

Jewish-Christian Dialogue

expands activities

The Mobile Area Jewish-Christian Dialogue will begin its fifth year by expanding its variety of activities.

THE DIALOGUE activities will start Sept. 11 at 7:30 p.m. at Spring Hill Avenue Temple with a film titled "Christians and Jews: A Troubled Brotherhood." The program is open to interested Jews, Catholics and Protestants in the Mobile area.

Those involved in the dialogue are beginning the new year of activities after a summer recess. The program is conducted each September through May.

Discussing planned changes for the upcoming year in a Press Register interview were Mary Filben and Isabel Siegal, co-directors of the dialogue, and Paul Filben, fiscal officer for the program. Mr. and Mrs. Filben are lay persons at Holy Family Catholic Church in Mobile, and Mrs. Siegal is a lay person at Spring Hill Avenue Temple.

AN ADDITION to this year's activities, according to the three dialogue leaders, is a study group. Those who sign up for this group will begin studying some basic aspects of Judaism and Christianity.

Filben said study-group participants "will visit Dauphin Street Synagogue, and they've been invited to Ashland Place United Methodist Church and perhaps others." In the beginning, those involved will "study structure and architecture and the theological meanings of these."

From that beginning, Filben said, "the group will help give direction" for its studies.

The basic study group is in addition to the already established activities of lectures and discussions of the lectures in small groups.

According to the dialogue leaders, the following are the specific options persons have for participation: lecture sessions

only; lecture sessions and discussion groups centering around the lectures; study group only; all of these listed functions.

MRS. FILBEN noted the local dialogue originated as a Catholic-Jewish project which was financially supported by the Mobile

Catholic Diocese, the Spring Hill Avenue Temple Sisterhood and Holy Family Catholic Church.

Said Mrs. Filben, "We were limited in what we could do then." However, a grant of \$2,790 during the past year from the Alabama Committee for the Humanities and the National Endowment for the Humanities is supplementing the Catholic-Jewish funds, "and with the grant we feel we can reach out to the community now," involving more participants.

Recalling the beginning of the dialogue, the three leaders noted participants met in small groups in homes for the first two years. Said Mrs. Siegal, "It was a time for saying, 'I'm OK. You're OK.' We had to learn to crawl before we could walk" in the newly established relationship.

HOWEVER, SAID Filben, "We couldn't stay in the 'OK' phase. We had to go from there." Gradually the dialogue participants moved into theology discussions, bringing national religious leaders to Mobile while also listening to local Jewish and Christian leaders.

Filben said, "This year we're trying to add issues of mutual concern" in addition to theology for the lecture sessions.

When asked on what basis the humanities grant was obtained to help support the dialogue program, Filben said activities are designed to be educational. Moreover, the dialogue centers on the "humanities — people's interaction with each other, how people live humanly together."

FURTHER INFORMATION about the dialogue is available by calling Mrs. Filben at 438-1603.