

# Report of Religious affairs - J. Lindenberg

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I would like to discuss with the members of this community, by way of this report, the precarious position of our religious affairs.

You may therefore know that although we have minyonim every Friday night, the attendance is very poor.

Our Rabbi who is conducting the Friday night services, has introduced new prayer songs and English reading for community participation, his sermons are interesting, but, many times he is compelled to cut short the services and relinquish the sermon because, ~~many times~~ we don't get started before 9.45 and most of us want to be home around 10 o'clock or shortly after.

Yohrzeit services are fairly well attended, but also in this field I notice a repetition of the old Pinnacle Street Shul mode, sort of a favour in attending.

Generally speaking there is a discontentment amongst the few \* who attend the Friday night services regularly ~~and the same applies~~ to your chairman of religious affairs and to your executive.

Judging by the number of male adults in this community, that is from the age of 13 upward, we should have no difficulties in getting 25 men every Friday night, yet, there are times that we have to telephone the 8th, 9th, and 10th. person to help us out with a minyon., and now with a few of our steady attenders going south, the situation will become more critical, to the point where we might have no services at all.

The executive is well aware of this situation and has investigated the possibility of changing the time of the Friday night services. A letter went forward to all members with a questionnaire at the bottom of the letter, asking to indicate which time is ~~better~~ more suitable 7.15 or 9.15? The answers that I received were the majority for 9.15.

The executive is also presently engaged in obtaining clarification as to a change in the mode of services. Data is being gathered, the Rabbi's views have been presented to the executive and further study is pending. At the moment I am not prepared to say whether a recommendation for a change will be forthcoming, but my guess is that even a complete change will be adopted, the attitude of our members will not change.

So you can notice that we have a problem of what to do, to interest our members in our religious affairs and mainly with their attendance. When this edifice was planned our members pledged that upon completion they will make good use of the modern facilities and convenience of the new Shul, embracing every phase of our activities including of course the religious side. Can every one honestly say that you have fulfilled your obligations to this Shul? Sure we have a nice Chaidar and the children are comfortable, furthermore it's convenient for the Ladies Auxiliary to meet here and make use of the modern kitchen facilities but the main thing - the Chapel - the house of prayers has been sadly neglected and a remedy must be found -- must be found before it's too late.

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I therefore want to conclude my observations by recommending a new approach---that we try education. We have tried every other thing, why not education?

I firmly believe that through education we will realize that

- 1) Prayer is a part of our Jewish and spiritual life, that
- 2) No one can dispense with prayers altogether, that
- 3) Our traditional prayers are a powerful force for developing Jewish consciousness and loyalty, that
- 4) We must find at least one period in the week for worship with the community of Israel, with whom we hold a kinship in hope and ideals as well as in blood, and that
- 5) The Synagogue with its prayers and aspirations is the most important institution in Jewish life today, devoted to the perpetuation of Israel as a distinctive people

That Mr. President is my firm believe., If properly presented to us, it might be one of the best solution to our problem., at least I hope so

If I was a politician and seeking re-election, I would stop right here to leave you with an impression that everything is all right,, that everyone of you are doing ~~in~~ your duties as required of you, but, the truth of the matter is, and speaking now as a none candidate for any office, that I am compelled to bring my observation to your attention.

1. We were and are to this minute constitutionally an Orthodox Congregation.
- 2 This edifice was build and believe me that I have the highest regard for it was build for the purpose of perpetuating Orthodoxy--the new building was suppose to be a stimulant to membership to attend services in this mode of praying
3. When we chose a Rabbi, the committee is instructed to look for an Orthodox Rabbi, (excuse me a modern orthodox Rabbi, what a modern Orthodox Rabbi means outside of being clean shaven and clean dressed, I <sup>will</sup> have to be told.) in other words, constitutionally our achievements ~~are~~ complete, our aspirations are of the highest degree,, so that there is nothing wrong in our set up.... I think that it is a beautiful garment, nicely designed and tailored, with a lot of expensive trimmings,-----but it is so big that we cannot find any one that this garment fits. *none of us are orthodox*

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I ~~am~~ in Belleville for 25 years and I know all the members and I have yet to find an orthodox member,, yet when we speak about a truly modern change in our constitution every one objects, Why?

I think that most members have the wrong conception what Conservatism is it seems that we are afraid that under any other mode of praying we and our children will cease to be good Jews. Many of us think that under conservatism we will be permitted to eat Chazer. It is not so, conservatism is only a step in the modern direction ., where the Rabbi will be conducting the services palatable to our congregation, where each member will ~~be to~~ partake in the services, and will not be kept in a cloak of mysticism

There sure are a lot of misconceptions and misinterpretations among our members in the difference between one mode or another, but a careful analysis will certainly point to, that we are due for a change, that we should instruct the incoming executive to discuss intelligently the problem of our religious affairs and bring their recommendations to the meetings of the congregation.

*Re Friday night  
service 'Time'*