

NEWS from the

ECUMENICAL FRATERNITY

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Dear Friends,

The next issue of our journal *Immanuel*, no. 24/25 on *The New Testament and Christian-Jewish Dialogue*, will be available from next June. We are thankful that this much-awaited Festschrift for Prof David Flusser is approaching completion.

We had to take into account that it would be read not just by specialists in the New Testament, but by other scholars and by a considerable loyal lay readership for whom the dialogue is a central concern and even a lifelong commitment. Accordingly, all the contributions have been edited with these diverse audiences in mind.

So long did the process take that in the same period we both began and completed *Immanuel* 22/23, entitled *People, Land and State of Israel: Jewish and Christian Perspectives*. It has been highly well-received and not only among our subscribers. There is a constant de-

mand for it both among visitors to the Fraternity in Jerusalem and at meetings of Christians and Jews abroad.

For both issues we are grateful to have received a contribution for the printing costs from the Evangelisches Missionswerk of Hamburg. The Fraternity is also grateful for support from the Vier Moderamina of the Dutch Reformed Churches, the Northelbian Church and Mayor Teddy Kollek of Jerusalem. Thanks also go to the editor, Malcolm Lowe, to Jeffrey Magnuson, for again providing our new and greatly improved layout, and to our other Assistant Editors, Sr Ibolya Glancz and now Jill Groves.

In the meantime, thanks to Dr Geoffrey Wigoder (a member of the Editorial Advisory Council of *Immanuel*), we also have most of the articles for *Immanuel* 26/27, to be entitled *Twenty-Five Years of Jewish-Christian Dialogue in Israel*. It will mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the foundation of the Ecumenical Fraternity.

Journal

Long-term subscribers to *Immanuel* will readily understand why its latest issue honours the seventieth birthday of Prof. David Flusser. This issue, *Immanuel* 24/25 on *The New Testament and Christian-Jewish Dialogue*, ends with a "Bibliography of the Writings of David Flusser"; among the nearly 300 items are no less than twenty-eight contributions to earlier issues of *Immanuel*.

Nor need we dwell on the great value of Flusser's contributions to the study of the New Testament or on the esteem and affection in which he is held. There is evidence enough in the item "Encounters with David Flusser" at the beginning of the new issue, where Franz Mussner, Robert Lindsey, Brad Young, Malcolm Lowe and Marcel Dubois recall their experiences with Flusser.

Then follow the articles: "The Cross, Jesus and the Jewish People" (Brad Young), "Plucking on the Sabbath and Christian-Jewish Polemic" (Menahem Kister), "The Charge of Hypocrisy in Matthew 23 and in Jewish Sources" (Moshe Weinfeld), "The Peace-Offerings and Pauline Soteriology" (Cheryl A. Brown), "Torah in the Flesh" (Jacobus Schoneveld), "Jesus and His Disciples: The Beginnings of Their Organization" (Chana Safrai), "A Hebraic Approach to the Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard" (Malcolm Lowe), "Epitropos/Paqid in the Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard" (R. Menahem), "Hermeneutics in Talmud, Midrash and the New Testament" (Arne Jarand Hobbel), "The Jewish Cultural Nature of Galilee in the First Century" (Shmuel Safrai), "The Origins of Reading the Aramaic Targum in Synagogue" (Zeev Safrai), "Epigraphic Evidence for Proselytism in Ancient Judaism" (Pau Figueras), "From Books to Testimonies" (Oskar Skarsaune), "Enoch is Metatron" (Moshe Idel), "Thomas Aquinas on the Place of the Jews in the Divine Plan"

(Marcel Dubois), "Learning Step by Step in the Jewish-Christian Dialogue" (Martin Stöhr) and "Catholic-Jewish Dialogue since 1945: Survey and Observations" (Franz Mussner).

In general, the articles address New Testament issues that have featured prominently in Christian-Jewish dialogue. Many deal with the New Testament itself and with the Judaism of its time. An example is the contribution of Shmuel Safrai, which shows how wrong it is to think of first-century Galilee as a region of ignorant peasants.

Safrai shows that Galilee excelled all parts of the Land of Israel, excepting only Jerusalem, in its attachment to Judaism and Jewish cultural life in general. It was the home of numerous rabbis, rabbinic courts and centers of study. Various requirements of Jewish law were observed more stringently in Galilee than elsewhere. Galileans were especially noted for their attachment to Jerusalem and its Temple. Scholars have been misled by occasional denigrations of Galilee in rabbinic sources (and the Gospels), but there are similar remarks about other regions. They are merely expressions of the regional rivalry found in all countries and at all times; they bare no relation to the facts.

Other articles discuss the impact of New Testament issues on the Christian-Jewish encounter in later periods. Given the important contributions of Flusser to the Christian-Jewish dialogue in German-speaking countries, the volume also includes contributions about it from a Protestant and a Catholic.

Immanuel 24/25 will be available from the Fraternity starting June 1992 for US\$21, including surface postage. *Immanuel* 22/23, entitled *People, Land and State of Israel: Jewish and Christian Perspectives*, costs US\$19. The price for subscribers is US\$17 in both cases.

Study Programme

This year the theme of the Fraternity's study programme is 'Holiness (*Kedushah*) in Jewish and Christian Tradition'. The opening lecture was given on October 31, 1991 by Prof James Kugel of Harvard University, who gave his "Reflections on Kedushah in the Bible and Early Judaism". Prof Kugel, whose research includes an important study of parallelism in the Psalms, gave examples of how biblical and early rabbinic thought can elucidate each other.

On November 21 Rev Joseph Stiasny of Ratisbonne presented "The Notion of Holiness: A Semantic and Anthropological Inquiry". Using semiotic analysis, he outlined a network of links between holiness and contrasting and parallel concepts.

Dr Alon Goshen-Gottstein of Bar-Ilan University and the Shalom Hartman Institute discussed "Rabbinic Temple Myth" on December 19. Rabbinic thought contains elaborate mythic ideas of the significance of the Temple as well as minute accounts of the Temple ritual; paradoxically, it is hard to find clear connections between the two.

We were happy to welcome back Dr Margaret Brearley of Birmingham University, who spoke about "Sanctification of Time and Space in Christianity and Judaism" on January 30. She pointed out how paganism can slip in when Christian thought forgets the links with Judaism in its conception of time and space.

Rt Rev Kenneth Cragg, now at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford, was a colleague of Canon Peter Schneider, the founding spirit of the Fraternity, during the period of Anglican Archbishop Appleton in Jerusalem. Back for a prolonged visit, he spoke to us on "The Ironies of Holiness" on February 27. His starting point was the observation that Islam, in contrast to both Christianity and

Judaism, makes relatively little mention of holiness.

Apart from the lecture programme there was also some study in smaller groups. In particular, on the weekend of November 30, members of the Fraternity, the Martin Buber Institute and the Interreligious Coordinating Council in Israel met to discuss aspects of "Jewish-Christian Dialogue in the Context of the Arab-Israeli Conflict".

Visitors

Once again, only a selection of many visitors can be mentioned. In June 1991 we were visited by Mr Jay T. Rock, Director of the Office of Christian-Jewish Relations of the National Council of Churches in the U.S.A. In August Rev Schäfer brought a youth group from Mannheim and Rev Prof John T. Pawlikowski accompanied a Christian leadership mission to Israel that included several Lutherans from Chicago. Among Prof Pawlikowski's many contributions is the article "The Re-Judaization of Christianity - Its Impact on the Church and Its Implications for the Jewish People", which appeared in *Immanuel* 22/23.

In September Propst Heyde from the Northelbian Church came with a small party to make acquaintance with Christian-Jewish dialogue in Israel and to experience Sukkot (the Festival of Tabernacles), including an all-night session of Torah study.

A variety of German groups came in October from Hamburg, Mannheim, Hamelin (with Mrs Bruns) and the former East Germany (with Rev W. Hülsemann). The Fraternity helped to provide the programmes of a youth group from the Northelbian Church, led by Rev. Watzlawik, and a group of Swiss theologians, led by Rev. Hans Schwegler. There was also a visiting delegation from Aktion Sühnezeichen that included

Prof Goldschmidt, Rev H. Müller, Rev Klaus Geyer and Rev Bea Spreng.

The Anglican Archbishop of Sidney, Most Rev Donald Robinson, came in November, as did a group sponsored by the Council of Christians and Jews in Britain. Archbishop Robinson is the author of *Faith's Framework: The Structure of New Testament Theology* (1985); the chapter on "Jew and Gentile in the New Testament" emphasises that the church does not replace the Jewish people, which retains its chosenness by God. Other visitors included Rev and Mrs Spier from Berlin; Dr A. James Rudin, Director for Jewish-Christian Relations of the American Jewish Committee; Dr Kitty Cohen, Director of the Israel Colloquium, who accompanied a group of Black American clergy; and Dr Ludwig Watzal, gathering information for an article on interreligious relations in Israel. Rev Ingrid Homann brought a study group from Northelbia.

Last year the crisis over Kuwait discouraged visitors; this time it was the coldest and wettest winter for decades. Thus a heavy snowfall in January brought the cancellation of a lecture at the Fraternity's premises by Dr Gerhard Riegner, sponsored by the Interreligious Coordinating Council in Israel. The lecture was rescheduled for several weeks later, when even heavier snow prevented it. However, many friends of Dr Riegner were able to attend a lunch in honour of his 80th birthday at the Hebrew University during his January visit.

The casualties of the winter included the editor of *Immanuel*, Malcolm Lowe, who fell on a damaged pavement and suffered a difficult leg fracture. Thanks to excellent treatment at the Hadassah Hospital, Ein Kerem, he is making a gradual recovery and working as much as his condition allows. We are grateful for the many expressions of sympathy and offers of help.

Despite the harsh winter, numerous groups and individuals succeeded in coming. A delegation from Austria, including leading Protestant clergy, came in January, as did a delegation from the National Christian Leadership Conference for Israel (NCLCI), led by Dr Rose Thering and Dr David Lewis. A group came from Pittsburgh and in February another one from Baltimore.

The NCLCI unites Catholics and Protestants of many streams, including Evangelicals, Charismatics and United Brethren of Christ. Delegation members emphasised that only their concern for the future of the Jewish people could bind together Christians from such diverse trends.

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On February 3-8 a further education seminar on the theme "Hegemony Claims in Judaism, Islam and Christianity" was organised for Catholic and Protestant theologians from Switzerland under the leadership of Rev Georges Braunschweig (whom illness prevented from coming) and Rev Hans Schwegler. The topics included "Christian Religious and Political Hegemony" (Dr Margaret Brearley), "Hegemony in Judaism - Chosenness and Tolerance" (Rabbi Jonathan Chipman), "The Orthodox, Conservative and Reform Approaches in Judaism in Terms of Self-Perception" (Rabbi Dr Pessach Schindler), "Typologies of Hegemony/Authorities in Islam" (Dr Meir Bar Asher) and "Extra Ecclesiam Nulla Salus" (Rev Prof Marcel Dubois). This intensive comparative study showed how the temptation to seek hegemony can arise both in relations between religions and within a given religion. Precisely in our aspiration to serve the One God we can be led to seek to impose one pattern on everyone.

Yours Fraternally,

Rev Petra Heldt (Executive Secretary)