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EVANGELISCH-THEOLOGISCHE FAKULTÄT
LEHRSTUHL FÜR NEUES TESTAMENT
(SCHWERPUNKT ANTIKES JUDENTUM)



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Ihr Zeichen, Ihre Nachricht vom

Unser Zeichen

2 April 2019

Dear Jim,

Re: Tribute in Your Honor

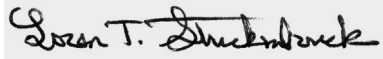
This note comes after the celebration of your career and in honor of your retirement at Princeton Theological Seminary a couple of weeks ago. I had just returned from the latest research travels to Ethiopia of February-March this year, a time in which contents of manuscripts hidden from “western” eyes could be accessed for integration into future editions of 1 Enoch and other texts with a bearing on Second Temple Judaism and earliest Christianity. Why do I begin by saying this? Well, Jim, so much of what you have carried out over five decades as my teacher lives and breathes on through me. You, more than any scholar I have known, have modelled an integrative, multi-tasking form of scholarship that involves the whole of a person’s life: you have devoted yourself to serious editing of texts (both primary texts and contributions of colleagues), written monographs that expand the horizons of academic learning, authored books that communicate research-led ideas to the interested public, reached out across religious divides, spoken to the media, engaged students at all levels in the classroom, influenced people all over the globe, and have been on the front lines of recovering primary sources (esp. Syriac, Aramaic, Hebrew, Greek) that will be studied for generations to come. It would take the combined efforts of many of our best scholars to attain the quality, quantity and breadth that you exemplify. Long after you and I, your student, have passed, your name will continue to live on, not only in memory but also in the printed and electronic word. After you, New Testament studies will not be the same.

I first met you in the summer of 1984 at a conference organized by Jacob Neusner entitled “To See Ourselves as Others See Us.” It was a summer of transition from Duke to Princeton for you. Enamored by your ability to inspire while staying close to the text, I was looking forward to taking your courses in Princeton, Little did I realize at the time what sort of a journey would follow. You pushed me not to stop short of giving my best, inspired me outside of many a comfort zone, and made it possible for me to go places and to do things – philologically, historically, and theologically – that I could only have dreamed of as a young adult. I “followed” you to places you went, some of your friends became my friends, and, most importantly, you never stopped being my teacher. In fact, your example has taught me never to disappear from students, as the “teaching” does not end with the classroom but continues through friendship and learning as long as we remain able.

Jim, buried between and underneath these lines are so many pivotal conversations. These include: your advice regarding decisions and “next steps” on numerous occasions over 35-years; that crucial chat in the midst of my despondency before the comprehensive exams; prayer before the dissertation defense; that phone conversation while deciding to move from Kiel to Durham; your gracious welcome to me as a New Testament colleague in Princeton; and your even more gracious advice and support as we decided on the move to Munich. This is not to mention times together in Israel, Tübingen, and the many meetings during the Society of Biblical Literature over the years.

Your retirement, in one sense, brings a certain sadness to me. You have never retired from learning new things, engaging in new ideas, and in seeking out that which is significant for both people of faith and those who struggle for meaning in a complex world. However, it is a phase that shall, I pray, open you up for the "new" that you have always reached for. I do not speak alone in emphasizing that in the coming years that remain, you will continue to be present just as we wish to be and remain present with you.

God bless, both you and Lea, and in the bonds that tie us together,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light gray rectangular background. The signature reads "Loren T. Stuckenbruck" in a cursive script.

Loren Stuckenbruck