

FORTUNE

Time & Life Building, Rockefeller Center, New York, New York 10020

Editorial Department

August 24, 1969

Rabbi Norman Lamm
The Jewish Center
131 West 86 Street
New York, N. Y.

Dear Rabbi Lamm:

Henry Siegman has told me that you have agreed at least to think about his invitation to join me in co-chairing the new Commission on Youth which Henry and I would like to establish for the Synagogue Council. I am delighted that you are considering it, and would like to add my urgent plea that you reach an affirmative decision.

I can readily appreciate your reluctance to take on any added responsibilities; I myself will not be able even to think about the Commission until December, because I am in the throes of finishing a book. But I do not know of anything the Synagogue Council could do that would be more important for the survival of a meaningful American Judaism.

There are a lot of stirrings, on the campus and elsewhere, among young and frequently rather alienated young Jews, who are searching for ways to identify themselves as Jews -- such things as RESPONSE Magazine, the Chavurat Shalom and various groups growing out of it in the Boston area, Hebrew House at Oberlin, the National Jewish Organizing Project, etc. I find much of it confusing, some of it disturbing, and all of it hopeful -- hopeful, because people who a few years ago would simply have ignored Judaism, or ostentatiously rejected it, are searching for ways of relating themselves to Jewish tradition. There is a strong if sometimes erratic or misguided creative impulse here, and it seems to me to be crucial that the Jewish religious community as a whole, not just its competing sectarian subdivisions, respond in an affirmative way.

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I do hope you will say yes. We terribly much need your unique combination of scholarship, tradition, and modernity. And working with you will rekindle some happy memories of my own youth (for my money, there has never been a chazan to compare with Jasenowsky!)

With warmest regards,

Cordially,

CES

Charles E. Silberman /87
Board of Editors

Dictated but not read by
CES:gs-8/28/69

CC: Rabbi Henry Siegman