

P R E F A C E

A new pattern of relationship between Jews and Christians is emerging in the State of Israel, where the age-long situation of a Jewish minority living in the midst of a vast Christian majority has been exactly reversed. Now forming an independent majority society, many Jews are taking a fresh look at a whole range of issues and situations, and Christians in Israel are also viewing certain things differently. The outside world is not unaware of the changes taking place, and shows a considerable interest in current developments and a desire for reliable information. However, much of the relevant literature published in Israel is inaccessible to readers elsewhere because it is written in Hebrew.

As far as developments in the religious-theological field are concerned, the Ecumenical Theological Research Fraternity in Israel felt that it could make a contribution towards meeting this desire for information by passing on to the Christian and academic world an account in English of recent publications in four specific fields of interest:

The Hebrew Bible
The New Testament and contemporaneous Judaism
Jewish-Christian relations, past and present
Contemporary religious life and thought in Israel.

This Fraternity is an association of Christian theologians living in Israel concerned with the study of Judaism and Christianity and their mutual relationship in the light of the establishment of the State of Israel, and of the recently intensified contact with Islam.

The Ecumenical Fraternity has decided to commence publication of "*Immanuel*", a bulletin of religious thought and research, in which emphasis is laid on presenting to an international non-Hebrew reading audience English summaries of books and articles published in the above-mentioned fields. Generally, the books are described in such a way as to convey their main thesis, while articles are summarised in more detail. In addition to descriptions and summaries, original articles are included from time to time. A middle course is being taken between a strictly scholarly and a more general presentation.

In order that the bulletin shall be as reliable as possible, the Ecumenical Fraternity has set up an Editorial Board consisting of a Jewish and a Christian scholar for each of the four rubrics, and has sought the co-operation of other institutions in Israel for the publication of the bulletin. The names of the editors and of the co-operating institutions appear on the

inside of the cover and on the front page. The summaries are prepared by appropriately qualified persons, whose names appear in the table of contents. The only criterion for inclusion of a book or article is its potential interest to our readership, and the Editorial Board does not necessarily identify itself with its contents or with opinions expressed in it.

Anyone interested in receiving a full translation of a particular article is invited to apply for this to the Editorial Board, who will try to provide such a translation at cost price, which of course varies according to the number of applications for a certain article. (In the case of books, provision of a translation would be more complicated.) The Editorial Board would also be happy to receive any comments or suggestions from readers of the bulletin.

Financially, the launching of this project has been made possible by grants from the World Council of Churches, the Institute of International Excursions in Holland, and the Netherlands Reformed Church, to whom we express our deep gratitude.

We hope that this bulletin will be of use of many theologians, scholars, church bodies, theological faculties, libraries, interfaith organisations and other interested people and institutions. May it ultimately contribute to a mutual respect and understanding between the adherents of Judaism and Christianity, which are both founded – in different ways, it is true – on the faith that human life is guided by the promise and the commandment of the Living God: Immanuel.

The Ecumenical Theological Research Fraternity
in Israel