

Jewish Leader Assails Talks With Christians About Faith

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—A leader of the largest Orthodox Rabbinical Association in the United States assailed Jewish secular organizations today for engaging in "religious doctrinal dialogues" with Christians.

Opposing the concept of "homogenized" religion, Rabbi Zev Segal of Newark, first vice president of the Rabbinical Council of America, warned that activities of secular leaders in interfaith religious discussions threatened "the unity and the loyalties of the Jewish community."

Rabbi Segal made it clear, however, that he did not oppose exchanges between Jewish and Christian religious leaders on "common problems affecting all religious groups, such as the large social issues of race relations and poverty, war and peace, law and order, the security of man, juvenile delinquency and the like."

"But we are against a homogenized religion," he continued. "Discussion of the deep religious commitments which a faith community holds can only serve to confuse. There is a particular relationship between man and his God that is not subject to either debate or persuasion."

Rabbi Segal was addressing the afternoon session of a three-day religious convocation being held by the Rabbinical Council at the Hotel Brunswick here. The council represents about 900 rabbis in the United States and Canada.

Rabbi Bernard Twersky, spokesman for the council, said that Rabbi Segal's criticism of Jewish secular organizations in this instance was specifically aimed at activities by the American Jewish Committee and the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith.

Without naming them, Rabbi Segal asserted that leaders of secular organizations are "incompetent and unqualified" to undertake interfaith religious dialogues. Such discussions, he said, are "a disservice and damaging and they undermine the religious commitments and the religious individualism which has characterized the Jewish community for its entire existence."

The religious doctrinal dialogues cited by Rabbi Segal have taken place in many synagogues and churches across the country. Jewish leaders have discussed the tenets of their re-

ligion with spokesmen for other faiths, who have outlined the rudiments of their own religions. Orthodox rabbis have been opposed to this.

A year ago Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, a renowned theological scholar, set forth "guidelines" for interreligious communications. Subjects found improper for such exchanges were Judaic monotheism and the Christian idea of the Trinity; the Messianic idea in Judaism and Christianity; the Jewish attitude toward Jesus, and the concept of the Covenant in Judaism and Christianity.

Rabbi Asks for Proof

Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum, director of interreligious affairs of the American Jewish Committee, said in New York that "Rabbi Segal and those who hold his view have an obligation to demonstrate that discussion of religious subjects between Christians and Jews has, in fact, weakened the faith and religious commitment of Jews who have participated in such conversations."

Explaining that he had not seen the full text of Rabbi Segal's comments, Rabbi Tanenbaum said:

"We believe that the time has come for all responsible Jewish leaders to abandon the outworn cliches regarding so-called secular agencies. The fact remains that the American Jewish Committee has engaged in the organization of dialogues always with prior consultation with leading authorities in Orthodox, Conservative and Reform Judaism."