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Is Religion Out of Date?, 1959.

IS RELIGION OUT OF DATE?

How modern is the modern man.

THE TEMPLE

February 1, 1959

Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver

This weekend The Temple has been host to a Conclave of High School age young people from Reform congregations throughout our area. The theme which these students chose as the general topic of their weekend, for its lectures and its seminars, is "Religion In The Space Age", and I promised to address myself this morning to what I consider to be the most crucial challenge facing religion today. Had I had the opportunity to address the parents of these young people twenty or thirty years ago when they were this age, I should probably have chosen quite another topic. This morning I am speaking to the question, "Is Religion Out of Date?". A generation ago I should probably have spoken to the question, "Is Religion Out-dated?", and though these two questions are linguistically similar, they are radically ^{DIFFERENT} in their implications. A generation ago there was much serious discussion whether the new truths of science had not obviated and replaced the old truths of ^{FAITH} religion. Religion had ^{NOT} very little standing in many academic and intellectual circles. College life was notoriously agnostic; college chapel attendance was notoriously meager. An astute observer of the religious scene thirty years ago commented in this vein:

Everybody seems to be talking of a changing world. Religion finds itself a slow pedestrian in this cross-country race and it is irreverently jostled and knocked about and bewildered. Scientific text-books are out-dated every five or ten years. Yet the religionist is still quoting ancient religious texts and the moral opinions of orientals who lived thousands of years ago. He is made to feel as if he were still pottering vainly among the alembics, vials and retorts of medieval alchemy while the world is busily at work in the efficient laboratories of modern science. He wonders whether his race is not already run, whether his role in the world is not already played and finished.

The enthusiastic devotees of the cult of scientism a generation ago were excitedly at work writing the eulogy of the religions of the world, and the minister was constrained to address himself to these people and to remind them that the corpse was yet alive, that these eulogies were premature, and that the new learning of science, far from replacing the old axioms of faith, reinforced them and reemphasized their importance and their centrality in human thought. [#] A minister time and again in those days addressed himself to the fact that science and religion are different and yet complementary hemispheres of human thought. Science with its tools explores the nature of life; religion with its tools explores the purpose of life. Science asks "How?"; religion asks "Why?" Science describes; religion judges. Beyond every new discovery of science there lies a new mystery. Religion seeks to part the curtain which ^{VEILS} ~~explains~~ that mystery and hides it from our understanding. [#] The religionists were right in their critical evaluation of the excessive enthusiasm of these scientists. They were right to remind these men that they were behaving like the nouveau riche of ^{every} ~~many~~ ages in making overly arrogant and pretentious claims for their new standing, claims which could not be ^{SUBSTANTIATED} ~~buttressed~~ on the basis of the data of their research. The battle was fiercely joined, and ^{though} ~~probably~~ neither of the contestants would then have admitted it, ~~but~~ both benefited from this debate. For science helped religion to rid its body of many of the poisons of ^{CRUDE} superstition, and ^{COARSE} fiction which had invested and infected the ecclesiastical body for many centuries. And Religion helped science to recognize that it was not divine, and that it should confine its interests and its energies to those areas of human experimentation and of intellectual adventure which were legitimately its own.

That today a minister does not have to address himself to this topic is itself ~~the~~ dramatic evidence of how much our world has changed ~~and of how much the climate of opinion in our world has moved beyond a generation ago.~~ Today the scientist is much more likely to be humble and to be cautious, to admit that both science and religion have their necessary place in life, that they both represent separate segments of the same truth. He is likely to echo in one form or another the

statement of perhaps the preeminent of all scientists, Dr. Albert Einstein, ~~that~~ "science without religion is lame, ~~and~~ religion without science is blind." We have seen in this generation an increasing number of our first-rate scientists address themselves in positive terms to discussions of faith. One thinks immediately of such Nobel Prize winners as Sir James Jeans, Arthur Compton, ^{AND} Robert Milliken. One sees especially the new intellectual vitality in religion when one visits a college campus. Chapel attendance is far from being vestigial remnants of an archaic past -- they are now fairly well attended. Religious emphasis weeks are important centers and foci of activity and of interest in college life. Religious philosophers of the standing of Martin Buber and Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul Tillich are treated with respect in once wholly secular courses of philosophy. A wave of interest has surged over the sea of indifference, and if the collegian is not apt to have wholly accepted the theological principles of any one religion or of any one denomination, he is much more likely than his parents to have accepted the importance of religion in his life and to be searching within the areas of religious discussion for meaning, for understanding. And as religion in our age has grown in intellectual stature, it has also grown in organizational vitality. One of the outstanding features of American life in this decade has been the amazing growth of religious institutions. In the quarter century between 1926 and 1950 our population grew by 28.6 per cent. In the same quarter century those who were religiously affiliated grew in number by 59.8 per cent. In 1950 some eighty-five million Americans, representing 57 per cent of our population, were affiliated with churches or synagogues. Six years later, in 1956, one hundred and ten million Americans were affiliated, representing sixty-five per cent of our population. And three years ago a survey conducted by the Public Opinion Research Council uncovered the fact that only five per cent of the American population considered itself wholly outside of any religious identification. The sociologists and those who take from time to time the pulse of the American way of life have on the basis of these statistics spoken of what they call a "religious renaissance". And I think we can see it all about us, in the mush-

rooming of new congregations, in the growth of new houses of worship, in the swelling membership rolls of established congregations. We can see it in the fact that religious architecture has become an important and economically successful sub-specialty of the building industry. Religious art and religious music have gained in creative power. In 1956 seven of the ten non-fiction best sellers dealt with religious themes. In the last ten years religious publishing houses have multiplied their output twenty times. And even in our national life, our stamps, our coins, even our Pledge of Allegiance have suddenly sported religious mottoes. There is a new vitality, a new exuberance to the life of religion in America, and a preacher would be laboring the obvious were he to ask the question ~~this morning~~, "Is religion out-dated?"

But it is quite another thing to say that a man of faith is satisfied with the position of faith of this year. He sees about him a reawaking of interests in spiritual things, but he wonders aloud whether there is depth, there are real roots, firm roots, to this new interest. Religion speaks of God, he knows. He knows that there is no way to measure the belief of those who have joined the churches and synagogues of America, and he knows also that this is certainly true - that the discipline of public worship is no more a regular and accepted discipline in this age of religious revival than it was in another age of so-called religious indifference. He knows that religion speaks of right and wrong and espouses a definite code of "do"s and "don't"s. And he wonders aloud why it is that this age of religious revival has not seen some interruption in the ^{rising} curve which is ~~steadily rising~~ of crime and of delinquency, of alcoholism, of marital infidelity. He knows that religion is concerned with the relationships between men and men much more than with the acquisition by men of things. And he wonders aloud why it is that this age of religious revival has not seen a turning away on the part of the American people from their preoccupation with leisure and with luxury, from occasional charity to lives of service and lives of dedication.

Now of course he realizes in making this observation that there is a paradox

at the very heart of this religious renaissance. And it is this: religion has gained in popularity, but the things that religion stands for -- worship, study of values, the discipline of prayer, a social vision, justice and righteousness -- these things have not gained in popularity. Such an astute observer as Mr. Will Herberg in his important bit of social history, the volume "Protestant, Catholic and Jew", made these observations of religion today:

The religious situation in the United States confronts us with a perplexing problem. The fact of a religious revival in America cannot be gainsaid. Barbara Ward noted in her recent "Report to Europe on America", (and he quotes here) "We did not need the evidence of polls or church attendance to confirm what we could so easily observe -- the walls of new churches rising in town and country-side wherever we went." ~~(end of quote)~~. Miss Ward's impression is fully borne out by the available evidence. Whether we judge by religious identification, church membership, or church attendance, whether we go by the best-seller lists, the mass media, or the writings of intellectuals, the conclusion is the same: there is every sign of a notable "turn to religion" among the American people today.

And yet, writing not much before Miss Ward's visit, a perceptive historian of America noted that at the mid-twentieth century, "the trend toward secularism of ideals was not reversed". Professor Oscar Handlin can find as much evidence for his conclusion as Miss Ward for hers, though the secularism to which he referred is not something that can be pointed out as obviously as Miss Ward's evidences of a religious revival. The secularism dominating the American consciousness is not an overt philosophy: it is an underlying, often unconscious, orientation of life and thought. Because it is so pervasive and omnipresent, it is hard to put one's finger on it. And yet perhaps something of what it implies may be suggested by a startling contrast. When Ignazio Silone, the Italian writer and Socialist, was asked what he felt to be the "most important date in universal history", he replied unhesitatingly: "The twenty-fifth of December in the year zero." But when nearly thirty outstanding Americans were asked not long ago to rate the hundred most significant events in history, first place was given to Columbus' discovery of America, while Jesus, his birth and crucifixion, came fourteenth, tied with the discovery of the X-ray and the Wright brothers' first plane flight. Silone is no orthodox Christian, yet it is evident that he takes his Christianity seriously in a way that the eminent American historians, educators, and journalists, who forgot all about Jesus in listing significant events in history, obviously do not. The secularism that pervades the American consciousness is essentially of this kind: it is thinking and living in terms of a framework of reality and value remote from the religious beliefs simultaneously professed.

In the five years from 1949 to 1953 the distribution of Scripture in the United States increased 140 per cent, reaching an all-time

high of 9,726,000 volumes a year. People were apparently buying and distributing the Bible at an unprecedented rate. Furthermore, over four fifths of the adult American population said they believed that the Bible was the "revealed word of God", rather than merely a "great piece of literature". Yet when these same Americans were asked to give the "names of the first four books of the New Testament, that is, the first four gospels", 53 per cent could not name even one. The Bible can hardly be said to enter into the life and thought of Americans quite as much as their views on its divine inspiration and their eagerness to buy and distribute it might suggest.

This is at least part of the picture presented by religion in contemporary America: Christians flocking to church, yet forgetting all about Christ when it comes to naming the most significant events in history: men and women valuing the Bible as revaluation, purchasing and distributing it by the millions, yet apparently seldom reading ~~it~~ the Bible themselves. Every aspect of contemporary religious life reflects this paradox -- pervasive secularism amid mounting religiosity, "the strengthening of the religious structure in spite of increasing secularism." The influx of members into the churches and the increased readiness of Americans to identify themselves in religious terms certainly appears to stand in contrast to the way Americans seem to think and feel about matters central to the religions that they profess.

Now certainly no minister or rabbi would be unprepared to enter a demurrer to this observation. Every one of us knows intimately men and women who have not only enrolled themselves and undertaken the financial the social obligations of church life, who have undertaken at the same time to abide by the disciplines of morality and of worship which faith demands. And yet each of us also knows that our membership rolls are swollen with the numbers of those to whom religious ideals are superficial and religious values quite peripheral. After all, such members are easy to identify. They are those who send their children to the religious school but themselves remain at home in bed. They are those who pay their dues to the Temple office but pay little heed to the office of the Temple pulpit. They are those who observe the sacred occasions of the religious year as holidays and not as holy days. They are those who expect a religious institution to serve them in their every personal need but neglect to serve the ideals which the tradition espouses. I do not quarrel with these men and women, ~~with these members~~. A religionist quickly knows that in matters of faith patience is both a virtue and a necessity. I would far rather have these people, ^{lending} at least their financial support

to the good work of temple or church, and I would far rather have them at least occasionally be exposed to a religiously oriented occasion than completely apart and separate from these. I pray that they may recognize that religious obligation cannot be discharged by quarterly payments through checks. And yet these people represent a challenge. They are our challenge. They have not yet been spiritually sensitized, and it is the task of the man of faith and of the church which represents his faith to reach these people and to enlighten them and to enthrall them and to educate them and to inspire them.

No, my quarrel today is not with the members who have joined the church or synagogue for a variety of seemingly peripheral reasons, but it is with the synagogue itself and with the church itself. For all too often in this day and age, the church and synagogue which should represent to the community and to these individuals the central, core values of a tradition fail to do so. All too often in this day and age church and synagogue are preoccupied with the trivial, with the wholly social, with the mundane, and they seem to be to the communities not places of faith, houses of worship, houses of prophecy, but houses of society and houses of fellowship and houses of entertainment. I am deeply disturbed when a young confirmand of our Temple who is now in the service comes to visit me on his leave and tells me that his military training is drawing to a close and that he has been much troubled by questions of direction in his life; he is not sure of the vocation he wishes to follow; he is not sure of the values by which he wishes to gauge his life activity. And when he tells me that, troubled, one day he determined to turn to the synagogue to find there an hour of quiet refreshment of spirit in which to think profoundly and deeply on this problem, and to find there the companionship of serious-minded men and women with whom he could perhaps verbalize, and to whom he could verbalize this problem. This young man tells me that he went to the synagogue in the town nearest to his base, and true, he found there an hour of worship, and he found inspiration and quiet and refreshment of spirit in that worship. And after the service he went up to one of the elders of the synagogue

and he asked him whether or not it was possible to join a young people's group in the congregation which was discussing problems of faith, problems of religion, problems of purpose in life. And he was told, "Yes, there is such a group. This week they are sponsoring a hay-ride, next month they are sponsoring a sleigh-ride. They leave matters of faith to the pulpit. They themselves do not concern themselves with discussion and debate of serious subjects." Now there are many times in his life when this young man would have welcomed these diversions, but not that day. He had turned to the place of God, the synagogue, where one might legitimately expect to find serious people and serious thought, and instead he had found the synagogue preoccupied with the light of heart and the light-headed.

I am disturbed as I see a reawakening of interest in the scientists and the intellectual leaders of our age in matters of faith, ^{AND} for when I find equally that the leaders of the intellectual life of America cannot express their faith adequately through many of the traditional institutions of faith. Einstein was a profound man of religion, and yet he spent most of his mature life trying to create a new cosmic religion -- he could not express himself satisfactorily through the institution of the synagogue. I am disturbed when I read the spiritual autobiography of a Professor Walter Kaufman, a biography which ^{WAS PUBLISHED RECENTLY} ~~all of you can read in this month's~~ ⁱⁿ ~~issue~~ of Harper's Magazine. Professor Kaufman calls it "The Faith of a Heretic", but he is no heretic. He believes in God. He believes in the spiritual ordering of this universe, he believes in spiritual values as the basic commandments of a personal life. Born a Protestant, he ~~quickly~~ ^{MYTHOLOGY} outgrew the Christian myth and was deeply attracted to Judaism ^{because of} ~~with~~ its purity of doctrine and its ideal of prophecy. But he found such a separation between the practice of the synagogue and the pronouncements of the prophets that he has never been able to satisfactorily adjust himself to membership in any synagogue, and he calls himself therefore, a self-styled heretic. I am disturbed when Professor Y. Milton Yinger of Oberlin University, in his important new study "Religion, Society, and the Individual", makes this observation:

The "return to religion" can be understood only by noting the simultaneous secularization by the church. What one returns to is an institution which makes few credal demands. It has been so secularized that to join many middle class churches is not sharply different from joining Kiwanis.

I am disturbed that the institutions of faith are not oriented to express the basic ideals of faith to those who seek faith.

What will happen to a man of sensitivity, a serious-minded man, who turns to the Church for moral guidance, for enlightenment as to the basic purpose in life, and finds that his church is embroiled in a lobbying battle for such a spiritual necessity as legalized bingo? What will happen to a sensitive, serious-minded man who is seeking to understand his relationships to God and to the universe, who wants to find out answers to the hundred questions which confound him and which confuses him, and turns to the churches and to the synagogues of our land and finds that outside of the discipline of public worship eighty per cent of the activity which takes place within temple and synagogue walls has no greater purpose in mind than that of sheer entertainment?? I am afraid that all too often the institutions of faith, far from encouraging the search for faith, repel and discourage those who are eager to find new meaning and new understanding for their lives.

I would commend to all of you a philosophy and a platform which we at The Temple adopted thirty years ago. We have not always been faithful, wholly faithful, but to this platform, ~~for~~ we have always gauged our activity according to its standard, and perhaps that measure of standing which we have gained in the lives of our congregants and our community can be in large measure attributed to this gauge. The leaders of our congregational life wrote then:

We hope to serve our people not less but more in those reaches of human life where a religious institution can best serve in fulfillment of its historic function and essential genius. The Temple cannot be all things to all men, but it can be and should be a place of inspiring worship, of religious education, of ethical guidance, and of Jewish sanctity to all members of the Jewish community.

We must gauge our influence not by the noise and bustle of multifarious and largely unfruitful activities which may be carried on within the Temple precincts, but by the readiness of men and women to turn to the Temple for the things of the spirit and by their eagerness to share in the larger life of Jewish responsibilities and human idealism.

A synagogue, a church, cannot gauge its success wholly by its popularity. Its success can only be gauged by its ability to translate the traditions, the values, the ideals, the aspirations which are fundamental to its teaching in a way which can be committed to its members, its community, and to the world.

Religion is not out of date. Religion will never be out of date -- in a mechanical age, or in the Space Age, or in whatever age will succeed this one. But the religions as we know them today may be out-dated, unless they succeed in so transforming the nature of their congregational activities. That in addition to the programs of fellowship, they develop and refine programs of exultation, of education, of commitment -- programs which can teach the individual and help the individual to understand the moral nature of this universe and the moral obligations of his life.

This is our challenge, the basic challenge which confronts religion as it stands on the threshold of the space age. Is religion out of date? It may be, and it will be unless you and I together so define the basic purpose of our organizational life that we express to those who seek direction, who seek guidance, and who seek inspiration, the direction and the guidance and the inspiration which Judaism has to teach.

Amen.

The Temple this included in host to a regional conference of high school age young people from the reform congregations in this area. & then for these lectures and seminars was scheduled close to general topic "Religion in The Space Age". I promised to address myself to what I consider the most crucial problem confronting religion today. - Such is the background of my question title "Is Religion Out of Date?"

had been added been given before a similar concern of the kind of those
Young people 20-30 years ago - my subject would have taken another form. I
should in all probability have to pose not to the question "Is Religion Out of Date?"
but to the question "Is Religion Outdated" - a question which ^{linguistically} ~~isn't~~ quite similar
~~inward~~ ^{however} is radically different in implication.

generation ago there were much more serious discussion in schools, the new books of
science had not ~~invaded~~ ^{been} and replaced the ancient ^{classics} of fables. Religion
had in those days ^{but little} ~~any influence~~ steadily in many intellectual and academic circles.
College life was ~~not~~ ^{quite} ~~uninteresting~~ ^{uninteresting}. College travel attendance was
notorious means.

The intellectual mood of the age was one of doubt, verges on denial. Within 30 years eyes are elsewhere.

Kaddish

Friday JAN 26
Sunday Feb. 1

Those who passed away this week
BARNEY COGAN

Vahrzeitz

CHARLES J. WEIL
THEPESA R. STEINER
SARAH STERN MICHAEL
JEFF RANDALL
MORRIS WOODLE
THERESA SILBERBACH
KATIE FISHER COHEN
JENNIE WEINGART
GERTRUDE GOLDBERG
ANNE J. KANE
EVA B. ROSEWATER
THEODORE T. SINDELL
SAMUEL BAER

In our day religion's ecology is a really daring proposal by
doctors of the new religion. A miracle was repeatedly witnessed to
show that the ecology was decidedly premature and that the new
ecology had not outdistanced the old.

Agassi and again ministers reminded the audience that religion and
science were complementary but distinct separate hemispheres of
human thought. Science seeks to know the nature of things. Religion
seeks to know the purpose of things. Science asks "How", Religion
asks "Why". Science describes, Religion judges. Beyond science there is
always mystery and it is the mystery of God which religion
tries to point.

And these ministers and rabbis were right, ^{and Time has shown that} ~~science is the~~ ^{science is the} ~~scientific method~~ ^{scientific method} ~~is not~~ ^{is not} ~~unlike~~ ^{unlike} ~~some~~ ^{some} ~~naive~~ ^{naive} ~~ideas~~ ^{ideas} ~~which~~ ^{which} ~~are~~ ^{are} ~~so~~ ^{so} ~~overwhelmed~~ ^{overwhelmed}
by this new power and position. But they missed its privilege - under the
use of these academic men sweeping clean on the basis of their
research - their interest is far beyond the scope of their research.

Time has shown that
The exchange of ideas between scientific and religious men is mutually
advantageous. Science helped religion to show its system of the power
of many ancient fictions and superstitions which it has long outgrown
only hampers the further advancement. Religion helped the scientist
to discover himself of pretension of divinity and to see that beyond
and mystery described in other more mysterious yet still revealed.

~~Science is not a religion~~
But a guardian of the truth was formerly joined and merged
such a leader or the would have been limited to the defense of the
basic elements of faith. To do such a representative is no longer
necessary. This fact of itself is an extremely indication of the
changed climate of opinion in our intellectual life. Especially
and the fact of the religious dogmatism - much to the intellectual
more cautious and more humble. He is slow to recognize that
both science & religion have no necessary place - and neither
Christians the need of the other. He is slow to recognize that
of a mind with the preeminence of all other sciences Albert
Einstein who observed "Science without religion is lame"
Religion without science is blind.

[illegible]

The more widespread attitude of religion in the communities is provided by a new ongoing study of religion in the industrial belt. The increasing percentage of religious affiliation is one of the remarkable features of an American life. In the quarter century between 1916 and 1950 the population of our country grew to ~~59,870~~ ²¹⁶ - in the same period church and synagogue membership grew from 59,870. In 1950 there were 85 million American Jews claimed membership in some religious body. This represented 57% of the population. Just 6 years later in 1956 there were 110 million Americans representing 65% of the population - certainly a small but no doubt a record. In a poll taken 34 years ago by the Public Opinion Research Society ~~57~~ 57% of those contacted reported a decided confidence from any religious affiliation.

Comdaro said figures on the sociological and other trends of our
 mentioned people have been spreading rapidly of an American religion
 movement. That would be a social attitude in the place in modern intellectual
 movement. ~~These~~ ^{these} ~~are~~ ^{are} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~new~~ ^{new} ~~unminded~~ ^{unminded}
 by ~~and~~ ^{clear} figures ~~on~~ ^{and} ~~the~~ ^{to} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~new~~ ^{new} ~~unminded~~ ^{unminded}
 studies of sociology and. Social movement, of the multilateralism of
 language, and of the movement of human of movement. Educational
 and intellectual have become a political building of people. Religion

~~These~~ and also by the more immediate

pulchresty house have increased six hundred 20 tons in the last 10 years.
 In 1856 209 @ 10 million half dollars were on silver base. Religious
 art and religious music are enjoying extraordinary. ^{Religious} ^{Notes} religious plays
 and other musical of - B has been one who has certainly ^{not} ^{been} ^{you}
 knowling person. There are changes & coming - must be maintain our place
 of allegiances - have began to speak religious notes.

[illegible][illegible]

But have translated by another problem: 14-15 and religion is to-day an accepted position in our national life - but the question of the modern man has been answered in our hands and hands have left the same time and called for the principles of the good and the good.

Religion is needed by all - of a good religion because it can make the
inward man to all and also good upon him - and one can measure the
value of their character by the number of members - but especially the
discrepancy between public worship and the more common is the
lack of religion - and the more it is a person's age.

Redemption a matter of a moral law - a definite note of death & death - itself
 the very of religious nature has not been very understood in
 the super and sense of definition, of course, of calculation, & of
 financial infidelity.

1. Neglect of the duties of men to man and not even for themselves
 2. too desire of men for things - yet an eye is still largely on the
 3. of convenience and material preoccupations and distractions
 4. occasional duties, the average person needs help and
 5. of himself in the help and contemplation of his community
 and often himself.

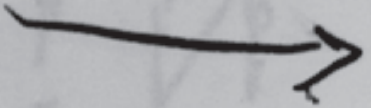
There is a per-son at the very heart of the religious movement.
 The church is popular but the church's discipline and teaching are not.
 In a most interesting study of the contemporary religious situation in our
 country Mr. Will Bradley made ^{an} ~~an~~ ^{excellent} ~~excellent~~ ^{discovery}



Amos distended when a confused of the Temple when is now in
the same nearly come to me, this military obligation was
bringing to a close. Many question referred him - almost a crowd
of help made - almost the whole the needed to play on the adult
world. Also as many ^{young} boys & his age leaves confused. He understood
the refusing guide of unknown of things in which I to stand and
be independent if others were around and thoughtful
standing and similar problem. He found to be appropriate in the
town near his home. He found the quiet and peace which he sought
in that journey - and it was - but when he called after the service
under the same a young people group under and discussed
questions of religion and of justice - he discussed and was understood
and a group - and the whole day was opening a new chapter
of life and not world a bandance but that the group
discussed deliberation of moral and justice to the people -

There was many occasions when the young men would come
understand and discussion. But that night - at his house - the
necessity of that age to go for further directed him, the reason
in the age to go for the same consideration of similar men in answer
thought - he found under that the main interest of the age to go
now for the discipline and the discipline.

From his house to the Professor Y. under the Order
Change in a new world was the Religion, the way, the
Discipline. Just understood to discuss



It would appear to me essential that a Church or synagogue should represent to the community the values which it holds dear. What must a series of men and of the same value it is a Church today which promises for and a spiritual renewal of degraded beings.

Fortunately few churches and synagogues are so closely materialistic - with it appears one understands that many churches & synagogues have not developed programs of study and program of activity which reflect the teachings of their faith and faith.

~~Churches and synagogues~~

~~Churches and synagogues~~

Fellowship has its place in a house of God - but I don't say that membership should be made a condition of all who enter the house and indeed activities are taking place within the confines of a house of God are purely of a social nature and have no other purpose but to entertain - and I don't say that many of these activities could have taken place just as well at a variety of other community institutions.

~~Churches and synagogues~~

I would commend to all churches & synagogues a platform and program and a broadened horizon has been built to our congregational life for the past 30 years. We have not always been widely justified to the platform - but its against is high standard that we have measured all our activities

I pray that the Church & Synagogue of our land may be equal to the challenge of the atomic age of the atomic age of the atomic age

Challenge of relevancy which the Jewish people, men & women must place against them. May these activities be conducted with a purpose and a purpose in mind and not merely popularity - may our religious institutions again appear to our people as significant and essential to the spirit of the Jewish people which seek faith and faith.

"We hope", ~~we stated in that program~~, "to serve our people not less but more in those reaches of human life where a religious institution can best serve in fulfillment of its historic function and essential genius. The Temple cannot be all things to all men, but it can be and should be a place of inspiring worship, of religious education, of ethical guidance, and of Jewish sanctity to all members of the Jewish community."

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 WRHS
 AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES
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Yet perhaps something of what it implies may be suggested by a startling contrast. When Ignazio Silone, the Italian writer and Socialist, was asked what he felt to be the "most important date in universal history", he replied unhesitatingly: "The twenty-fifth of December in the year zero." But when nearly thirty outstanding Americans were asked not long ago to rate the hundred most significant events in history, first place was given to Columbus' discovery of America, while Christ's birth or crucifixion, came fourteenth, tied with the discovery of X rays and the Wright brothers' first plane flight. Silone is no orthodox Christian, yet it is evident that he takes his Christianity seriously in a way that the eminent American

RELIGION IN AMERICA: The Problem

The religious situation in the United States today confronts us with a perplexing problem. ^{and he quotes here} "The fact of a religious revival in America cannot be gainsaid", Barbara Ward noted in her recent "Report to Europe on America". ^(end of quote) "We did not need the evidence of polls or church attendance to confirm what we could so easily observe -- the walls of new churches rising in town and country-side wherever we went." Miss Ward's impression is fully borne out by the available evidence. Whether we judge by religious identification, church membership, or church attendance, whether we go by the best-seller lists, the mass media, or the writings of intellectuals, the conclusion is the same: there is every sign of a notable "turn to religion" among the American people today.

And yet, writing not much before Miss Ward's visit, a perceptive historian of America noted that at the mid-twentieth century, "the trend toward secularism in ^{Oscar} ideas was not reversed". Professor Handlin could find as much evidence for his conclusion as Miss Ward for hers, though the secularism to which he referred is not something that can be pointed out as obviously as Miss Ward's evidences of a religious revival. The secularism dominating the American consciousness is not an overt philosophy: it is an underlying, often unconscious, orientation of life and thought. Because it is so pervasive and omnipresent, it is hard to put one's finger on it.

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historians, educators, and journalists, who forgot all about ^{years} Christ in listing significant events in history, obviously do not. The secularism that pervades the American consciousness is essentially of this kind: it is thinking and living in terms of a framework of reality and value remote from the religious beliefs simultaneously professed.

In the five years from 1949 to 1953 the distribution of Scripture in the United States increased 140 per cent, reaching an all-time high of 9,726,391 ⁰⁰⁰ volumes a year. People were apparently buying and distributing the Bible at an unprecedented rate. Furthermore, over four fifths of adult Americans ^{the} said they believed the Bible ^{population} to be ^{that} the "revealed word of God", rather than merely a "great piece of literature." Yet when these same Americans were asked to give the "names of the first four books of the New Testament ~~of the Bible~~, that is, the first four gospels", 53 per cent could not name even one. The Bible can hardly be said to enter into the life and thought of Americans quite as much as their views on its divine inspiration and their eagerness to buy and distribute it might suggest.

This is at least part of the picture presented by religion in contemporary America: Christians flocking to church, yet forgetting all about Christ when it comes to naming the most significant events in history; men and women valuing the Bible as revelation, purchasing and distributing it by the millions, yet apparently seldom reading ^{the Bible} ~~it~~ themselves. Every aspect of contemporary religious life reflects this paradox -- pervasive secularism amid mounting religiosity, "the strengthening of the religious structure in spite of increasing secularization." ^{any} The influx of members into the churches and the increased readiness of Americans to identify themselves in religious terms certainly appear to stand in contrast to the way Americans seem to think and feel about matters central to the ^{religious that} ~~faiths~~ they profess.

~~The paradox is there, and it would be misleading to try to get rid of it by suppressing one or the other side of the apparent contradiction. It will not do to~~

Announcement Sunday, February 1
Everybody seems to be talking of a changing world.

Religion finds itself a slow pedestrian in this cross-country race and it is irreverently jostled and knocked about and bewildered. Scientific text-books are out-dated every five or ten years. Yet the religionist is still quoting ancient religious texts and the moral opinions of orientals who lived thousands of years ago. He is made to feel as if he were still pothering vainly among the alembics, vials and retorts of medieval alchemy while the world is busily at work in the efficient laboratories of modern science.

He wonders whether his race is not already run, whether his role in the world is not already played and finished.



Announcement: Sunday, February 1

Ask NELFTY guests remaining for lunch to remain in Temple for a short time so we can clear Social Hall of school children.

Ask guests who are leaving for the 12:34 train to report to Rooms 1 and 3 for luggage and report to parking lot immediately.

Temple Chorus - Wednesdays, 8:30 P.M.

