

*Lifted*

By RABBI SAMUEL SILVER

Do you read something occasionally that just lifts you out of your seat? I did recently.

It is a statement by a former president of a temple, Rodeph Shalom of Philadelphia.

Donald Bean told his fellow-congregants that it is the function of religion to spiritualize the life of society.

This means, he pointed out, that religion must mix in with politics, if our world is to survive.

There are some, Mr. Bean said, who feel that synagogues should not get involved in the issues of the day.

"For the church in Germany to have taken a stand against the crematoria would have been to take a stand on a political matter, but can there be any doubt that it was a matter of morality and therefore of religion?"

In our land today, callousness and Calleyism threaten to brutalize us, warns Mr. Bean. Hence, we need the synagogue, "the only institution in Jewish life whose primary role is religion."

Mr. Bean urges his people actively to make their sentiments felt on important matters. He tells a story about an old priest who chided a younger one for his participation in activities on behalf of racial equality, saying to him,

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"Why didn't you go into the chapel and pray?"

Praying must be accompanied, Mr. Bean reminds us, with deeds for ethical amelioration.

True, Mr. Bean concedes, some people get religious instruction and still are coarse and cruel, because "the teachings didn't rub off."

So we should try the harder, because, "The church and the synagogue are the only institutions in our society which have as their major purpose the teaching of human values."

And, the speaker concludes, "That sort of teaching was never needed more than today."

NEW YORK--Jerry Goodman, a specialist in Soviet Jewish Affairs, will assume the position of Executive Director of the American Jewish Conference on Soviet Jewry as of August 16, it was announced by Richard Maass, Chairman of the Conference.

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