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# Theological Observer

INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS OF 1984

## Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas

The 39th General Meeting of the S.N.T.S. (Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas) was held from August 20 through August 24 in Basel, Switzerland, at the University. It began with a business meeting on the first evening and continued for the next three days with a series of full-length main papers (the first being the presidential address of the newly inducted president, Dom J. Dupont), short main papers, and (simultaneous) short papers. In addition, each full day saw a two hour meeting of 14 seminars, with each participant choosing one seminar for the duration of the meeting, from offerings such as "Paul and Israel," "Inhalte und Probleme einer neutestamentlichen Theologie," "The Johannine Writings," "The Pseudepigrapha and the New Testament," "Textual Criticism," and the group I attended, "Symbols, Metaphors and Models in the N.T.," which dealt with Structuralism and Reader-Response Criticism. Included on the first full evening was a gala reception in the Basel Munster (Cathedral) by city and university dignitaries, and the four days concluded with an afternoon trip to a Roman site near Basel comprising Augst—a former colony of Roman veterans which flourished from 15 B.C. to 260 A.D.—and Kaiser Augst—a fortress on the Rhein which served as a bridge defense from 300 to 400 A.D. All proceeded unbelievably smoothly, and, it should be said without hesitation, this was due principally to the hard work and fine organization of Prof. Dr. and Mrs. Boe Reicke.

The highlights of the four days are almost too numerous to recount, but the following stand out: the main paper by Hans Weder (Zurich), "Gesetz und Sunde: Gedanken zu einem qualitativen Sprung im Denken des Paulus," an imaginative, illustrated-by-overhead-projector [sic!] treatment of Paul and the Law in Romans 5:12-20, which none in our circles would have disputed; the short main paper by Barbara Aland, "Die neutestamentlichen Funde auf dem Sinai," a first-hand analysis of recently discovered Biblical and lectionary manuscripts in the St. Catharine's Monastery in the Sinai (with information on new uncials 0285 and 0289); the short (simultaneous) paper by Jack Kingsbury, "The Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen in Matthew: Some Literary-Critical Observations," a sound—indeed, rather tame—narratological enquiry which elicited many heated responses, revealing that most N.T. scholars are incapable of taking the text of a Synoptic Gospel seriously as it stands, without raising questions about *Vorlagen*, Synoptic interrelationships, etc.; a display, not only of the first and second editions of Erasmus' Greek N.T., but also and especially of the Greek manuscripts which were used both in its compilation and in its corrections, along with the main short paper of H.J. de Jonge (Leiden), which argued persuasively that in 1516 Erasmus intended to produce, not a Greek edition of the N.T., but a new Latin edition, with the Greek text added to demonstrate his translation's accuracy; the short (simultaneous) paper of P. F. Beatrice (Padua), "Apollos of Alexandria and the Origins of Jewish-Christian Baptism Encratism," which argued, bizarrely, that Apollos was Paul's main opponent at Corinth, his "thorn in the flesh" in 2 Corinthians 12, and the original source of second century encratism; meeting and speaking personally with scholars who were hitherto merely names or bibliographical entries (especially rewarding was participation in a conversation between Peter Stuhlmacher and Joseph Fitzmyer on justification and the Lutheran-Roman Catholic dialogue).

Mention must also be made of a significant event which took place on the last evening of the General Meeting at the *Gemeindehaus* of the local Lutheran congre-

gation in Basel. At a small reception, the outstanding *Festschrift* edited by our own William C. Weinrich was presented by William Farmer (who was instrumental in facilitating the final stages of publication) to Prof. Dr. Bo Reicke upon his retirement from his professorial chair at the University of Basel. In attendance were (in addition to Frau Reicke, family members and Pfarrer and Frau von Schroeder) B. Metzger, J. Carmignac, F. F. Bruce, W. Rordorf, J. G. D. Dunn, B. Orchard, J. Kingsbury, G. N. Stanton, R. Fuller, and other scholars too numerous to mention. Dr. Weinrich was unable to be present and was represented, however inadequately, by this author. The next general meeting of the Society will be in Trondheim, Norway, in August of 1985.

### Society of Biblical Literature

The 1984 International Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature was held in Strasbourg, France, August 16 and 17, several days prior to the General Meeting of the S.N.T.S., which began on August 20 in Basel. This was the second international meeting of the society, an American-based organization, the first having been held in Salamanca, Spain, in 1983. In general, the meeting was of good quality and worthy of attendance. Fine papers were presented, and an opportunity was given to meet scholars known heretofore by name only. Notable lectures were: George Beasley-Murray, "John 3:3,5: Baptism, Spirit and the Kingdom of God in the Fourth Gospel," an outstanding piece of exegesis by an important participant in the Lutheran-Baptist dialogue (the paper provided a foundation of sorts for a Baptist acceptance of infant baptism); Charles Homer Giblin, "Until Times for Nations are Fulfilled (Luke 21:24c)," a sound literary analysis by a Roman Catholic theologian of Luke's version of Jesus' "Little Apocalypse" (cf. Mark 13); Joseph Blenkinsopp, "The Place of P in the Generation of the Flood Narrative," a fresh and lively presentation which revealed how standard critical theories of the Pentateuch are currently being revised; Eduard Schweizer, "Christologies after Rudolf Bultmann," a fine synthetic survey of the current theological scene.

It must be said, however, that the SBL International Meeting was not up to standards set by the General Meeting of the S.N.T.S. On the one hand, almost all papers were "simultaneous" (presented concurrently with other papers), with the result that all too frequently unpleasant choices had to be made. On the other hand, no name-tags were used, and no social activities, except for a very basic, final banquet, were arranged, so that it was quite a bit more difficult to meet the people and to discuss ideas than it was in Basel. It was also a disappointment that Kurt Aland, who was scheduled to lead the afternoon N.T. session on August 16, did not appear. No doubt, organizational improvements will be made, even at the next meeting, which is scheduled, tentatively at this time, for Amsterdam in 1985.

James W. Voelz