

Words of

I met Jacques Doukhan when I first wrote for *Shabbat Shalom*, and learned that his desire for warm and engaging dialogue between Jews and Christians was a topic of great personal as well as professional concern. The publication of this journal has helped Christians gain a richer and deeper understanding of Judaism and bridge the misunderstandings that often separate us. Moreover, my wife Margarete and I were invited to Andrews University to speak at the symposium, "Thinking in the Shadow of Hell: The Impact of the Holocaust on Theology and Jewish-Christian Relations." Dr. Doukhan and the entire Andrews faculty could not have been more gracious in their hospitality or more sensitive in their treatment of this difficult topic. Through study we can appreciate our monotheistic brothers and sisters more and more. This has been the goal of *Shabbat Shalom* from its beginning.

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Shabbat Shalom is one of the most interesting journals I have ever read. As a Christian it has helped me to better understand Judaism and Jewish history and heritage. The fact that Christians and Jewish authors are sharing themes in each issue is not so common. The fact they bring the best they can in respecting others point of view and trying to build bridges in order to help the readers to be better is a great achievement. *Shab-*

bat Shalom is offering its readers interviews with Nobel prize winners, historians, theologians, Holocaust survivors always keeping a tone of hope and peace. I want to congratulate and to thank Editor Professor Jacques Doukhan and his team for their excellent work. When I receive *Shabbat Shalom* I know I will be enriched in reading it and stimulated to make my life helpful for others and to be more sensitive to injustice and suffering.

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I first became familiar with the expression *Shabbat Shalom* as a Friday evening greeting while studying in Jerusalem years ago. Editor Dr. Jacques Doukhan has chosen that greeting for this journal devoted to fostering understanding between Christianity and other world religions, especially Judaism. It has been a good choice.

Scripture does not directly combine *Shabbat* (the day of rest) and *Shalom* (peace and wellbeing), but the two words feel comfortable with each other as soon as they are introduced. The day of rest, Sabbath, enjoys broad acceptance in our world today and expresses a longing in the hearts of

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millions for rest, freedom and fellowship. When observed carefully, this day invites individuals of all classes, every form of life, and nature itself into the divine presence. Peace represents the highest ideal of life on earth, certainly for faithful Christians, Jews and Muslims but other religions as well, and yet it occurs so sporadically. But once it comes, it overturns conflict, brings about security and leads to contentment in a new kind of realm from above, the kingdom of heaven.

So by placing these two words in juxtaposition, Shabbat and Shalom, the editor has touched a raw nerve in the life of faith, spirituality and inter-religious dialogue. He is suggesting, I believe, that the three monotheistic world religions have something important they must discuss. The oldest of these, Judaism, has supplied the two important words, Shabbat and Shalom and set the stage for conversation. The second, Christianity, brought these two words to the attention of every nation, kindred, tribe and people through the mystery of the life and death of Christ. Islam while turning in a different direction, continued to affirm monotheism and a life of piety. Saddest of all these monotheistic world religions have fought each other for millennia in the name of their one God. What will He think of us? What will we say to Him in response?

It is my hope that this journal will continue to foster dialogue centered around the two words in its name, Shabbat and Shalom. On Shabbat we take time and bend our ear, eagerly waiting for

a word from God our Creator. In Shalom God responds to us promising that His kingdom will come and inviting us to enter in peace. May that continue to be the substance of discussion in this journal.

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About five years ago I became interested in learning more about Jewish culture. Then I heard about *Shabbat Shalom* and began a subscription. What a refreshing magazine! It validates the Jewish roots of Christianity while also pointing out where fractures have occurred. *Shabbat Shalom* validates incorporating Jewish practices into today's religious life much as first-century believers did.

The magazine presents viewpoints from traditional Judaism, Messianic Judaism and Christianity. By considering all viewpoints, maybe these groups can come closer together in understanding. *Shabbat Shalom* provides a "community" which supports authentic practice and dialogue. It has been a blessing to me. May God bless the work of *Shabbat Shalom*!

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