

Conservative judaism essay

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First describe yourself a little. Do you consider yourself spiritual religious, neither, or both? What, if any do you consider being part of? My name is Silvana Cabarcas and I was born and raised in Barranquilla Colombia. My parents, Antonio and Luz Marina raised me to be Catholic and taught me a great deal about the Catholic religion, which I strongly believe in. I consider myself a religious person and have attended Catholic Church my entire life. I strongly believe in my faith and will pass on my beliefs to my children.

I have spent every school year of my life in Catholic school until I graduated in 1998 from “ The Institute Ariano”, which was my High school. I visited the Temple of Beth Torah/ Tamarac Jewish Center, a synagogue. I was able to talk and interviewed Nathan Kogon who is a member and a voluntary of the synagogue. Their religion was Conservative Judaism. Conservative Judaism holds a middle ground between the Orthodox and the Reform. In the United States this movement began during the 1890’s. The United Synagogue of America is the national organization of Conservative congregations.

This is the hugest of all the movements of Judaism, which was then established by Solomon Schechter and Zachariah Frankel. Conservative Judaism considered adopting commitment to the laws of the Jews together with its reasonable faith (Asheri 88-91). The need of having symbols which are so particular and not just an imagination or an idea at all. They believe in the idea that Jews are people chosen by God to be the bearers and teachers of monotheism. God chose Israel to be a priest- people to all nations.

The special relationship between God and Israel is called the Covenant, or agreement. The concept of the chosen people does not mean a favored people, but rather a people charged with a responsibility to all mankind. It means that Jews must keep themselves distinct as a priest- people until all God's children have entered the kingdom of God. They have the Torah where all their laws are being written. These include the five books of Moses in the Old Testament, the Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy (Jacobs 344). They also have the rabbi, which is counterpart of the Christian's priest. In Conservative Judaism, having a woman as a rabbi is allowed but not in branch of Judaism.

The congregation of Conservative Judaism is not that strict, because both men and women can sit together. They are permitted to do their activities like driving to their synagogue during their Sabbath and also the usage of electricity (Jacobs 344). Description of art, symbols, images, cultic, objects, including sacred scriptures: Bima A raised horizontal surface or a platform where the Torah is being read and heard by the synagogue.

TorahThe Torah, or Law, is the commandment of God to His chosen people.

The Torah originally referred to the Ten Commandments, and later to the Pentateuch, or five “ Books of Moses.” In a broad sense, Torah includes all the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) and the whole of the sacred tradition from Biblical times to the present. In this sense, the Torah includes the Talmud, which interprets Biblical commandments and deals also with many fields of knowledge. The Torah comprises the five books in the Old Testament and these Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy (Shenker 122-125).

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Jewish identity According to Jewish law, anyone who has a Jewish mother counts as a Jew and anyone who converts to this religion (Shenker 122- 125).

Hazzan A hazzan or cantor chants the service (Asheri 93).

Mezuzah “ Door Post”, this is called as such because it is placed on the houses’ doorpost. It is symbol of God’s Presence or commandments (Asheri 93).

Menorah A branched- candlestick which is used in the synagogue. It symbolizes Israel as a light to other countries (Shenker 122- 125).

Magen David The protective covering of David; Star of David. It symbolizes King David’s shield. They used the symbol for them to be identified as Jewish synagogues like the Christian’s wherein they have the cross to represent the.

(Asheri 93). Distinctive dress of clergy or members: At services in the synagogue, Jewish men wear a small cap, called a kippah, to show respect for God. At some services, men also wear a prayer shawl that reminds the person wearing it of God. Traditional Jews may also wear two small leather boxes, called tefillin. One is worn on the middle of the forehead; the other is tied to the arm, facing the heart. Inside the boxes are tiny scrolls on which passages from the Torah are written. The tefillin remind Jews that they should love God with their whole hearts and minds. The tallit which is a cloak should always be worn and it will only be removed after the services.

The kippot also a covering on one’s head which serves as a sign of respect for God. In the way they dress is really very respectful, it is modest. They do

not allow chitchats while the service is happening, it can only be done afterwards because they want to observe sanctity in their service.

While for those who will get honors should wear formal attire and the ladies should also wear conservative clothing where in no shorts, or mini skirts and backless are not allowed. They have this reasons why kippah should still be worn and these are; respecting God as above all, adhering to the mitzvot, for them to be identified as Jews and serves an action of ministry to all Jews (Prager et al. 78). Worships and special ceremonies: Every male baby is circumcised on the eighth day of his life. By tradition, when a boy reaches 13 he participates in a ceremony through which he becomes bar mitzvah.

It then his duty to take on the religious responsibilities of an adult Jew And bat mitzvah, for girls. Marriage is always celebrated within the Jewish laws and premises and Jewish community (Musaph-Andriesse 998).

Birth This is on Jews become parents. Brit Milah or circumcision and Simhat bat which is a Celebration of a Daughter. The Brit suggests a covenant between God and his people. (Musaph-Andriesse 998).

Bar/ Bat Mitzvah Young Jewish girls and boys undergo this ceremony when they turn thirteen years old. In this time, they are already held responsible and accountable for mitzvot or the 613 laws. They are now obliged to follow the rules and traditions of a Jew (Musaph-Andriesse 999). Conversion This process involves self observation of one's thoughts and feelings. This religion should be kept day by day in accordance with their set laws and commandments. They should be able to regularly attend ceremonies and

synagogue services (Musaph-Andriessse 999). Wedding Marriage of the Jews is done under a canopy or in their language is huppah.

In this ceremony, they exchanged vows among hundreds of people. M'Kudeshet is exchanged during the ring ceremony. It serves as a solemn commitment of your life or your time to some cherished purpose. They follow the wedding ceremony by drinking of wine and breaking of the glass (Musaph-Andriessse 998). Death When a Jewish person dies, they should be buried immediately.

The family involved has a grieving period of seven days. Within this time they have this prayer called Kaddish, a prayer rendered by the relatives of the dead person (Musaph-Andriessse 998). Shabbat Large synagogues have services every day but many Jews go to the synagogue only on the Sabbath (called Shabbat in Hebrew) and special holy days. The service on the morning of the Sabbath lasts for about two hours.

A service includes prayers, blessings and readings from the Torah and is led by a teacher, called a rabbi. Readings from the Torah are given from a raised platform, called a bimah, in the centre of the synagogue (Musaph-Andriessse 996). Hours of worships (days and time) Their services are from Mondays to Fridays where in they have their services which start from 7: 45 until 6: 00 pm. During Friday's, 6: 00 pm until the sunset of Saturday, this is called as the Sabbath (Musaph-Andriessse 996). Major festivals and/or sacred days Yom Kippur, 10th Trishi (September or October).

Day of Atonement; a fast day. Holiest day of the Year. Sukkoth, 15th to 23rd Tishri (September or October). Feast of the Booths, or Tabernacles;

commemorates the booths used during the wandering in the wilderness. Hanukkah, 25th Kislev to 2nd or 3rd Tebet (November, December or January). Feasts of Dedication or Feast of Lights; commemorates the rededication of the Temple in 165 B. C. after the victory of Judas Maccabaeus over the Syrians.

Purim, 14th Adar (February or March). Feast of Lots; commemorates the defeat of Haman, as told in the book of Esther. Pesach, 15th to 22nd Nisan (March or April). Passover; celebrates liberation of the Israelites from bondage in Egypt. Shabuoth, 6th and 7th Sivan (May or June). Feast of Weeks, or Festival of the First Fruits; a harvest festival (Musaph-Andriessse 996).

Describe how what you saw and witnessed impacted you, whether it was positive or negative, including, if you enhanced your appreciation for that particular religious, faith and/or for religion, in general. My experience in the Temple Beth Torah was very interesting. What was interesting to me was how modern Conservative Judaism was as compared to Orthodox and Reform Judaism. Conservative Judaism recognizes women as a part of the minyan which traditionally was restricted only to men.

A woman is also given an opportunity at becoming a Rabbi. In addition, Conservative Judaism, women are allowed to sit with men, where as in the Orthodox faith they are not. I was impressed with how helpful the people were when I visited the Synagogue. They were friendly and very eager to teach me about their religion. It was a pleasurable experience talking with them. References: Asheri, Michael.

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Musaph-Andriessse, R. G. From Torah to Kabbalah: a Basic Introduction to the Writings of Judaism (Oxford University, 1998). 4.

Prager, Dennis, and Joseph Telushkin. Nine Questions People Ask About Judaism (Simon & Schuster, 1999). 5.

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