I would like to offer you my heartfelt congratulations.

I joined the Fraternity in the fall of 1967. I am, thus, almost a founding member. In that year I had been appointed as Theological Adviser in Jerusalem of the Netherlands Reformed Church, that is to say as an observer of the religious situation in Israel with a view to contributing to attitudes of respect, reconciliation and peaceful relations among all who are connected to the religions in the Holy Land and outside this Land.

I was privileged to serve as Executive Secretary of the Fraternity following the severe illness and subsequent passing-away of Canon Peter Schneider, the inspiring first Executive Secretary of the Fraternity. I am sure, at this celebration and much attention will be paid to the

crucial role he has played in the early years of the Fraternity.

Personally I owe a debt of great gratitude to the Fraternity for what it has given me in the years, until 1980, when I was active in Jerusalem. Its members inspired me to start the publication of the periodical "Immanuel – A Bulletin of Religious Thought and Research in Israel" and to work on a comprehensive research on "The Bible in Israeli Education" concentrating on approaches to the Hebrew Bible and its teaching in Israeli educational literature – which became my doctoral dissertation accepted by the Leiden University in the Netherlands, in cooperation with the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

The Fraternity saw as one of its tasks to help visitors from abroad understand better the complicated religious situation in the Holy Land where Jews, Christians and Muslims but also local Christians and

foreign Christians, are in constant competition with each other but are also involved in attempts to come closer to each other. The Fraternity inspired me to be active also in these areas, with great satisfaction to me and my family when we were in Jerusalem. For a number of crucial years the Fraternity has been an intricate and unforgettable part of my life.

My wish is that the Fraternity may find its way into the future with the same fervor and vision that has characterized it in its early years!

Dr. J. (Coos) Schoneveld



Sr. Dr. Kirsten Stoffregen
Pedersen

Greetings from Rev. Dr. Wesley H. Brown, ETRFI President 1979-81

Dear members and friends of the Ecumenical Theological Research Fraternity in Israel,

It was my privilege to participate and provide some leadership in the Fraternity during the 1970's and 80's. I give thanks to God for the many challenging encounters with both Jewish and Christian scholars in the context of the Fraternity. I deeply regret that it is not possible for me to attend the 40th anniversary celebration. It would be wonderful to see many old friends and recall some of the themes around which we struggled together.

One of the most enriching dimensions of the Fraternity for me was the ongoing conversation about our Christian faith and the way in which it is challenged in the encounter with living Judaism. I am grateful for the way in which my friends from other countries and traditions patiently helped me reflect on my own faith pre-suppositions. We all felt the burden of history as we faced the reality of the Church's tragic history of anti-Semitism which culminated in the Holocaust. After genuine repentance, we reflected together on how we might contribute in

some way to a new day in dialogue, and share the riches of contemporary studies with the wider Christian family.

The lecture series we planned each year enabled us to receive and consider new perspectives from both Israeli Jewish scholars as well as fellow Christians. I appreciated the outstanding coordinating work of Coos Schoneveld and Åke Skoog. Among lecturers whose impact I recall with particular appreciation are Marcel Dubois, Moshe Greenberg, Ralph Martin, Pinchas Hacohen Peli, Pierre Benoit, and David Flusser. In listing them, I do not wish to minimize the enormous value of many others, both Jewish and Christian.

I felt that the publication Immanuel was one of our most significant contributions to the Jewish-Christian encounter.

I am thankful for the continuing work you have undertaken under the leadership of Rev. Dr. Petra Heldt.

May God continue to bless your efforts and encounters, both in Israel and internationally.

Wesley H. Brown

Greetings from Fr. Joseph Stiasny, ETRFI President 1981-83

Dear Friends,

Having been told that my advanced age notwithstanding I should be brief and pointed, I would like to send you a few words from my far away dwelling in GALUT ASKENAZ. After so many years of perpetual tension in Jerusalem I am enjoying the MENUHA, expecting to be called in a not too distant future to the definite NAHALA. I had the privilege to be one of the first members of the Fraternity and the additional favour to live in the same building: a sort of symbiosis, if I may say so.

When I was a young and naive scholar I lacked certainly one of the most important virtues: intellectual humility, the permanent disposition to recognize that my categories are in a permanent need to be re-interpreted. The Fraternity and the

other resources of intellectual and spiritual enrichment in Jerusalem, give me the opportunity to recognize that other people, coming from different backgrounds, have something significant to say and that they deserve to be at least listened to. I am grateful to have encountered beautiful people whose honesty and integrity will remain a paradigm for me. I can proudly say that during my long years in Jerusalem I have been receiving more than I have given.

So, dear members of the Fraternity and all those who came this evening to concelebrate this significant anniversary, thank you for your kind invitation to be with you and may God bless you all!

M.J. Stiasny

Hebrew for the Churches?

I could not think that, for the fortieth anniversary of the Ecumenical Fraternity, I would have to say a few words about Hebrew and the use of the language in the Church of Jesus Christ. And to communicate this short message at Ratisbonne's Institute (the Salesian Friars) not far from the Heichal Shlomo, the Great Synagogue of Jerusalem.

There is maybe more tonight. Pope Benedict XVI and the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomaios of Constantinople met at the Saint George cathedral of the Phanar to celebrate the Feast of Saint Andrew, the First Called according to the Byzantine tradition and the new calendar. Patriarch Bartholomaios I had visited the Ecumenical Fraternity in 1994. But tonight's event marks the encounter of the Bishop of Rome with the Bishop of Constantinople in the country where the bigger part of

the Christian Scripture were firstly proclaimed and written. Today as in ancient days, languages mean a way to apprehend and define Church traditions. As Mgr Francis Dvornik noted in his article "National Churches, Universal Church" written in 1943 (in *Istina* 1995), specific languages were adopted in the early Church for different reasons: Greek was the sort of lingua franca along with Aramaic. The Greek tradition showed to be rather flexible toward local Middle-Eastern people and their world of mythologies, pagan deities. Thus, the local tongues were rapidly used for the celebration of Divine Liturgies and prayers. This allowed a wide diversity if compared with the Latin tradition that wiped out the local mythologies of the West and imposed the Latin tongue. This is a spiritual attitude that underscores how East and West Europeans paved the way to



Malcolm Lowe, Sr. Irena, Moshe Aumann



Martina & Kees DeVrug



Fr. Dr. Thomas Maier, WF

announcing Christianity among the Gentiles, in opposition to the Persians who, to begin with, systematically accepted the Semitic tongues.

Still, Greek is very interesting in the way we approach the matter of Hebrew as a liturgical tongue in the Churches. Beside Aramaic, Armenian, Coptic and the fact that the Church experienced, in Persia, a very important development of the Semitic tongues, Greek had been for centuries the language of many Jewish communities, both in Eretz Israel and in the dispersion. Jews did pray in Greek in Crimea, Athens, Alexandria. The Hellenistic culture naturally switched from paganism to Christianity and until nowadays, the Greek tongue interestingly continues to develop along the same line as Hebrew in creating new words. The Septuagint has exerted a profound impact on the Greek soul and it is interesting that Saint Hieronymos' translation from Hebrew as a spiritual choice somehow leaped over the basic position adopted by the Greek culture in setting up various liturgies, as for Saint James' Liturgy which remains the native Jerusalem Liturgy written in Greek and rapidly translated into Aramaic. The Assyrian Church words of Consecration are typically Semitic and short while Western Syriac is a copy of the "Greek" phrase.

Now is Hebrew a liturgical tongue? The question was asked by Pope Pius XII to Cardinal Eugene Tisserant and it did not seem to be a joke. The cardinal responded by another question: "In which tongues is it mentioned in the Gospel that Jesus is "the King of the Jews" on the Cross? Hebrew, Latin (in fact "Roman") and Greek (John 19:19). The Pope then agreed and blessed the few clergy - some of whom could be with us tonight - to pray in Hebrew and Aramaic according to the Chaldean rite.

Good enough. Some authors track back Hebrew in the Church to the 9th century (P. Lapid: *Hebraeisch in den Kirchen*). Hebrew as the language of the Scripture has more or less been accepted by the Western tradition while the Greek and Oriental



Canon Peter Schneider,
of Blessed Memory

Churches relied upon the Greek and very Jewish-like translation of the TaNaKh. One can admire the fact that the Hebrew Bible was printed by Daniel Bomberg at Antwerpen or so many Hebrew as well as Yiddish grammars were written by Christians. This does not mean that Christians can seize or encroach upon Hebrew. Hebrew is a language in which words have few letters, but they are letters of fire, said E. Renan. At a psychological level, it is maybe the only paternal language, not a mother tongue as it was the language in which Avinu Malkenu (אבינו מלכנו) spoke to His nation.

I celebrate the Divine Liturgy with the very rabbinical Hebrew version of Fr. Levinson whose translation was blessed by the Moscow Holy Synod in 1840. Bishop Salomon Alexander Pollack published "the Book of Common Prayer" in Hebrew about the same time and Hebrew prayers were conducted till 1947 in the Old City according to the Anglican rite. In 1948, the Jesuits issued a small Mass book in Latin and Hebrew. The "סעודת האדון" booklet was extended from the time of Fr. Semchovsky to the whole of the Latin rite liturgical cycle and reviewed on a regular basis. In the Byzantine tradition, various manuscripts do exist.

But can we still speak of "Hebrew for

the Church liturgy"? All throughout the 19th century, various translations of different Protestant Church traditions were published for Eastern Europe. Some translations are definitely grounded on colloquial Hebrew as it developed after the reviving movement initiated by Eliezer Ben Yehudah. This revival process is the consequence of some sort of "resurrection". When humans can share through speech this is a miracle. This means that Hebrew eventually makes sense as a liturgical tongue for local believers living in Israeli society or in the State of the Jews, or everywhere in the world if this "dry bones" tongue revival could be viewed as a part of a "resurrection". I would not like to get into the various pending interrogations. Hebrew does exist in the Churches in Israel today. Colloquial and more sophisticated or, more rarely, Jewish tradition-rooted Hebrew. There is another problem. Let's say you hear Yiddish: it sounds like a German dialect but it is substantially - בממשהו בממשהו - Talmudic. It speaks out, from the inside, the colloquial daily Talmud page spiritual study - דף יומי. The same happens in the Church because of the tremendous gap that exists between Judaism and Christianity that underwent the process of estrangement. And, true, people do pray in Hebrew in the Church. But, for the bigger part, they do not take into account - as Churches as well as individuals- the huge spiritual impact that always linked the Talmud with the spirit of the Bible, not the Gospel, the New Testament. And this might take centuries before we get to that point. It is a meeting point where we could meet in 500 years, God willing!

If Hebrew is used for a better knowledge of Judaism in the Church, good; but not in order to have some folklore or to "christen" Jewishness and even Israelity. Israel relies upon both the Written Law (TaNaKh) and the Oral Law (Talmud). Every educated Jew is aware that God understands all tongues (Sota 7:1). Hebrew is the challenge for witnessing with much authenticity that God gathered "people of all nations, races, tongues" (Apocalypse 5:9) for the sake of the Unity of His Reign.

Archpriest Alexander Winogradsky
ט דכסלו תשס"ו - 30 November 2006



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Season's Greetings!



New!

The Orthodox Liturgy and Daily
Prayers in a Hebrew Translation
By Jacob Barclay

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