

ETRFI NEWSLETTER

Issue 32

January 2003

Dear Friends,

A belated Merry Christmas to our friends in the West and a Blessed one to those here in the East! The Coptic, Ethiopian, Greek, Romanian and Syrian Orthodox have celebrated the *Word became Flesh* on the 7th of January while the Armenian community looks forward to the 19th of this month.

*I have set
my king
on Zion,
my holy
hill.*

Psalm 2:6

ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES—2002/2003 Lecture Series

Dr. Aviva Gottlieb Zornberg lectured at the Fraternity on November 21st on the topic, “‘And I did not know.’ The Secret of Prayer’.” Dr. Zornberg analyzed the life of Jacob according to the account of Genesis 27-35. The sociological, psychological and religious insights kept a large audience fascinated. Aviva Zornberg teaches Bible and *Midrash* and is the author of *Genesis: The Beginning of Desire* (1995, paperback 1996) and *Exodus: The Particulars of Rapture* (2001, paperback 2002). December 19th **Prof. James Charlesworth** gave a lecture on “The Spirituality of the Dead Sea Scrolls.” The assumption was that the community of the Dead Sea spent three centuries in the desert in order to search for and to understand God’s Will. Does that mean that we can learn for the present time, from their findings? This lecture was attended by a record audience.

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Coming up next at the ETRFI:

- Special Lecture on January 24th: Dr. Eugene Korn
- January 30th lecture: Prof. Marc Bregman

—Special Lectures

December 4th at the Hebrew University: **H.B. Michel Sabbah**, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem spoke on the topic, “Peace Upon Jerusalem.”

The Jerusalem Rainbow Group met on the 11th of December at the YMCA. In keeping with the Rainbow topic for 2002/2003, “Sacred Space”, **Prof. Sarah Japhet** lectured on “Some Biblical Concepts of Sacred Space.”

On the 8th of January the Group met at the Scottish Church. **Mr. Malcolm Lowe** lectured on, “Sacred Space in Classical Antiquity.” Mr. Lowe deliberated on the activities in the Temple – If some Ancient Greeks and Romans came to Jerusalem and saw what went on in the Temple, how familiar would the activities have been to them? What would have been familiar and what foreign?

The Ecumenical Circle of Friends (ECOF) met at St. George’s Cathedral on December 19th to discuss the archeological finding of the tombstone of James, Jesus brother, chaired by our Vice-President, **Rev. Canon William Broughton**.

The 2002/2003 Research Seminar of the Center for the Study of Christianity is entitled, “Cultural Dynamics between Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity.” November 14th **Prof. David Aune** of the University of Notre Dame presented, “The Transformation of Apocalypticism in Early Christianity”; on December 19th **Dr. Serge Ruzer** of the Hebrew University, “Dilemma of Textual Authority in the Old Syriac Gospels” and on January 16th, **Prof. Lorenzo Perrone** of the University of Pisa, “The ‘Consitution of the Jews’ in the Polemics between Celsus and Origen.”

CHARITABLE SERVICES

—Syrian Orthodox Church

Thanks to the generosity of German friends in the Catholic Church the Fraternity can again this year aid many Syrian Orthodox children of Bethlehem in the payment of their school fees.

The year 2002 ended on a happy note for one Syrian Orthodox young man in particular: H.A. was enabled to travel to Jordan for a critically necessary knee ligament operation. He had suffered pain in his knee for the past two years. Thanks again to our friends in Germany.

CHURCH ACTIVITIES

—Ratisbonne Celebration

On Sunday December 29th the Congregation of Notre Dame de Sion celebrated the second centenary of the birth of its founder, **Theodore Ratisbonne** with a Eucharistic celebration in the chapel of the Sisters of Sion at Ein Kerem. **Cardinal Martini** retraced the principal stages in the life of Fr. Theodore. The essence of his message was that it is not enough today, to fight anti-Semitism but to love Israel.

—Armenian Patriarchate Reception

On the 5th of January 2003 the Armenian Patriarchate with the invitation of **H.B. Archbishop Torkom Manoogian**, held a reception in honour of the Name Day of St. James Brother of the Lord and King David the Prophet.

FRATERNITY COMMUNITY NEWS

—Christmas Festivities

On the 20th of December the Student Christian Forum, the ETRFI Steering Committee and friends met at the home of **Canon William Broughton** for a Christmas dinner and sing-a-long. Thank you Bill for a wonderful meal once again and for your contagious Christmas cheer!

The President of the State of Israel **Mr. Moshe Katsav** hosted the heads of the Christian communities in Israel for the New Year's celebrations on Monday December 30th. **H.E. Archbishop Aristarchos** responded in the name of all Christian leaders and said in his address, on behalf of **H.B. Patriarch of Jerusalem Irineus I**: "This long-established annual event is a reflection of how we get along and live together every day of the year and shows the respect given by the State of Israel to the Christian Church, extending to the right of standing at this podium." His speech in full is available at the ETRFI offices.

—Student Christian Forum

There have already been two excursions this academic year! On November 22nd the **Rev. Jan Mortensen** took the students on a tour of the City of David, including the Tunnel of Hezekiah. On December 13th, **Dr. Kirsten Stoffregen Pedersen** shared from her wealth of knowledge on an excursion to the Ethiopian

monasteries and properties in Jerusalem. The SCF excursions are a special highlight to Christian students in Jerusalem.

—Study Programs

The Jerusalem University College remains in its traditional premises on Mt. Zion. JUC continues this semester with its studies, with a small group of students.

The University of the Holy Land (UHL) uninterruptedly continues with its study program and has a sizable group of students also in this current academic year.

Ecole Biblique provides a reputable program for students again this year, even with a reduced number of participants.

**ETRFI members
and associates are
well-known scholars
& professors
belonging to a wide
range of Christian
institutions
worldwide.**

—The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2003

The Week of Prayer is from January 19th-26th. “We have this treasure in clay jars” (2 Corinthians 4:4-18) is the theme for this year. The opening will be at the Anglican Cathedral of St. George at 5:00 P.M. For the full program consult the ETRFI website: www.ctrfi.com

—Farewells

Sadly, we bid so long to our friend **Prof. Rudolf Pesch** who has returned to Germany in order to provide leadership in the founding of a new group within the Catholic Integrated Community such as the one he headed here in Jerusalem for the past years. We remember with appreciation Prof. Pesch’ lecture at the Fraternity in February 2001. For more information concerning the community, the *Heute* newsletter can be read on the web: www.heute-online.com . Prof. Pesch’ article, “Die Person Jesu – aus katholischer Sicht. Jüdischer Prophet – Messias Israels – Gottes Sohn,” is available at the ETRFI.

—Welcome back!

Our member **Fr. Peter Ashton ofm** is back after a year’s sabbatical in the UK to take up his duty in Jaffa.

—Of Blessed Memory

Ekkehard Maurer, a dear friend and member of the ETRFI has passed away on the 25th of December 2002 in Irschenhausen, Germany. If you would like to send a gift in his memory, you may do so via the Johanniter Hospice in Jerusalem. For details please contact (972 2) 626 4627.

For those of us who were not able to attend the service, on November 3rd an ecumenical remembrance service was organized by the ETRFI & Hagia Maria Sion (The Dormition Abbey), in loving memory of Fraternity members **Rina Geftman**, **Laurentius Klein**, **Marie-Liesse LeDorze**, **Bargil Pixner**, **Laurenz Volken** and friends of the Fraternity **Basilea Schlink**, **Shaul Colbi** and **Uri Mor**. It was a blessed occasion and a comfort to all.

—Remarkable Discoveries

The Jerusalem Center for Biblical Studies and the Israel Nature and Parks Authority has announced: “Remarkable Archeological Discoveries Found at Byzantine Monastery at Kursi National Park.” During the excavations in the early 1970s led by **Prof. Vassilos Tzaferis**, one of the largest and most important monasteries in Israel was discovered. Excavations were renewed last year. Now, structures within the monastery compound have been uncovered, and part of a Byzantine bathhouse that was used by pilgrims was discovered. This is the only bathhouse ever found within a monastery. In addition, there were “some remarkable discoveries of subterranean areas from which much can be learned of the Persian invasion of 614 A.D.” For more information: **Brian Kvasnica** at mskvas@mscc.huji.ac.il .

—Publications

“Un echo d’Israel” is a newly-established publication by some French-speaking clergy in Jerusalem. It can be ordered via echo_israel@hotmail.com or viewed on their website www.echodisrael.catholim.com . The editorial board of “echo” includes **Fr. Yohanan Elihai**, a founder of the Hebrew-speaking Catholic community in Israel.

ETRFI Newsletter

The Ecumenical Theological Research Fraternity in Israel was founded in 1966 by a group of professors, theologians and lay people in Jerusalem. They shared the perspective that recent history demanded a fundamental consideration of Christian attitudes towards the Jewish faith and people, and that the State of Israel offered a unique setting for facing this task together.

Today, the ETRFI is the recognized roof-organization for Christians engaged in Christian-Jewish dialogue in Israel. It is also the ecumenical group containing the widest range of members from all the historic churches.

LEADERSHIP

President:	Dr. Kirsten Stoffregen Pedersen
Vice-President:	Canon William Broughton
Executive Secretary:	Rev. Dr. Petra Heldt
Treasurer:	Br. Elio Passeto NDS

MEMBERSHIP

Members of the ETRFI represent the Protestant, Catholic and Orthodox Churches in approximately equal numbers, totaling more than one hundred, both locally and abroad.

Donations can be made by cheque or via bank transfer addressed to: Ecumenical Fraternity; Union Bank; Main Branch; 34, Jaffa Rd; Jerusalem; Account # 10638/62.

WE'RE ON THE WEB!

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