ACPC MIDWEST CONFERENCE AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

The January Newsletter was largely devoted to initiatives both in this country and Israel on the part of religious and cultural leaders for an inclusive inter-faith -- Christian, Jewish and Muslim -- approach to Middle East peace. Our Midwest conference (Feb. 12-14) carried through on this in the program: statements from representatives of all three religions urging Middle East amity were made. We were glad to see these statements received good coverage in the Chicago newspapers. Here is the report in the Chicago Daily News (Feb. 13), reproduced in full.

CALL RELIGION KEY TO MIDEAST PEACE

Jews, Christians, Moslems Urged to Join Hands in Settlement

Man of three different faiths urged here that Jew, Christian, and Moslem join hands to cast aside the atmosphere of hate and name-calling that hangs over the explosive Middle East.

They suggest that where politicians have exploited religious differences, religion might help heal the wounds that remain sore.

Their pleas were heard at the opening session of the American Christian Palestine Committee's regional conference Thursday night in the Congress Hotel.

The speakers were Rabbi Dudley Weinberg of Milwaukee and Dr. J. Coert Rylaarsdam, professor of Old Testament theology at the University of Chicago.

The other scheduled speaker, Dr. Nasrollah Fatemi, former member of Iran's parliament and professor of social science at Fairleigh Dickinson University, could not be present. But his statement was read to the meeting by Victor Obenhaus, conference chairman and University of Chicago theologian. Dr. Fatemi was injured last Tuesday in an auto accident in New Jersey.*

Problems besetting the Middle East, said Rabbi Weinberg, must be removed from the context of accusation and put in a climate "of religious motivated love. Instead of asking which nation is wrong or who should be punished, we should ask of these nations: What is humanly needed now? In this way," the rabbi said, "the democratic impulse of Israel might someday help fertilize a rebirth of the Middle East."

In his statement, Dr. Fatemi said he believed the role of religion will be a "most vital and essential one" in the settlement of Middle East conflict.

Dr. Rylaarsdam said a settlement reached on a religious level could help Arab nations work with Israel to solve their common problems.

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*Dr. Fatemi's many friends will be glad to know that the accident was not serious and that the distinguished Iranian scholar has fully recovered from his minor injuries.