



Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations
of America

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MEMORANDUM

72

DATE: 6 Shevat 5723
January 31, 1963

TO: Rabbi Norman Lamm

FROM: Saul Bernstein

SUBJECT: Metropolitan Regional Council

The need for community-wide cohesion among orthodox congregations in the Metropolitan area is and has long been obvious; I don't believe it is necessary for me to demonstrate the need to you. Also obvious is the fact that the development of a Metropolitan inter-synagogue Council, as the agency for cohesion, is a big job. I believe that within realistic limits, the job can be done, and that the present moment is timely to begin it.

Line of Approach

Ideally, the best method of organization might be to have people confer individually with key figures of leading congregations, "sell" them the idea, bring them together for series of meetings, map out a detailed blueprint of objectives, methods and structure, build the organization step by step, then get the program under way in careful stages. I don't believe that this method would work in the present case because: 1) Neither the Orthodox Union nor any other agency is in a position to provide or mobilize the professional or volunteer manpower to initiate the process; and 2) Even if this weren't the case, the process would bog down in talk in the early stages.

Or, the opposite approach might be undertaken -- to mount a big blast of publicity, call mass meetings, develop public excitement, improvise an organizational facade. In my opinion, this would evaporate in a short time, nothing would be left.

So, instead, we propose:

a. Write (personalized letters) to presidents of leading synagogues, informing them of the objective and asking them to come together in conference to pool thinking and lay the groundwork for the Metropolitan Council of Orthodox Congregations. Ask them to bring with them to the Conference not more than two other important figures from their respective synagogues. Telephone follow-up.

b. A small steering committee should prepare the Conference agenda and a preliminary Council blueprint. There should be a minimum of general publicity.

c. The Conference should be an all-day event, programmed to the level of responsible and sophisticated participation. There should be several workshops in which particular phases of concern are analyzed, and general sessions in which basic objectives are clarified, an over-all conceptis developed, and given action agreed upon.

d/ From the Conference should emerge a minimal, core structure, program and working plan. Both should be geared to a realistic appraisal of the capacity for implementation.

e. The Conference ~~sw~~ould be in itself most meaningful, since it would be a manifestation of community of interest and purpose. Meeting, thinking and discussing together on a leader-to-leader, synagogue-to-synagogue basis, a climate of intimate relationship would be spontaneously generated. Apart from the practical significance of whatever might be discussed and planned, this atmosphere, intangible as it might be, is the key ingredient for team-work in intra-community and inter-community approach, as the experience of the Union has consistently shown.

f. To implement the foregoing, we propose to hold the Conference on Sunday March 17th, at the Esplanade Hotel.

I look forward to hearing from you, as per our telephone conversation.

P.S. - A year or so ago, Moe Feuerstein
broached this idea to Mr. Max Stern.
Mr. Stern indicated to M.J.F. his
willingness to head the Conference.
LB