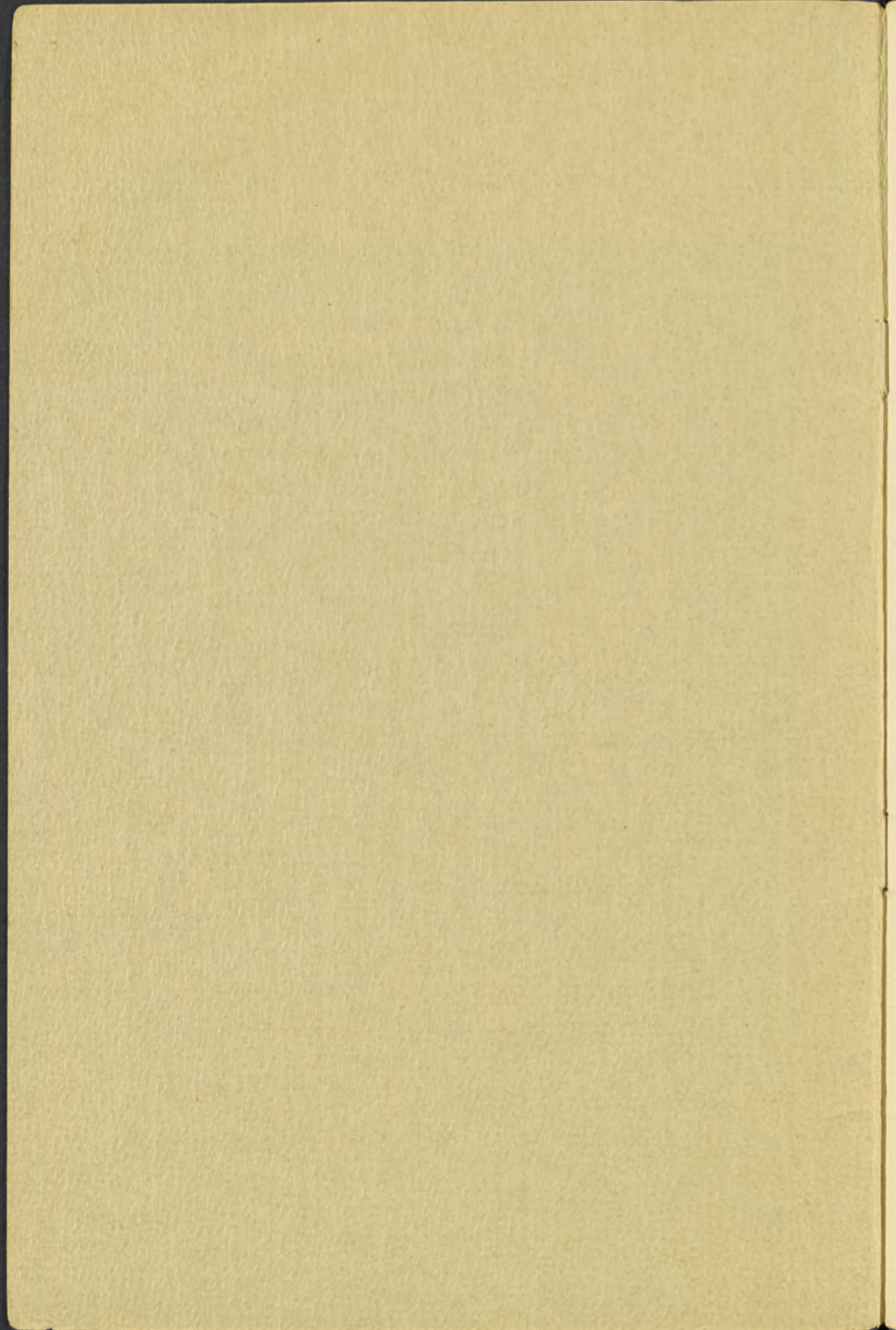




THE NEW JEWISH SYNAGOGUE, CORNER OF FIFTY-FIFTH STREET AND LEXINGTON AVENUE, NEW YORK.—[PHOTOGRAPHED BY ROCKWOOD.]

YOUR TEMPLE

A Unique Story of Devotion, Faith and Service



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A Unique Story of Devotion, Faith and Service

An address delivered by
HERBERT SCHWARZ, President
of CENTRAL SYNAGOGUE, at the first
Sunday Morning Forum under the auspices of
Central Synagogue Parents Association and
Central Synagogue Brotherhood

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INTRODUCTION

DEAR FRIENDS: I am proud to have been invited to speak at a Sunday morning forum under the auspices of Central Synagogue Parents Association and Central Synagogue Brotherhood. I thank these organizations for the special honor accorded me by inviting me to be their first speaker.

There have been many wonderful families and dedicated individual members involved in the great panorama I shall now describe. It would be difficult to include them all by name. Therefore, I feel it is best to omit personal reference to them. I shall, however, refer to ministers and to their relatives. A few others will be mentioned by name. They are well known to us all.

IN THIS WE REJOICE

During the one hundredth anniversary celebration of Central Synagogue, Mr. Rudolf Neuburger presented to the Congregation the portrait of Dr. Jonah

B. Wise which hangs in the foyer of this Community House. He described Dr. Wise as a man who "culls the best from the past, applies it to the present and projects it into the future".

At the end of World War II, Dr. David J. Seligson was invited to speak from our pulpit. In the congregation was a Captain in the United States Army Medical Corps who told me that he was attracted to this particular Sabbath Service because he wanted to hear in a New York pulpit the Jewish Chaplain whom all of the G.I.'s adored in the Burma-India theatre.

Recently, a plaque was dedicated indicating that Central Synagogue is one of the first landmarks of New York to receive recognition from the Community Trust and Municipal Art Society as a building of historic beauty and interest.

Each Sunday morning there is broadcast from our pulpit a beautiful brief religious service which reaches to the far corners of the entire country. As the program begins on this national network, the announcer says, "And now we present the Rabbi of Central Synagogue, founder and moderator of the 'Message of Israel,' Dr. Jonah B. Wise."

Central Synagogue Brotherhood has assumed as a responsibility the religious education of the Jewish children at the Lexington School for the Deaf. With the assistance of our Sisterhood, they also conduct parties for these deaf children at Hanukkah, Purim

and Passover. The Succah which our children have for their own Succoth observance is used the following day by these children of the Lexington School. Their kind good friend, Dr. Seligson, is with them. Our Sisterhood are hosts. I picture for you a little deaf girl about ten years of age, who has never heard the human voice, standing at the festive table, her hands extended as she enunciates in her own way, *Praised be Thou, O Lord, Our God, Ruler of the World, who brings forth bread from the earth.*

This, dear friends, is your Temple. I shall now tell you its unique story of devotion, faith and service.

THE BEGINNING

The oldest Congregation in New York is Shearith Israel founded in 1654. B'nai Jeshurun was formed in 1825. There are four Reform Congregations which are over 110 years old. Rodeph Sholom was founded in 1842, Emanu-El in 1845, Shaaray Tefila 1846 and Central Synagogue, then known as Ahawath Chesed, 1846. Part of Central Synagogue as we know it today was a Congregation named Shaar Hashomayim, whose charter as a religious institution was granted in 1839, which could make us the oldest Reform Congregation in New York.

And now, dear friends, we go back 112 years. Population of New York, less than one-half million. The Jewish population, 12,000. The scene, narrow

Ludlow Street on the lower East Side.

It was in the year 1846 that Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise, founder of American Reform Judaism, arrived in America. The Mexican War began in 1846 and ended two years later with Mexico relinquishing claims on Texas. It was about the time that Elias Howe invented the sewing machine. Samuel Morse transmitted the first telegraph message. It was the year that the present Trinity Church was consecrated.

The Hotel Delmonico was completed at Broadway and 25th Street. Prince Joseph Bonaparte visited New York in 1846. Henry James and Mark Twain were boys. Gilbert and Sullivan were boys. Cezanne and Renoir were boys.

Central Synagogue was founded in that year, 1846. It was a monument to those Jews who sought to walk erect in preference to cowering in the ghettos to which they had been condemned by the civilization of continental Europe. They had very little in worldly goods but they did possess a determination to maintain the best of their heritage as Jews.

Eighteen young men, most of whom had come from Bohemia, met in a hall in Coblenzer's Hotel on Ludlow Street and conducted their own services. They looked to the Book of Micah for their Congregation's name and chose Ahawath Chesed—Love of Mercy (from *Do Justly, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with Thy God*).

THE STORY TO 1864

As the little Congregation grew, it moved first to the east, seven blocks to Ridge Street in 1849, having transformed the upper part of two houses into a Synagogue at a rental of \$100 per year. Dues were \$1.50. The ritual was Orthodox, but there were indicated sentiments away from this, even in those early days.

In 1854, with still larger quarters required, the Congregation moved three blocks further east, almost to the East River. The Congregation purchased a house on narrow Columbia Street which it remodelled. At present there are several extensive public housing developments in this area, including the Baruch Houses.

Its next move was to the north, about ten blocks to the Southwest corner of 4th Street and Avenue C. It is 1864. A church was offered for sale to this now well established group. The neighborhood then had not suffered the deterioration we see there today.

Speakers at their dedication ceremonies were Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise, now of Cincinnati and Rabbi Samuel Adler of Congregation Emanu-El. Rabbi Adler did not travel from 65th Street and Fifth Avenue. Emanu-El was then located the distance from us that it is today. They were on East 12th Street.

By coincidence, both of these important men, Rabbis Wise and Adler, would have sons who would

study for the Rabbinate. One was to be our beloved, renowned Rabbi Jonah B. Wise. Dr. Adler's son studied abroad for the Rabbinate but was never ordained. Many of you know him by name. He was Dr. Felix Adler, founder of the Society for Ethical Culture. Today on the site of our Temple of 1864 we find an Orthodox Jewish Parochial School.

1865 RABBI ADOLPH HUEBSCH

The Congregation was now in a position to further the program which it instinctively felt was of supreme importance to American Israel. In 1865 they sent to Bohemia for two leaders, one, the very distinguished and lovable Dr. Adolf Huebsch, and the Rev. Samuel Welsch, who acted as Cantor for fifteen years. Dr. Huebsch was a powerful personality in the American Reform Movement. He and his Congregation believed it could best consecrate Judaism by devoting it to the American scene.

No Congregation has been more concerned with the quality of its Ministry than has Central Synagogue and probably none has contributed more distinguished leaders and teachers.

Always joined with their loyalty to their beloved country was their gratitude that their Reform Judaism played an important role in their lives as Americans.

Early in its history, the pioneers of our Congregation felt they were part of the life of America. Upon

the death of Abraham Lincoln they shared in the grief of the nation with a dramatic, moving memorial service.

A LANDMARK IS ESTABLISHED

Five years later—1870—with the movement of population, the Congregation decided to acquire the property at 55th Street and Lexington Avenue, where your beautiful old Temple now stands. What courage and devotion to construct there the second largest Synagogue building in New York. They engaged Henry Fernbach, the first Jew to practice architecture in America. Envision, if you will, a vastly different neighborhood than we see today. Private dwellings lined Lexington Avenue and 55th Street. At 53rd Street and extending to 52nd Street from Lexington to Park Avenues was Steinway and Company's piano factory. Part of their area is now occupied by the Seagram Building. Where you now see St. Bartholomew's Church, Park Avenue from 50th to 51st Street, was the site of Schaefer's Brewery.

The cornerstone of your Temple was laid December 14, 1870. Again Dr. Isaac Mayer Wise spoke, as did the then Rabbi of Congregation Emanu-El, Dr. Gustav Gottheil, and Rabbi Huebsch. Please notice that the Rabbi of Emanu-El traveled about a dozen blocks.

The population of New York at the time was less than one million—about nine hundred thousand.

The Jewish population was approximately 120,000. Ahawath Chesed had a membership of 140 families.

THE TEMPLE

The Synagogue seats more than 1300 persons. It cost about \$265,000 with the ground. When they undertook the venture, the Congregation had net assets of \$36,000. Loans were made by the members to the amount of \$80,000.

Fortunes were wiped out in the panic of 1873, the year after its dedication, and many adversities set in throughout the nation. Your Temple and Congregation withstood them and carried on.

The Hebrew Benevolent Society, the oldest Jewish Voluntary Welfare Agency, was founded in 1822. It later became the Hebrew Orphan Asylum. Mt. Sinai Hospital, originally known as the Jew's Hospital, was founded in 1855. Both philanthropies were represented in your Temple from the very beginning. Charity boxes for each were placed in the foyer of the Synagogue at its inception and are still there, although not in use.

It is likely that the original Eternal Light above the Ark became the longest continuously burning light in New York. It was lit in 1872 when your Temple opened and was not extinguished until 1946 when gas there was replaced by electricity during the restoration for the one hundredth anniversary.

RABBI ISAAC MAYER WISE

Dr. Isaac Mayer Wise organized The Union of American Hebrew Congregations in 1873. Central Synagogue was one of its early constituents, having joined in 1878. This national organization of Reform Synagogues has a present membership of about 550 Congregations.

Dr. Isaac Mayer Wise also founded the Hebrew Union College in 1875. It prepares Rabbis for Reform pulpits. It was the first Jewish Seminary to be founded in America. Dr. Jonah B. Wise graduated from the College in 1903. Dr. David J. Seligson was in the class of 1933.

In addition to his son, Jonah, being our Rabbi, his daughter, Jean May, twin sister of Dr. Wise, is a devotedly active member of the Congregation.

THE SCENE CHANGES

Seventy years ago there were seven important Synagogue buildings in Manhattan. The years brought change. Your Temple alone remains on the same site—a true landmark. In the 1850's Congregation Shearith Israel—the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue—acquired a large plot at the northwest corner of 19th Street and Fifth Avenue. Holding to Sephardic custom of modesty, they did not build on Fifth Avenue. They sold the Fifth Avenue portion and built as a Synagogue the tallest structure in the neighborhood at No. 5 West 19th Street. No. 7

adjoining was the Rabbi's home. In 1897 they moved to 70th Street and Central Park West. A large loft building covers the corner and former Temple site.

Congregation Shaaray Tefila, now known as West End Synagogue, was located at 127 West 44th Street. Where the Temple stood there is now a hotel. West End Synagogue is presently on West 82nd Street. They recently sold this property.

Temple Emanu-El was at the northeast corner of Fifth Avenue and 43rd Street. It was replaced by a Lefcourt building now known as 521 Fifth Avenue.

Congregation Rodeph Sholom now at West 83rd Street was located at the present side of the Bar-bizon Hotel for Women at the southeast corner of 63rd Street and Lexington Avenue. Its Rabbi of those days was also father of a man who would later become a well known Rabbi. The spiritual leader of Rodeph Sholom was Rabbi Aaron Wise—his son was Stephen S. Wise. He will play a part in the story of your Temple.

Seventy years ago, Congregation B'nai Jeshurun was located on the west side of Madison Avenue between 64th and 65th Streets. The site is now occupied by a two-story commercial building. At the southerly end, No. 742, one can still see the yard which, like the yard of your Temple, was used in those days for the Congregational Succah. Congregation B'nai Jeshurun is now on West 89th Street.

Congregation Beth Israel Bikur Cholim had its

synagogue building at the northeast corner of Lexington Avenue and 72nd Street. Presently on this site is a large apartment house. This Congregation joined with Park Avenue Synagogue.

How fortunate are we, in possession of a precious irreplaceable treasure—the last of the old Temples in New York. Although seventy years ago they did not possess one of the imposing Synagogue buildings, the Congregation, Shaar Hashomayim, (Gates of Heaven) which today is so important to us, was at the end of the century located in 15th Street, 211 East, facing Stuyvesant Square. A half century before, they worshipped downtown on Attorney Street. This group merged with Ahawath Chesed in 1898. They strengthened us and brought many of our staunchest and most welcome loyal members. Upon the consolidation, we became Congregation Ahawath Chesed Shaar Hashomayim. As such we continued until about 1920 when the name was changed to Central Synagogue.

FROM RABBI KOHUT TO RABBI KRASS

Dr. Adolph Huebsch died in 1885. The Congregation invited to its pulpit Dr. Alexander Kohut. In doing so, the Congregation maintained its highest ideals. Dr. Kohut came from Hungary as one of the most significant authors, scholars and religious leaders, a man of noble devotion to Judaism. Dr.

Kohut administered to the Congregation for only eight years but he left his imprint upon it and upon all American Judaism. His monumental work, the Concordance, known in international scholarship as the *Aruch Completum*, has established his permanent place in posterity.

Mrs. Julius Kahn, a beloved and most faithful member of our present Congregation, is a daughter of the sadly missed Dr. Alexander Kohut.

Dr. David Davidson succeeded Dr. Kohut. He too had a dedicated Ministry. Toward the end of the century, the Rev. Theodore Guinsburg became Cantor. Some of us can still remember his genial and sweet personality.

Following Dr. Davidson, the Congregation called to its pulpit a person of whom we have fond recollections, Dr. Isaac S. Moses. German born, he came to us in 1901 from Temple Israel of Chicago. He was the last of the Rabbis to preach in both English and German. He was a genius for liturgy. He was a principal editor of the Union Prayer Book. His prayer books and hymn books profoundly influenced and enhanced the programs of American Judaism. His two lovely children, Mrs. Edna Flarsheim and Eugene F. Moses, as well as Eugene's artistic wife, Betty, are devoted members of the Congregation.

Upon Dr. Moses' retirement in 1918, Dr. Nathan Krass became our spiritual leader. His significant ministry ended in 1923.

NEW STRENGTH

The Congregation flourished during the ministry of Nathan Krass. Our position was weakened substantially when he left. It was then that a merger was attempted between Central and Free Synagogues with Dr. Stephen S. Wise as Rabbi. This effort did not materialize and in 1925 there was a great need for new leadership. The need was met when Jonah B. Wise was invited to our pulpit. He was not only a Rabbi in the traditional sense but a man of vision and stature. He possessed those qualities which were then necessary to reestablish Central Synagogue's accustomed position of eminence.

The first post of Stephen S. Wise, then a young man, was as Assistant Rabbi at Congregation B'nai Jeshurun of New York. In 1900 he left B'nai Jeshurun in New York to become Rabbi of Congregation Beth Israel of Portland, Oregon. He left Portland to return to New York in 1906. At that time, Rabbi Jonah B. Wise succeeded to his pulpit at Beth Israel of Portland. Twenty years later, in accepting the pulpit of Central Synagogue of New York, Dr. Jonah B. Wise succeeded Dr. Stephen S. Wise a second time.

In 1926, the Congregation acquired its Community House at 35 East 62nd Street from the Young Women's Christian Association. Theretofore all activities had taken place in the Synagogue or in the Vestry below.

In 1937, Frederick Lechner followed Isadore H. Weinstock as Cantor, when the latter passed away. After many years of solid musical training and important concert and operatic performances all over Europe, Mr. Lechner came to America in the fall of 1936. His voice has probably been heard by more people than that of any Cantor in history. It is Mr. Lechner who leads the inspired singing on the "Message of Israel" radio program every Sunday morning.

In 1945 with the war ended and an enlarged membership, it was felt that another Rabbi should be added to our Ministry. The man selected is our dear friend and renowned preacher and teacher, at that time an Army Chaplain, David J. Seligson.

RABBI JONAH B. WISE

Let us speak of our Rabbis, each of whom has brought honor to us. With them, the importance of our pulpit has been enhanced. They are so thoroughly American in sentiment and outlook. Dr. Jonah B. Wise has enjoyed a long career of purposeful and consecrated service to Judaism and mankind. His efforts were most successful in the 1930's when he became a great influence in the Overseas Relief Program of the Joint Distribution Committee. With courage, he went to Germany two months after the advent of Nazism. Upon his return he assumed a position of leadership in the work of mercy and relief which the American Jewish com-

munity had to assume. He has been at the helm of the United Jewish Appeal as a National Chairman. He founded the United Jewish Laymen's Committee, which, with the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, sponsors the "Message of Israel" radio broadcasts.

For twenty-three years the program has provided a medium through which the ideals of American Judaism can be heard and understood by fellow Americans of all faiths all over the country and overseas. He has been a member of the board of the New York Chapter of the American Red Cross; a member of the Executive Board of the American Jewish Committee; he is an honorary member of the Board of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. He is a member of the Board of the Jewish Child Care Association and the Educational Alliance. Jonah B. Wise is an epic personality in the American Rabbinate. One of his greatest admirers, a distinguished philanthropist once commented that history will demonstrate that Jonah B. Wise was the outstanding Jew of the turbulent period of the 1930's.

CONGREGATION HABONIM

This tribute to Dr. Wise for his world leadership reminds us that Central Synagogue played an important part in the emergency created in the 1930's through the exile of Jews from Germany. We wel-

came to our own premises a group of German Jews under the leadership of Rabbi Hugo Hahn. The shelter afforded by our Synagogue and our Community House to this group resulted in the formation of a solid organization now numbering about 900 families, known as Congregation Habonim.

They are presently happily independent and pursuing a useful career in the service of their people. This cooperation on the part of Central Synagogue in the religious establishment of these newcomers on the American scene was recognized and applauded.

RABBI DAVID J. SELIGSON

Dr. Seligson, a brilliant scholar, warm and affectionate, did not require much time to win the esteem of the entire Congregation when he came to us in 1945. He received immediate recognition from the community. He became President of the New York Association of Reform Rabbis. He served two years as President of the New York Board of Rabbis. Under his administration, the New York Board enlarged its ambitious program of service to persons in various charitable and public institutions and acquired its permanent headquarters on East 73rd Street.

Dr. Seligson has been a member of the Executive Board of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. He is a member of the Evaluation Com-

mittee of the National Conference of Christians and Jews and the Executive Committee of the New York Chapter of the American Jewish Committee.

I would think that one of the greatest honors conferred upon Dr. Seligson, and I could say conferred upon any Rabbi, occurred in 1954 when he received a graduate or academic Doctorate in Hebrew Letters from the Hebrew Union College—Jewish Institute of Religion. He was the 47th person ever to receive this distinction of an Academic Doctorate in almost 80 years. He is presently a Lieutenant Colonel in the active reserve of the United States Army. He is an outstanding Rabbi and has performed outstanding deeds known personally to so many of us.

CELEBRATIONS

On December 6, 1936, the Congregation attended a gala dinner in celebration of their 90th anniversary. Honored guests were Governor Herbert H. Lehman and Mr. Felix M. Warburg. In commemoration of this anniversary, the membership supported the publication of the life of Horace Mann, copies of which were given to universities, schools and libraries.

In 1946, for our Centennial, we adopted the watchword *A Century of Service to God and America*. It was felt by everyone in the congregational family that this occasion would leave its mark for generations. A fine program was developed

which culminated with a banquet on December 21, 1946. At a special service, Dr. Joshua Loth Liebman, then at the height of his career, came from Boston to deliver the principal address. Every seat in the main Sanctuary was occupied. Our Vestry, then having a capacity of about 200, with no platform but with public address system, was filled and hundreds were turned away. Unfortunately, Dr. Liebman was unable to speak. He was present but had lost his voice. Dr. James G. Heller of Cincinnati was asked to deliver a thrilling centennial message. It was an unforgettable scene.

In connection with the celebration, we held a special radio forum on "Religion in Our Time". The Museum of the City of New York loaned us a special collection of prints depicting the New York scene in 1846. *The Reminiscences of Isaac Mayer Wise* was republished. Copies were presented to every Reform Rabbi in America and to every member of our Congregation. Also to many universities and libraries.

The Congregation restored your Temple. They installed new reinforced foundations. They installed a new roof, new wiring, complete redecoration. We received a gift of new lighting. The Vestry was completely modernized, a new entrance placed on 55th Street. A Centennial Fund had a phenomenal success. It provided contributions that totaled more than \$250,000.

In 1951, we honored Dr. Wise upon his 25th year as our Rabbi. It was the week of his 70th Birthday. One invitation with no follow-up whatsoever was all that was necessary to fill the Starlight Roof of the Waldorf-Astoria.

For Rabbi Seligson we held an elaborate reception when we all rejoiced with him when he became Dr. Seligson. Everyone present felt that he personally was sharing in the happiness of this achievement. Services honoring Dr. Seligson's tenth year with us in 1955 and marking his fiftieth birthday in 1956 brought almost a thousand persons to your Temple for each occasion.

Just six weeks ago we held a special service in honor of Mr. Lechner's twentieth year at Central Synagogue. Bad weather kept the attendance to over 600 but those who were there were amply rewarded.

TRUSTEES

In the first 96 years, Central Synagogue had seven Presidents. They served an average of almost fourteen years each. In the past 16 years, we have had three Presidents.

Our Trustees have been men and women of integrity, many with family tradition in the Synagogue—many with fine records for community service, dependable, capable, respected persons who have won the esteem of the Jewish community and non-Jewish community as well. They have stood for the

best in our Reform Jewish Movement.

With our Rabbis rests the religious aspects of our total program.

At the same time the Board has the responsibility of projects for the Congregation, all community relationships, of the maintenance of our three establishments, the Synagogue, the Community House and the Cemetery, and the engagement of staff required by the overall program. The total budget came to about \$220,000 last year. A financing plan for the amounts needed is also a responsibility of the Board of Trustees along with other matters which confront us from time to time.

THE SYNAGOGUE

Religious services in your beautiful old Synagogue are truly magnificent. At these Sabbath services two of America's preeminent Rabbis of all time create a dignified, impressive spiritual atmosphere in which one can join with prayer and gratitude. The singing of our Cantor and the choir enriches the service, which is really an aesthetic experience. This is yours to attend each Friday and Saturday throughout the year.

Mr. Lazar Weiner who directs our choir is well known in music circles generally as composer of synagogue and other music as well as conductor. Mr. Alexander Richardson, our organist, is a gentleman of high reputation in his profession.

Each year Mr. Lechner is soloist in a special music program with choir presented in the Synagogue. This has become an anticipated event for hundreds and hundreds of music lovers. Sacred Services of Ernest Bloch and Darius Milhaud have been performed. *The Song of Amos*, composition of the renowned organist, Dr. Charlotte Garden, was given a few years ago. Our "Music for the Synagogue from Antiquity to the Present Time" was not only presented in Central Synagogue but broadcast for Shavuoth by Radio Station WQXR in 1956. This year the program was a liturgical music festival of contemporary composers.

In 1946, with the end of World War II, it was in Central Synagogue that certificates of appreciation were presented by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations to all Reform Rabbis in the metropolitan area.

At times this wonderful old Congregation must have been in dire need of funds. Yet they always maintained the dignity and beauty of their precious house of worship. The only locale for memorials are the tablets at the entrance and small brass plaques at the foot of memorial windows. We owe our forebears a great debt for their enduring legacy to us. The fact that the beauty is not marked with memorials and names all over the surface is something for which we should be tremendously grateful.

THE SYNAGOGUE AND THE COMMUNITY

The Pursuit of Equality is the title of a very elaborate book which has recently been published in commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the founding of the American Jewish Committee. Several important buildings and portraits of renowned people illustrate the handsome volume. Only one Synagogue is shown and that is Central Synagogue in a huge interior photograph.

The facilities of our Temple and its Vestry and this Community House are used constantly by noteworthy organizations for good causes. As examples, we hold services here for the Jewish Deaf at the High Holy Days. Memorial Day services have been held in our Temple for Spanish War Veterans of all denominations. Each year a special service is held in our Temple for the Jewish members of the staff of the United States Customs Service. The Jewish Child Care Association of New York holds a tea and reception each year in our Vestry Auditorium for the foster parents of their expanded group. Our Vestry Auditorium has been used by the Greater New York Council, Girl Scouts, for exhibitions of their craft work. The New York Section of the National Council of Jewish Women held its annual reunions in our Vestry for underprivileged children who attended its summer day camp.

For twenty-two years, Thanksgiving Day has af-

forded us an opportunity to worship at Union Thanksgiving Services with our Christian neighbors, the Congregations of Christ Church Methodist and Central Presbyterian Church. Each year the ministers rotate in preaching the sermons and conducting truly memorable services.

THE UNION AND THE COLLEGE-INSTITUTE

550 Reform Congregations are constituent members of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. This Union and the Hebrew Union College—Jewish Institute of Religion have no closer tie with any single congregation in the country than that which binds them to Central Synagogue. We have been a great asset to them and they a great asset to us.

The same is true of the New York Federation of Reform Synagogues, the local organization of 79 Reform Congregations. Also the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods, the National Federation of Temple Brotherhoods, the State Federation of Temple Sisterhoods, the Metropolitan Conference of Temple Brotherhoods, the National Federation of Temple Youth and the Manhattan Federation of Temple Youth—our Sisterhood and Brotherhood and Temple Youth are important in them all.

Dr. Maurice N. Eisendrath, President of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and Dr. Nelson Glueck, President of the Hebrew Union

College—Jewish Institute of Religion have been with us on many auspicious occasions.

It is not surprising that when we observed Dr. Seligson's 10th anniversary, as a Rabbi of Central Synagogue, the principal speaker was Dr. Jacob R. Marcus who came from the College in Cincinnati. Dr. Marcus, who is an outstanding authority on American Jewish History and a brilliant, entertaining speaker, will visit our Temple again on March 28, 1958. Then we shall hold a special late Friday Sabbath service in honor of the 80th anniversary of the founding of Central Synagogue Sisterhood.

The House of Living Judaism, national headquarters of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, is located at 838 Fifth Avenue, the southeast corner of 65th Street. The ground breaking ceremonies for this imposing building were held in 1950. Dr. Jonah B. Wise, his son, our own David Wise, and David's son, Jonathan, who is a great grandson of Dr. Isaac Mayer Wise, all had important roles on this historic occasion. Jonathan deposited a copy of the original publication of the *Reminiscences of Isaac Mayer Wise* in a compartment of the cornerstone arranged for that purpose.

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

We are very proud of our Religious School and consider it one of our most important responsibilities. Our Religious School Board has many functions.

To them we look for guidance in administration and planning for the school.

The school should be a source of joy to all of us. Children who attend find happiness there and a feeling of loyalty to their religious heritage. These feelings become vocal when our Religious School Choir is heard from coast to coast on the "Message of Israel" program and on other occasions.

Heading the school as Principal is Dr. Philip E. Kraus, who has done outstanding work in the field of general education in addition to his achievements for our Religious School. Dr. Kraus is a principal assigned to Board of Education headquarters for Special Research. He attended our Religious School himself in 1914, was confirmed in Central Synagogue in 1921. He joined the faculty of the school in 1935 and became principal in 1943. As a member of our Youth Group of years ago, he became acquainted with his gifted wife, Martha, in what is now the Boy Scout Room in our Vestry.

CONGREGATIONAL FAMILY

Central Synagogue Sisterhood's program for good in the community has won it a very high place among women's organizations. Through its various projects, toys, talking books, its camp program, Interfaith Neighbors and its sewing project, our Sisterhood has brought untold happiness and comfort into the lives of countless thousands of under-

privileged, ill and handicapped children and adults.

The Sisterhood has also been wonderful to the Synagogue. Its cultural and social programs have met with enthusiastic response. It is also concerned with our Youth.

Our Forum of today offers an example of the Brotherhood's constant willingness to stimulate interest for the good of the Synagogue and the Community. The Lexington School for the Deaf is but one of their beneficiaries. The Brotherhood has a Boy Scout program which is unsurpassed by any other religious institution in New York. They remember our boys presently in the Armed Forces and they never forget the children of our religious school. They also have a splendid, successful, cultural and social program.

The Sisterhood and Brotherhood always responded to the needs of the larger Community. This was demonstrated during the 1930's and the Second World War. I mention such projects as a canteen for working women, training of refugees for gainful occupation, Red Cross sewing, Blood Bank, packaging of comforts for overseas and solicitude for the men and women who served with the Armed Forces.

The Parents Association's reasons for being are of the very best. What finer purpose could there be in religious life than to bring parents closer to their children. Through fellowship and adult education

they also bring parents closer to the Synagogue to which these parents look for the religious education of their young loved ones.

Our Senior League and the Young Married Group have excellent programs. They enjoy social and cultural activities. Philanthropy is one of their first considerations. Parties are arranged by the Senior League for hospitalized children. Our Young Married Group will, I believe, soon embark upon a new community service project. These two organizations are very close to our hearts. We are a good family and they are the younger members.

The post-confirmation group, known as our Youth Group, meets regularly with advisors. Their program is in the main religious, cultural and social. Their enjoyment of this program is of importance to us all. Each and every one of these young people has our very warmest affection.

A FINAL WORD

This, dear friends, is Central Synagogue. From small beginnings, we have attained a position of great importance in the American Jewish scene. God blessed this Congregation in the year 1846. He has showered it with blessings ever since. It was the dedication, dignity and altruism of those who went before and those who lead us now that brought us to the high place we occupy today. They had no selfish purpose but always placed first the spiritual

needs of the Synagogue and the welfare of the community. As good citizens of America, they joined hands with all other good citizens whenever possible for the realization of the ideals of our beloved America and Reform Judaism.

This is your Temple and its unique story of devotion, faith and service.

Plaque unveiled at Dedication Ceremony, January 5, 1958

LANDMARKS OF NEW YORK
CENTRAL SYNAGOGUE

THIS IS THE OLDEST SYNAGOGUE BUILDING
IN CONTINUOUS USE IN NEW YORK CITY.
THE CONGREGATION WAS ESTABLISHED IN
1846 AND THIS TEMPLE, DESIGNED BY
HENRY FERNBACH, WAS COMPLETED IN
1872. THE STYLE IS MOORISH REVIVAL, THE
ARRANGEMENT GOTHIC.

PLAQUE ERECTED 1957 BY THE NEW YORK COMMUNITY TRUST.



*designed by MAHLON CLINE,
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