

ORTHODOXY AND REFORM

MEMORANDUM by

Rabbi B. M. Casper, Chief Rabbi, United Hebrew Congregation of Johannesburg and the Federation of Synagogues of South Africa

and Rabbi A. S. Super, Senior Rabbi, United Progressive Jewish Congregation of Johannesburg

With a view to clearing up the confusion and misunderstanding that seem to be rife in some communal circles, the Orthodox Chief Rabbi B. M. Casper and the Senior Reform Rabbi A.S. Super have agreed as follows:

1. From the religious point of view there is an unbridgeable gulf between Orthodoxy and Reform. Therefore, there can be no question of Orthodox Rabbis, Ministers or Chazonim participating in any Reform services, or vice versa; nor can there be any joint Orthodox-Reform religious services.
2. At public communal functions such as banquets, dinners or luncheons, Grace before and after meals will be recited completely by an Orthodox Chazan.
3. At the Annual Memorial Meeting at West Park Cemetery, organised by the Board of Deputies as an Act of Mourning and Homage representative of the entire community, the traditional Memorial Prayers will be recited by an Orthodox Chazan; and an Orthodox Minister and a Reform Minister will both be seated on the platform.
4. With regard to Chaplaincy at Military Camps, the duly appointed Orthodox visiting chaplain will use his good offices with the local camp commander to facilitate visits by a Reform Minister to the Reform personnel who happen to be there. In other words the Orthodox appointed chaplain would ask his local Commander if the Reform Minister could be allowed to visit the Reform boys.
5. In social, welfare and other non-religious matters, Orthodox and Reform should co-operate (as is indeed already the practice) in the general communal interest. Where religious issues become involved the principles stated in paragraphs 1 and 2 of this memorandum would apply.
6. It has for long been the custom for the Chief Rabbi to recite a Prayer at the opening of Conferences of the Board of Deputies and of the Zionist Federation. This has become an accepted "Minhag" of the South African scene; and it is therefore agreed that the Chief Rabbi or his representative shall continue to offer the Prayers on such occasions.

23rd Sivan, 5725
23rd June, 1965

(Signed) B. M. CASPER
A. S. SUPER

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