

A Rabbinic Perspective *By Rabbi Seymour Rosenbloom*

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“Truthful Faith, Faithful Practice” Recruiting Searchers



On the second day of *Rosh HaShanah*, I spoke about what it means to be a congregation, and the challenges that we face as a Conservative synagogue, challenges faced by all members of our Movement today.

The recently published Jewish Population Study is not encouraging news for the Conservative Movement. Many of our members are gravitating to Orthodoxy; many more to Reform. Where the Movement was once

the largest in America, it is now surpassed in numbers by Reform, and, in numbers of young children, by Orthodoxy.

As a rabbi, I continue to lead the synagogue to encourage greater adherence to the tenets of our faith, and greater involvement. But I know exactly how Dr. Ismar Schorsch, Chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America and spiritual leader of the Conservative Movement, feels when he recently wrote, “The modern day rabbi ha[s] become little more than a desperate lobbyist for a Judaism in contraction.” But my colleagues and I did not become rabbis to be desperate lobbyists for a losing cause. We became rabbis to be guides for those who want to walk the path of Judaism with us, and whose passionate commitment will secure our Jewish future. You probably know the automobile commercial whose tag line is “Drivers wanted!” Well, my call is “Searchers wanted.”

I am looking for people who believe that Judaism is, or could be, a meaningful part of their lives, who are searching for spiritual meaning through Judaism, who know they do not have all the answers, and may not even be sure they are on the right road. But they are willing, even eager, to talk about their faith and practice with others who similarly care.

In that vein, I am starting a new seminar series titled “Truthful Faith, Faithful Practice.” We will begin with a session on Sunday morning, October 31, 2004, from 9:45 to 11:15 AM. This opening session will be subtitled “A New *Mahzor* for an Eternal Faith and Evolving People.” Our prayerbooks are the books of Jewish theology *par excellence*. In considering the changes and innovations in the *Mahzor*, we will begin a journey of exploring our faith in a truthful way.

The discussions will continue on biweekly Thursday evenings, beginning on November 4, 2004, and continuing on November 18, December 2 and 16, 2004, from 8:00 to 9:15 PM each evening, following minyan which begins at 7:30 PM.

After the first session, the agenda will be open. I expect we will talk about belief, how we came by it, what we are not sure of, and how we clarify what we can believe. After that, who knows? I hope we will move on to what we can do, because practice is vital to implementing our faith.

Enrollment is open, but I would appreciate advance registration. Just call the office and leave a message for me that you would like to attend, or send an e-mail to rabbirosenbloom@adathjeshurun.info with “Truthful Faith, Faithful Practice” in the subject line.

I look forward to our searchers identifying themselves and journeying with me.

CONGREGATION
ADATH JESHURUN



7763 Old York Road
Elkins Park, PA 19027
215.635.6611
www.adathjeshurun.info