

MASSAH מסע JOURNEY

Journal of the
New Zealand Council
of Christians & Jews

30 Summer 2011

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Massah

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Editorial

Our first national CCJ conference held in Auckland last July had two formal presentations—from Fr John Pawlikowski, and from Professor Paul Morris in response. The lead article in this issue is based on John Pawlikowski's keynote address.

What I found even more interesting and stimulating than the formal presentations was what emerged in the various question-and-answer sessions following. Judging from the high level of interest and energy on the conference floor, this was so for others also.

We heard, for example, that there is much more going on, and that there is much more to be positive about in interfaith relations, than is typically presented by the media, which can often present current issues in uncritical, simplistic and sensationalist ways.

In a way, this simply reinforces what we already know and what we need always to keep in mind as a CCJ: that while we rely heavily on what we read in books, in journal articles and on the internet, equally—if not more—important is what we learn, personally, “to be true” from each other.

Shalom,

Tony Stroobant

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For Your Diary

Auckland

Sunday March 20, 5.30pm, Beth Shalom Synagogue, 180 Manukau Road, Epsom.

CCJ members are welcome as participants with the Beth Shalom congregation in their Purim celebrations. Please note the starting time.

Tuesday May 17, 7.30pm, St Pauls Methodist Church lounge, 12 St Vincent Avenue, Remuera.

Gone to Hell in a Handcart? Whatever Happened to the Judeo-Christian tradition?

With Dr Peter J. Lineham, Associate Professor at Massey University, Auckland—historian, lecturer and author in the field of church and society.

Sunday July 10, 2.30pm, at St John's College, 202 St Johns Road, Meadowbank.

Jewish and Christian Perspectives on the Book of Ecclesiastes

With Paul Morris, Professor of Religious Studies, Victoria University of Wellington, and Dr Alice Sinnott, Lecturer in Biblical Studies, Catholic Institute of Theology (Auckland).

Sunday September 18, 2.30pm, at St Johns College, 202 St Johns Road, Meadowbank.

Annual combined CCJ/CCM meeting.

As a Jew/Christian/Muslim, what I find most attractive in the two other faiths represented here today is.....

Three speakers share how other faiths shed light on their own faith. See the next issue of *Massah* for more details.

Wellington

Thursday February 10, 10am, Wellington Hebrew Community Centre, Webb Street (and subsequently on the second Thursday of the month).

WCC Core Group meeting. ACCJ members always welcome.

Thursday February 17, 7pm (for 7.30), Wellington Hebrew Community Centre, Webb Street (dining room).

Start of year dinner. \$25 per person. Friends/partners/spouses all welcome.

Thursday March 24, 7.30pm, Wellington Hebrew Community, Webb Street.

Public meeting to discuss the Charter of Compassion, focusing on how compassion is viewed in each Abrahamic faith and how it is implemented.

Contributors *Massah* 30

Darryl Milner

Rev Darryl Milner is a recently-retired priest within the Anglican church. He is a long-serving member and a Past Christian Co-President of the CCJ who continues to be actively involved.

John T. Pawlikowski

Rev Dr John T. Pawlikowski, OSM, has been actively involved in Jewish-Christian relations for over forty years and is immediate Past President of the ICCJ. He is Professor of Social Ethics and Director of the Catholic-Jewish Studies Programme at the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago.

Deborah Sheridan

Rev Deborah Sheridan is Chaplain of St Giles Hospice, Lichfield and Vocational Education Officer for Lichfield Diocese. She holds an MA in Jewish-Christian Relations from the Centre for the Study of Jewish-Christian Relations, Cambridge (The Woolf Institute of Abrahamic Faiths).

Lynne Wall

Rev Dr Lynne Wall was born in Sussex and emigrated to New Zealand with her family in 1965. A Methodist minister, she has a special interest in biblical studies. Her PhD from Birmingham focused on Christian origins and the use of Jewish methods of biblical interpretation.

Peter Wedde

Rev Peter Wedde is a retired Presbyterian minister, a Past Christian Co-President of CCJ, and an active contributor to the on-going life and work of CCJ.

The State of the Global Christian-Jewish Dialogue: Some Reflections

John T. Pawlikowski

Based on the keynote address given at the first national NZCCJ conference, July 4, 2010

The Christian-Jewish dialogue is now over fifty years old if one dates its origins to the groundbreaking declaration issued in 1947 in the small Swiss town of Seelisberg where an ecumenical group of Christian leaders came together to confront historic Christian antisemitism in light of the trauma of the Holocaust. Many positive developments have ensued since then, though there has been some backsliding in recent years resulting in a certain escalation of tensions. But at the outset there is need to note the immense about-face that has taken place when one looks at the Christian-Jewish relationship in an historical perspective.

After some two millennia of deep-seated theological and social hostility, primarily on the Christian side, there now exists a willingness in many quarters of both communities to describe the relationship between Christians and Jews in very positive terms, including talk of special bonding between the two communities at the level of their fundamental identities. This is a remarkable turnabout in a mere half century. It certainly represents the most profound change to date in the relationship between two faith communities and clearly could become a model for other such interreligious relationships. And as we confront some of the continuing challenges and tensions in the ongoing Christian-Jewish dialogue we should never lose sight of this remarkable turnabout.

Regrettably some religious leaders, both Christians and Jewish, restrict themselves to a few generic statements about the Christian-Jewish relationship without really probing whether such generic statements translate into more specific perspectives and actions. Certainly this has been the problem with the current papacy of Pope Benedict XVI. From the outset of his administration, Pope Benedict has made very important statements in condemning antisemitism and the Shoah and indicating great respect for the Jewish community as well as for the importance of dialogue. Most recently he has spoken in such terms during

his September 2010 visit to England and Scotland. But when we look at more specific events during his papacy the positive picture becomes much more cloudy.

The understandable criticisms of this current papacy over such issues as the revised Good Friday prayer for the Tridentine liturgy (which clearly retains a conversionist orientation), as well as the fiasco over the bishops from the Society of St. Pius X—Bishop Richard Williamson in particular who rightly stands accused of Holocaust denial—and the basic marginalization of Cardinal Walter Kasper (recently retired President of the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews), all certainly raise questions about the sincerity of the more generic statements regarding Catholic-Jewish dialogue.

Add to this a rather consistent interpretation of the Nazi Holocaust as an atheistic attack on religious belief as such without any reference to the history of Christian antisemitism and its undeniable role in giving support to the Nazi attack on the Jews, a tendency once again apparent in the Pope's words during his recent trip to the United Kingdom.

Yet there has been some positive movement of late in some of Pope Benedict XVI's statements, most notably in his January 17, 2010 visit and address at the synagogue in Rome. Three aspects of his talk there have special relevance for the advancement of Catholic-Jewish relations today, provided they truly impact internal reflections within Catholicism on its relations with the Jewish People.

The first was the Pope's emphasis on the ongoing nature of the Jewish covenant. He spoke of the Jewish covenant in the present, not the past tense. This is in line with the Vatican II document *Nostra Aetate* and with several important statements made by Pope John Paul II. It also repeats the basic thrust of the Pontifical Biblical Commission's 2001 document, *The Jewish People and their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible*.

Pope Benedict, then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, wrote a very laudatory introduction to this document in his capacity as head of the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. This papal re-emphasis on the ongoing validity of the Jewish covenant is particularly relevant given the perspective advanced over the past several years by the late Cardinal Avery Dulles and his supporters. Cardinal Dulles has had a significant impact on certain changes introduced by the American Catholic Bishops, including in the adult catechism, which caused considerable concern among Jewish leaders in the dialogue across the Reform/Conservative/Orthodox spectrum.

The perspective of Cardinal Dulles has been that *Nostra Aetate* did not settle the issue of the post-Christ Event status of the Jewish covenant and that we must bring back to the table the passages in the Letter to the Hebrews with their apparent invalidation of the Jewish covenant—despite the fact that *Nostra Aetate* ignored these passages, clearly establishing Romans 9-11 as the foundation for a contemporary theology of the Church's relationship with the Jewish People.

Cardinal Dulles also seemed unaware that several prominent biblical scholars writing on Hebrews have insisted the letter never intended to obliterate the Jewish covenant after Christ. And Pope Benedict's use of an important Jewish document in his speech at the synagogue would tend further to confirm his view that Judaism remains a valid religion after Christ. Otherwise why offer it as a resource for Christian belief.

Cardinal Walter Kasper, shortly before his retirement from his Vatican position, indicated in private conversation that the Pope's January 2010 remarks definitely show that Cardinal Dulles' view is not the perspective of Benedict XVI. It would prove immensely helpful, however, if Cardinal Kasper would put that understanding of the papal address in writing.

In this speech at the synagogue in Rome, Benedict XVI addressed another issue that has plagued

his papacy as I have previously mentioned. Previous to this address, while he has strongly denounced the Holocaust and all forms of antisemitism, he has been most often ambiguous at best on the issue of Catholic complicity in the Shoah (a tendency, as was mentioned above, re-

It would have been preferable if Pope Benedict had expressed repentance for Catholic collaboration with antisemitism over the centuries, including the Nazi era, in his own words—particularly given his German background.

occurred in his UK address). In the synagogue speech he made his own the often-quoted words of Pope John Paul II first spoken in the liturgical ceremony for the new millennium held in Rome on the first Sunday of Lent 2000 and then repeated that May

in a message placed in the historic Western Wall in Jerusalem by the Pope during his visit to Jerusalem. The statement expresses repentance for Catholic collaboration with antisemitism over the centuries, including the Nazi era. It would have been preferable if Pope Benedict had said this in his own words, particularly given his German background.

Nonetheless, his embrace of John Paul's statement of repentance represents his first real step towards acknowledging Catholic complicity in this regard. It is unfortunate that he did not continue in this vein in his address during his United Kingdom visit.

Finally, the Pope's positive reference to the 2001 Pontifical Biblical Commission's document, along with his citation of Jewish religious sources, helps to restore a positive thrust to the Catholic-Jewish dialogue. Those in Catholic leadership who have been espousing the view of Cardinal Dulles have tended to dismiss all documents subsequent to *Nostra Aetate* (i.e., this document from the Biblical Commission, the 1974 and 1985 documents from the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, and the many speeches of Pope John Paul II) as merely pastoral statements and not part of what they term "settled doctrine," a dubious term from the standpoint of Catholic canon law.

By referring to the 2001 Pontifical Biblical Commission's document, Pope Benedict has given it a new status and, by implication, also the other documents that have been dismissed by those

championing the Dulles perspective. Such documents are clearly important in understanding the basic theological relationship between the Church and the Jewish People in the eyes of Pope Benedict XVI.

This second important development on the international scene is the release, in July 2009, of a major new interreligious statement by the International Council of Christians and Jews at its conference at the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Berlin. This document, several years in the making through international consultations of scholars and people active in the Christian-Jewish dialogue, was signed by representatives from 28 countries in a solemn ceremony in Berlin. It is meant as a further development and updating of the historic document issued in the summer of 1947 by representatives from nineteen countries who met in Seelisberg, Switzerland, to examine the implications of the Holocaust for Christian-Jewish relations.

The Seelisberg document had ten major points; the Berlin document has twelve (see sidebar). Titled *A Time for Recommitment: Jewish-Christian Dialogue 70 Years After the War and the Shoah*, this document also differs from the 1947 text in that it outlines responsibilities for both the Christian and Jewish communities as well as responsibilities incumbent on all religious traditions. The points of the Seelisberg statement addressed only the Christian community. The ICCJ Berlin document is not intended as a final statement. Rather it will hopefully serve as a stimulus for further discussion around the world.

Another important global development in rethinking the Christian-Jewish relationship comes from the world of biblical and theological scholarship. In the last several decades we have witnessed a scholarly revolution in the understanding of the early relationship between Jews and Christians. Contrary to the ordinary perceptions of people in both communities the split between Judaism and Christianity was far slower and more complex than we once believed. One scholar who contributed important insights into this reconception of the early Christian-Jewish relationship was Dr. Robin Scroggs who has taught both at Chicago Theological Seminary and then at the Union Theological Seminar in New York. In an effort

Twelve Points of Berlin

Responsibilities incumbent upon the Christian community:

- *to combat religious, racial and all other forms of antisemitism*
- *to promote interreligious dialogue with the Jews*
- *to develop a theological understanding of Judaism that affirms its distinctive integrity*
- *to pray for the peace of Jerusalem*

Responsibilities incumbent upon the Jewish community:

- *to acknowledge the efforts of many Christian communities in the late twentieth century to reform their attitudes towards Jews*
- *to re-examine Jewish texts and liturgy in the light of these Christian reforms*
- *to differentiate between fair-minded criticism of Israel and anti-Semitism*
- *to offer encouragement to the State of Israel as it works to fulfill the ideals stated in its founding documents, a task Israel shares with many nations of the world*

Responsibilities incumbent upon both the Christian and Jewish communities and others:

- *to enhance interreligious and intercultural education*
- *to promote interreligious friendship and cooperation as well as social justice in the global society*

to simplify the very complex picture that is emerging of the first several centuries of the common era, Scroggs emphasizes the following points: (1) The movement begun by Jesus and continued after his death in Palestine can best be described as a reform movement within Judaism. Little or no evidence exists to suggest a separate sense of identity within the emerging Christian community; (2) Paul understood his mission to the Gentiles as fundamentally a mission out of Judaism which aimed at extending God's original

and continuing call to the Jewish People to the Gentiles; (3) it is difficult to speak of a separate Christian reality prior to the end of the Jewish war with the Romans in 70 C.E. Followers of Jesus did not seem on the whole to understand themselves as part of a religion separate from Judaism. A distinctive Christian identity began to develop only after the Roman-Jewish war.

The research which postdates that of Scroggs tends to push the separation even later, perhaps as late as the fourth century in some areas. Certainly there were distinctive identities such as “Jewish,” “Jewish Christian,” “Christian Jews,” “Gentiles,” but these groups did not necessarily view their “distinctiveness” as a reason for total separation. Some scholars today would even argue that “Christ worship” did not bring about a total split; The later parts of the New Testament do exhibit the beginnings of some sense of distancing often leading to hostility toward each other (some would suggest that the “synagogue of satan” language found in the gospel of John is the result of such hostility among rival Christian-Jewish groups).

In my judgment, the degree to which we advance the dialogue in the coming years will be determined in part by whether and how we incorporate this significantly new understanding of “parting of the ways” in both faith communities. It is never easy for any religious community to re-adjust its basic faith identity. Most Christian churches took a major step in that direction with their repudiation of theologies of Jewish covenantal displacement which frequently served as an important cornerstone of their Christological affirmations. But only time will tell whether a second step can be taken by the Christian community and essentially a first step by the Jewish community in response to the emergent consciousness that the account of Jewish-Christian separation is simply not as it has been presented for centuries.

One of the central aspects of the new view of Jewish-Christian separation is how both Christians and Jews understand the role of Paul the Apostle who often has been seen by both as “the founder of Christianity,” as the person most responsible for the Jewish-Christian divorce. What is beginning to emerge in important sectors of Pauline scholarship is a picture of a Paul still very

much a Jew, still quite appreciative of Jewish Torah with seemingly no objection to its continued practice by Jewish Christians as long as their basic orientation is found in Christ and his teachings, and still struggling towards the end of his ministry to balance his understanding of the newness implied in the Christ Event with the continuity of Jewish covenant, something quite apparent in the famous chapters 9-11 of Romans cited by Vatican II in chapter four of *Nostra Aetate* where we find the conciliar declaration of the new understanding of the church’s relationship with the Jewish People. It is also possible, though Paul would have added his distinctive interpretations.

A few of the biblical scholars involved in this new Pauline research even go so far as to maintain that Paul regarded Torah observance so highly that he feared that if Gentiles tried to practice it they would only corrupt its authentic spirit. Such a view admittedly pushes the envelope of scholarly evidence a bit far, but it is presently under discussion in some academic circles.

There have also been important developments in the theological area. One was launched following the 2005 commemoration of the fortieth anniversary celebration of *Nostra Aetate* at the Gregorian University in Rome. Co-sponsored by Boston College, the Catholic University of Leuven, Catholic Theological Union and the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome—with the strong support of Cardinal Walter Kasper—the project has been examining a metaquestion entitled: How Might We Christians in Our Time Reaffirm Our Faith Claim that Jesus Christ is Savior of All Humanity, even as We Affirm the Jewish People’s Covenantal Life in God? Primarily a Catholic effort, but with some Protestant and Jewish participation, the project will soon release a book containing its reflections with joint American/European publishers.

The World Council of Churches has also launched an effort to examine the implications of interreligious dialogue for Christian theological self-identity. The process involves a consultation with each of the WCC’s major dialogue partners. The consultation surfaced considerable differences regarding Christian-Jewish relations among the participants from Europe, the United States, Asia and the Middle East. One particularly diffi-

cult question was whether the new positive theologies of the Christian-Jewish relationship emerging in North America and Europe in fact add to the sufferings of the Palestinian people because they stifle criticism of Israeli policies. The issue of the Middle East has tended over all to occupy a more central role in Protestant Christianity than in its Catholic counterpart, though that is beginning to change.

As a Christian theologian in the dialogue who has pursued the issues from the Christian perspective I am compelled to assert that Jews will have to re-examine the classical Jewish theologies of Christianity. Admittedly, the situation for Judaism in this regard bears little parallel to the challenge faced by Christians. However, the groundbreaking Jewish document on Christianity *Dabru Emet* will need to gain greater respect within the Jewish theological community along with the writings of such scholars as Irving Greenberg, Daniel Boyarin, Elliot Wolfson, Michael Kogan, the late Michael Signer, David Novak, Edward Kessler, and Byron Sherwin, all of whom have reflected in new and differing ways on the Jewish-Christian relationship.

Other issues such as the notion of mission will continue to challenge the Jewish-Christian relationship. Overall there has been significant progress over the past half-century and we should never forget this. But we must continue to keep at it. There is still progress to be made and we shall also have to resist backsliding in certain parts both of the Christian and Jewish communities.



Australian and New Zealand CCJs To Hold Regional Conference on Twelve Points of Berlin

When asked at our National Conference last July "What more might we do for Jewish-Christian relations in our part of the world", Fr John Pawlikowski, reflecting the wishes of the ICCJ, suggested a regional conference to discuss the Twelve Points of Berlin. This idea has been positively received by the ACCJ. Further developments in the next issue of *Massah*.

Progress in Jewish-Church Relations

Rabbi David Rosen
offers a Jewish perspective

When Catholics and Jews get to know each other, they tend to see each other as genuine friends who have many of the same values and interests in common, affirms Rabbi David Rosen.

The Rabbi said this at the Special Assembly for the Middle East of the Synod of Bishops where he was invited as a special guest. The two-week assembly seeks to address several challenges faced by the Churches in the region.

In addition to Rosen, who is the advisor to the Chief Rabbinate of Israel and director of the Department for Interreligious Affairs of the American Jewish Committee, the synod also invited two representatives of Islam: Mohammed Al-Sammak, political adviser to the mufti of Lebanon, and Ayatollah Seyed Mostafa Mohaghegh Ahmabadadi, professor at the Faculty of Law at the Shahid Beheshti University of Tehran and Member of the Iranian Academy of Sciences.

"The relationship today between the Catholic Church and the Jewish people is a blessed transformation in our times—arguably without historic parallel," said Rosen. He added that "this striking transformation" is not complete, as more time is needed to overcome the "contempt" toward Jews that had been spread for centuries.

However, improvement in relations has taken root, and Rosen was quick to note that there are some countries where Catholic-Jewish relations have progressed more than in others.

In the United States, he explained, "Jews and Christians live in an open society side by side as vibrant self-confident and civically engaged minorities. As a result the relationship has advanced there to a unique degree involving cooperation and exchanges between the communities and their educational institutions; and today the US boasts literally dozens of academic institutions for Catholic-Jewish studies and relations, while there are perhaps three in the rest of the world.

"Indeed, there is a widespread perception among the Jewish communities in the United States of the Catholic Church as a genuine friend with profound values and interests in common."

The rabbi lamented, however, that in other countries, and especially those that are mostly Catholic, there is not only a lack of interest in Judaism, but there is ignorance—by even priests and other clergy—of "Nostra Aetate," which is the fundamental document of the Second Vatican Council on relations with other religions, and other current Church documents on the topic.

Rosen also acknowledged that in Israel, "the only polity in the world where Jews are a majority," Israelis have been "quite unaware of the profound changes in Catholic-Jewish relations." But things are changing, he stated, and gave two reasons.

The first impetus for change, according to the rabbi, "is the impact of the visit of the late Pope John Paul II in the year 2000." Rosen noted that Israel and the Holy See had established full bilateral relations six years earlier, which had positively influenced perceptions of the Church among Israelis, "it was the power of the visual images, the significance of which Pope John Paul II understood so well, that revealed clearly to the majority of Israeli society the transformation that had taken place in Christian attitudes and teaching toward the Jewish people with whom the Pope himself had maintained and further sought mutual friendship and respect."

"For Israelis," he continued, "to see the Pope at the Western Wall, the remnant of the Second Temple, standing there in respect for Jewish tradition and placing there the text that he had composed for a liturgy of forgiveness that had taken place two weeks earlier here at St. Peter's, asking Divine forgiveness for sins committed against the Jews down the ages, was stunning and overwhelming in its effect."

Rosen credited John Paul II's visit not only for changing attitudes, but also for opening up "the remarkable new avenue for dialogue, understanding and collaboration in the form of the bilateral commission of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel and the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with Jewry, established at John Paul II's initiative and praised extensively by Pope Benedict XVI during his pilgrimage to the Holy Land last year and also in his words at the great synagogue here in Rome earlier this year."

Rosen said a second factor leading to a change of attitude of Israelis toward Christians "is the influx of other Christians who have doubled the demographic make-up of Christianity in Israel."

The rabbi reported that some 50,000 Christians immigrated to Israel from the former Soviet Union over the past 20 years, and who are full Israeli citizens, but that there is also a large population of migrant workers who are mainly Christian.

He said these migrant workers, of which half either entered illegally or overstayed their visas, are from the Philippines, Eastern Europe, Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa.

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Wellington Interfaith Akedah Study

The Wellington Jewish Community Centre was full for this year's public sacred text study of the *Akedah* or *The Binding of Isaac*. Rabbi David Alima, of the Wellington Jewish Congregation, Rev Jenny Chalmers, an Anglican priest who is the Vicar of Carterton and Christian co-chair of the WCCJ, and Imam Hezrat Adam of the Wellington Mosque discussed their religion's perspectives on the story of Abraham and his intended sacrifice of Isaac.

Rabbi Alima, who had arrived in Wellington from Israel eight days previously, spoke first, outlining some of the rabbinical interpretations of the *Akedah*. After a break for *Maghrib* (Muslim evening prayers) Jenny Chalmers, using Søren Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling* continued with a discussion of the *Akedah* as the beginning of Judeo/Christian ethical thought. Imam Hezrat Adam told the audience that while the *Binding of Isaac* is not mentioned in the *Koran*, the *Hajj* or pilgrimage to Mecca is based on the event and explained that the actions of the Hajj represent Abraham's actions.

The audience were appreciative of the discussions, asking a number of questions of all the speakers and referring to the papers they had presented. Lively discussions continued over supper and a large number of people joined the email list for the WCCJ.

Planning Holy Week?

Deborah Sheridan has a question for the churches: Are you sure you want to celebrate a Seder?

On Maundy Thursday this year many Christians will gather round a table in a church or hall. They will light candles, bless and break *Matzot*, dip bitter herbs and listen to the reading of Exodus chapter 12, the account of the first Passover and the Israelites' Exodus from Egypt. They will enjoy a meal of lamb, pita bread and salad, attempting to relive the Last Supper with a Seder, or Passover service.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that for hundreds of congregations it has become a regular and much loved part of their Holy Week observance. It fits in well with the way we attempt to relive the events of Jesus' final week.

But actually the evidence suggests that the Seder as it is known today has its origins in the first and second centuries CE. It was a ritual designed to take the place of the Temple and its Passover sacrifices.

The earliest written description of the Seder dates from about 200 CE. As the Temple was still functioning at the time of Jesus, the rituals in the Haggadah cannot be the rituals that Jesus celebrated before he died.

The assumption of those taking part in church Seders is that the Haggadah is all about God's redemption of the Israelites from Egypt. But actually the Haggadah tells a far more complex story.

Sadly this has also meant liberation from Judaism's Christian enemies. One early example is the account within the Haggadah of the instructions of Rabbi Gamaliel II, the grandson of Rabbi Gamaliel mentioned in Acts 5. Scholars have argued that Gamaliel's rubric explaining rituals became mandatory in order to emphasise the Jewish interpretation of the Passover and to exclude Christians and their new interpretation of the Passover.

Another example comes at the end of the traditional Seder celebration when these words from Psalm 79 are read: 'Pour out your wrath on the nations that do not acknowledge you and on the

kingdoms that do not call on your name. For they have devoured Jacob and laid waste his habitation.' This text was added to the Haggadah after the First Crusade when the Crusaders swept through the Rhineland, slaughtering Jewish communities on the way. Liturgy has a long memory.

The Haggadah is a text that has grown over the centuries in response to the needs of the community. And it is still growing: today there are feminist Haggadot, vegetarian Haggadot, holistic Haggadot, freedom Haggadot, Do-It-Yourself Haggadot. A Haggadah is also more than just a text. From the days of the earliest printed Haggadot, commentaries were included that interpreted the text for the contemporary situation. Scholars and writers still publish the Haggadah with their own commentaries. The Chief Rabbi's Haggadah with his commentary and interpretation was published in 2007.

So the Haggadah is not a relic from the past. It is a text that has a key place within contemporary Judaism. And when Christians celebrate a Seder using the Haggadah liturgy they are not taking part in a celebration that Jesus

would have known, but rather one that has developed over the centuries to celebrate Jewish life and history.

When churches celebrate a Seder using passages from the Haggadah, hard questions arise which have implications for Jewish-Christian relations. Should we assimilate the sacred texts of another faith into our religious observance? Using Jewish liturgy, symbols and traditions, but rejecting their meanings within their original tradition implies that we think Passover is a quaint relic from the past rather than a key festival in a contemporary living religion. If we do not engage with the complexities of the real Haggadah, or indeed the real Judaism, we neglect that respectful attention to boundaries which is the beginning of genuine inter-faith relations.

Maybe rather than abusing the Haggadah we can learn from it. Some religious stories, images and myths have become universal in their significance. The story of the Exodus is one such archetypal narrative. Perhaps the Exodus themes of

Using Jewish liturgy but rejecting its original meaning implies that we [the churches] think Passover is a quaint relic from the past

slavery and liberation, exile and redemption could be creatively explored in Holy Week worship.

The Haggadah's powerful sense of history interpreted in the light of the Exodus might lead us to recount Christian history liturgically in the light of Easter. The modern Haggadot which engage with contemporary issues of concern to the community - peace, liberation from oppression, the environment—could encourage us to think creatively about our Holy Week liturgies.

Or indeed we might reflect on why we need to attempt to restage the Last Supper in our churches when we regularly recall it liturgically in the Eucharist?

Rather than appropriating the liturgy of another religion we might humbly acknowledge that there is much we can learn from another faith tradition.

This article first appeared in the 26 February 2010 issue of the Church Times and is reprinted with permission.

Visit <http://www.churchtimes.co.uk>.



New Reform Prayer Book

The 1975 Jewish prayer book *Gates of Prayer* proved to be an invaluable resource when, some years ago, the Methodist Church of NZ prepared a liturgical “kitset” for the use of those conducting funeral or memorial services.

The compilers found that both the spirituality and the language of the prayers made a refreshing change from traditional Christian liturgy. For those of us “in the know”, *Gates of Prayer* has been a rich liturgical asset over the years for regular parish worship, not just funerals.

Gates of Prayer now has a successor: *Mishkan T'filah—A Reform Siddur* (“Dwelling Place for Prayer”). But is it needed? Is it just a matter of seeking newness?

These questions are asked rhetorically by the editor of the new *siddur*, Rabbi Elyse Frishman, who goes on to say that it began with a survey, “not of theology and clergy, but of laity.” The survey results showed a clear desire for “transliteration, meaningful God language, expanded God

language, relevant and compelling English prayer, faithful translation, and a response to the feminist critique.”

Though there may be less belief in a personal God these days, the survey showed that the desire to call upon God remained central.

“Yet, although prayer invites us to beseech God, we must also be open to what God wants from us,” continues Rabbi Frishman. “Prayer is not merely an outpouring of the self; it is the opening of our senses to what is beyond ourselves. *Send me*: prayer must motivate us to give selflessly.” The new liturgy intentionally offers the worshipper this opportunity.

The result (at least anecdotally), says Rabbi Frishman, is a prayer book that “helps us re-engage our Jews in meaningful worship...offering a balance of creativity and beauty, theology and purpose.”

Mishkan T'filah was released for the use of Reform Jewish congregations in the United States in 2007. Another edition (2010) takes account of the more traditional approach often taken by English-speaking Progressive communities outside the US. It is also sensitive to the experience of Jews living in the Southern Hemisphere (New Zealand, for example) where traditional liturgical seasonal references relating to the Land of Israel are out of step with local weather cycles.

From reports to date, worship leaders, both Jewish and Christian, will find *Mishkan T'filah* as rich a liturgical resource as its predecessor, and both Jews and Christians will have a prayer book for personal use that offers what must be among the best of both Biblical and contemporary Jewish spirituality.

For more information visit <http://urj.org/worship/mishkan/>

To purchase a copy of the 2010 edition referred to above, check with the office/shop at Beth Shalom, telephone (09) 524 4139.

Tony Stroobant

Though there may be less belief in a personal God these days, the survey showed that the desire to call upon God remained central.

Book Reviews

The first two reviews in this issue, from Darryl Milner and Lynne Wall, remind us that Jewish-Christian relations do not belong only “way over there” or “way back there”, but are very much part of our family history and our present-day consciousness here in Aotearoa-New Zealand. And in a world which seems to relentlessly mock any idea of “faith”, Peter Wedde reviews a book where the author argues that faith is not necessarily at odds with science.

Postcards From Tukums: A Family Detective Story

Ann Gluckman

David Ling Publishing, Auckland, 2010

Reviewed by Darryl Milner

I found reading Ann Gluckman’s book *Postcards from Tukums* a fascinating experience. Every reader brings their own life’s experience to the reading of a book. There are many things in *Postcards from Tukums* that resonate with my experience and made reading it a special pleasure.

I think it is a common experience for immigrant parents like me often not to speak a lot about the “home” from which they came. Leaving “home” is a traumatic experience, especially if “home” was a place of violence or threat. An additional reason for not speaking about it in front of one’s children is that one wants one’s children to quickly settle and integrate into what will become their “home”, with no nostalgia for a world to which one cannot return.

Children live very much in the “now” and sense their parents reticence so family history often goes untold and unrecorded. Often an interest in discovering one’s roots only develops later in life, typically when one has one’s own children and grandchildren. By then the older generation have often died and taken their stories with them. Much precious information is lost.

Tukums was a town in north-western Latvia, in the region known as Kurland, part of the Czarist Russian Empire. This was outside the enforced Pale of Settlement, but still subject to sporadic cruel pogroms. Most families there spoke German at home, not Yiddish, but Russian was the language of schools and business. Ann’s grandfather fled Latvia in 1905 for a new life in New Zealand.

Ann has done something very special in writing *Postcards from Tukums*. She has done a wonderful work of detection and from a few precious clues has researched and recorded the history of

her grandparents, and especially of her redoubtable mother, Augusta Kippel *nee* Manoy. It is a precious legacy to leave her own children and grandchildren. She has also generously shared it with us.

Ann knew only a smattering of the story until 2004 when the old house at 78 Lucerne Road, Remuera, in which Ann’s mother and father and then two succeeding generations of the family lived, was demolished. The family had lived there from 1934, and almost seventy years later “workmen found a large, dust-encrusted cardboard box full of silverfish-chewed, foxed* letters.” “The box had been carefully concealed under the eaves. Fortuitously, the workmen showed the box to Ann’s son, Peter Gluckman, who recognised the bulk of the letters as being in his grandmother’s distinctive sprawling, difficult-to-read handwriting. Thus the box was saved from a dump truck.”

There was also a small bundle of ninety postcards dating from 1909 to 1916, mostly written in an older form of German, a few in Russian, one in Hebrew and one in a difficult amalgam of four languages including Yiddish written in Hebrew characters. Many of the postcards are etchings of biblical sites, others are connected with Jewish festivals, while yet others are of noted personalities or scenes of Latvia a hundred years ago. All these postcards are beautifully reproduced in the book and, when Ann unlocks their secrets, give us a glimpse of Jewish life in Czarist Russia in the years before that world was swept away, first by the Russian revolution of 1918 and then by the Holocaust during the Second World War.

Working with these few clues, and with the transcription of a tape recording that her mother, then aged 90, made in 1987 for a Jewish oral history archive, Ann pieces together the story of her family.

* “foxed”= discoloured with brown spots—Ed.

Dr. C. B. Sherer, an old friend of Ann's, is an English Jew who served as a doctor in J force, then lived in Auckland for 30 years before making aliyah to Jerusalem 30 years ago. He knew Ann's family, and after reading *Postcards from Tukums* wrote this to Ann:

"I am deeply grateful to you for sending it to me. I really mean that. It is a beautifully produced work, written with love and care in an utterly appropriate style, with no pretensions other than to recall a family you loved and a world which has gone.

I am reminded of Proust. 'A la recherche du temps perdu', which is usually (and wrongly) translated as 'Remembrance of things past.' It should be 'In search of *lost time*.'

Lost time. That is precisely what your book is about, a time which has been lost forever. Between it and the present there is a huge gap which can never be filled. For the British, say, writing about the same period would be a continuum, and for the years before that, and before that, ad infinitum almost. Empires have come and gone, worlds have changed, and the Germans robbed us meantime of one-third of our genetic potential.

But when you think of life in Latvia, and far-off New Zealand, there would seemingly be no connection, except for the box of postcards, the letters, the charming old pictures and the world they represent.

I congratulate you."

I whole-heartedly endorse his sentiments.

Postcards from Tukums is more than simply the story of Ann's family. It is also the story of many other immigrants from other religions and cultures who manage to retain their identity while becoming truly involved as citizens of New Zealand. Such stories flesh out of the unique tapestry that is Aotearoa.

I urge the readers of *Massah* to join Ann on her detection and be moved by what she discovers, especially the story of her mother, a memorable and remarkable woman, as is Ann, our Auckland CCJ's founding Co-President.

Strawberries with the Führer

Helga Tiscenko

Shoal Bay, Auckland, 2000

Reviewed by Lynne Wall

This memoir reflects a view of the Second World War from an unexpected perspective, and is generously illustrated with photographs from the family album.

Helga, born in 1929, tells how she was brought up in a stable middle-class German home. Her parents were both members of the National Socialist Party and her father was a professional soldier in both world wars, rising to the rank of general in the SS. Before the war, at a huge parade in Berlin honouring Hitler's birthday, young Helga had presented a bouquet of forget-me-nots to the Führer and been invited to take strawberries and ice cream with him, hence the title of the memoir.

This then is a child's view of the war and an adolescent's struggle to come to terms with its aftermath, which included the execution of her father in 1947. Despite saving the lives of two Slovak officers, much to Himmler's annoyance, he was a victim of the chaos that accompanied the communist takeover of Eastern Europe. Happier years were to follow when Helga emigrated to New Zealand with her Russian husband. After the fear and struggle of life in Germany and then in Eastern Europe under communism, she writes warmly of their new start "in paradise."

But what did she make of her parents' commitment to National Socialism? She writes:

"I cannot understand how my parents, two decent and intelligent people, could ignore all the signs pointing to Hitler's madness and megalomania. How they could turn a blind eye to the manifestations of racial hatred that led to the Holocaust, how they could swallow all that nonsense of the *Arisches Blut* (Aryan pure blood) and how they could reconcile their personal compassionate actions with those of a callous regime, responsible for the suffering and death of millions of people. There must have been conflict in their hearts and minds. I can only suppose that adherence to that code of honour, 'Deutsche Treue' (German faithfulness), prevented them from dissenting.

It seems so futile and incomprehensible to me now. The conflict of loving my parents and yet knowing that they were followers of an ideology I reject remains forever in my heart. This is a burden I have in common with many Germans of my generation.” (p.18-19)

As a postscript, I read on the internet that a privately-funded documentary is being made of Helga’s story. It is to be hoped that such a film might at least be viewed at the film festivals.

The Language of God—A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief

Francis Collins

Free Press , Washington DC, 2006

Reviewed by Peter Wedde

I belong to a discussion group where most of the members have read and thought deeply about one or the other of two books, Richard Dawkins’ *The God Delusion* or Christopher Hitchens’ *God Is Not Great*. Then someone turned up at a group meeting with Francis Collins’ *The Language of God*, and lots of us have now read it.

It was good to turn to Collins after Dawkins and Hitchens. Both of these now well-known atheists have a particular delight in ridiculing the picture of God presented in the Hebrew Scriptures (which they, of course, always refer to as the “Old Testament”). Hitchens goes further in specifically attacking Judaism and Jewish customs, but Christians and Muslims get no sympathy from either of these writers.

Although Collins writes specifically as a Christian, he makes a few supportive references to Judaism and Islam, and concentrates much of his argument on upholding belief in God as Creator. He comes from a nominally Christian home, but says he was sent as a 5-year-old to sing in the local Episcopalian Church choir because “it would be a great way to learn music.” He became a teenage agnostic and later an atheistic student of physical chemistry. He then developed an interest in molecular biology and finally qualified as a medical doctor.

With such a wide ranging scientific background and what must have been an enormous intellectual and administrative ability, he was invited to

become director of the American Human Genome Project, which completed its mapping of human DNA and presented its results to President Clinton in 2000. Along the way in the midst of what must have been a very busy life, Francis Collins came to believe in God.

He tells the story in *The Language of God*, a title he took from President Clinton’s speech about the Genome Project : “today we are learning the language in which God created life.” Collins tells us quite a lot about that language—fortunately, in a way that a scientific layperson like me can to a large extent understand. I found this part of the book totally absorbing. But for Collins it is only a background for his main theme: the way belief in God and creation fits in with a scientific worldview.

Collins may not be totally convincing for the sceptically minded, but for him it was thinking about the Moral Law and its demands on human life that led him to believe in God. He was lent a copy of C. S. Lewis’ *Mere Christianity*, and was convinced by Lewis that belief in God was reasonable and rational.

In the light of his newfound belief, Collins touches on what he calls the great questions of human existence, the origins of the universe, life on earth and evolution. He shows up what he considers are the errors of atheism as promoted by Dawkins, Hitchens and others, but also exposes what he thinks are the failures of the religious reactions that go under the names of “creationism” and “intelligent design”.

He advocates a position he calls “biologos”, where he presents science and faith in harmony. To show how this harmony can work, Collins goes on to discuss a number of problem areas in bioethics.

The book ends with a discussion group guide but anyone who reads it is, I think, likely to want to discuss with others ideas from the book whether in a formal group or over the coffee table. I bought an extra copy to lend to friends—including if requested, readers of *Massah*!



New Zealand Council of Christians and Jews

Inaugural National Conference 2010

On the weekend of July 3-4, 2010, The New Zealand Council of Christians and Jews (NZCCJ) held its first ever national conference at St John's College, Meadowbank, Auckland. Originally, the idea was for Auckland and Wellington CCJ Core Group/Committee members to get together to be more than just "names" to each other, to discuss organisational matters and what we might do to promote Jewish-Christian relations nationally as well as locally. But the event quickly turned into something else...

Auckland-Wellington Meeting

Nineteen of the Auckland and Wellington CCJ leadership met on Saturday afternoon, with The Rev Jenny Chalmers in the Chair, and Fr John Pawlikowski—keynote speaker for the weekend—sitting in as advisor. After discussion, the following were agreed:

- To set up a national email group to improve communications
- To further development of the NZCCJ website
- To circulate a draft national CCJ charter for discussion
- That *Massah* might reflect local context, rather than overseas material easily accessible on the internet, with input from both Auckland and Wellington
- To investigate starting a CCJ in the South Island
- That Wellington should continue its idea of expanding to become an "Abrahamic faiths" organisation (Christian/Jewish/Muslim) while Auckland remains committed to Jewish-Christian relations, at the same time valuing its annual meeting with the Auckland Council of Christians and Muslims
- At Fr John Pawlikowski's suggestion, and as a way of contributing to the wider world of Jewish-Christian relations, there might be a regional discussion around the Twelve Points of Berlin. (This possibility is currently under discussion between the NZCCJ and the Australian Council of Christians and Jews.)

Wider Conference

For the around fifty-five participants, it all began with a "meet and greet" over drinks on late Saturday afternoon. The Rev Darryl Milner offered thanks for the gathering and the meal, which was enjoyed in the College Dining Hall—its oak panelling and oil paintings unselfconsciously redolent of those in Oxford and Cambridge. International teacher, author and raconteur, Mona Williams, entertained us and gave us something to think about with word-picture stories from her younger years.

Conference participants swelled to around ninety the following Sunday morning. Fr John Pawlikowski, for over forty years a leading figure in Jewish-Christian relations, gave the keynote address (the lead article in this issue of *Massah*), and Professor Paul Morris of Victoria University of Wellington responded.

After lunch, and further thought-provoking input from Mona Williams, there was a panel discussion around all that had been said earlier, which was then opened up for questions and discussions from the Conference floor.

Some found the formal presentations of the Conference somewhat "dry". Others thought this was redeemed by the generous and candid informal responses of both main speakers to often hard-edged questions from the floor, especially around contemporary issues related to Jewish-Christian relations.

With the exception of one or two who queried why the main addresses were scheduled on a Sunday morning when they could not be there, organisers received effusive feedback saying how well everything had gone.

"To be continued", we feel sure...



News and Notes

Auckland

July 2-3, 2010

Auckland enjoyed hosting the first national CCJ conference—see report opposite.

August 22, 2010

At our annual Council of Christians and Jews/ Council of Christians and Muslims gathering, Anthony Hart in word and song told us about the Jewish festival that meant most to him, as did Bishop Ross Bay from a Christian perspective, and Gul Zaman from a Muslim perspective.

October 12, 2010

In the final public meeting for the year, Ann Gluckman and Kathryn Schollum held us spell-bound with stories of their Jewish and Christian forbears. A review of Ann's book appears earlier in this issue of *Massah*.

October's joint Jewish/Christian/Muslim public study of sacred text on the *Akedah* (*The Binding of Isaac*) was attended by over two hundred people which quite took us by surprise (see report on page 8 of this issue of *Massah*).

Shortly after the study we were privileged to lunch with John Battle, the former MP for West Leeds and Tony Blair's advisor on Interfaith matters. John Battle impressed us with his understanding of the reality of interfaith dialogue, rather than, as he said, 'a pleasant afternoon of tea and samosas'.

The Wellington CCJ made a financial contribution to help with the expenses of the Schechita case and are pleased that Schechita killing in New Zealand has partially been resolved. Finally the Wellington CCJ wishes all *Massah* readers Hag Hanukah Sameach, and best wishes for an excellent Christmas and a prosperous new year.



Wellington

Although the Wellington Council seem to have had a quiet year, when we look back, steady progress has been made. We welcomed the Rev Dr Godfrey Nicholson, Vicar of St Peters Willis St and Father Aprem Pithyou of the Syrian Orthodox church to our core group membership during the year. Sultan Eusoff of the Federation of Islamic Associations of New Zealand continues to make a quiet invaluable contribution to the core group and to our Bible studies.

In October, Rabbi David Alima, of the Wellington Hebrew Congregation has joined us from Israel.

We decided in June that we would meet regularly at 10am on the second Thursday in the month and that our meetings would begin with, and we hoped would largely be, the joint study of sacred text. This had led to lively discussions, not only of the text!

Postcards from Tikums

A Family Detective Story

Ann Gluckman
David Ling Publishing
ISBN 978-1-877378-45-4
255 x 190mm, 288pp, full colour, paperback

Auckland Libraries hold multiple copies. Visit <http://www.elgar.govt.nz>

To buy, visit Wheelers Books Remuera or order online at www.thenile.co.nz

Times and Seasons

Holy days for this calendar year

Jewish

5771

Purim	March 19
Pesach	April 19-26
Yom HaShoah	April
Shavuot	June 7-9
Tisha B'av	August 8

5772

Rosh Hashanah	September 29
Yom Kippur	October 8
Sukkot	October 12
Simchat Torah	October 19
Chanukah	December 20-28

Christian

2011

Ash Wednesday	March 9
Palm/Passion Sunday	April 17
Good Friday	April 22
Easter Day	April 24
Ascension Day	June 2
Day of Pentecost	June 12
Trinity Sunday	June 19
All Saints	November 1
All Souls	November 2
Advent Sunday	November 27
Christmas Day	December 25

MASSAH
מסע
JOURNEY