MS-831: Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Foundation Records, 1980–2008.
Series D: Adam Gamoran Papers. 1991–2008.
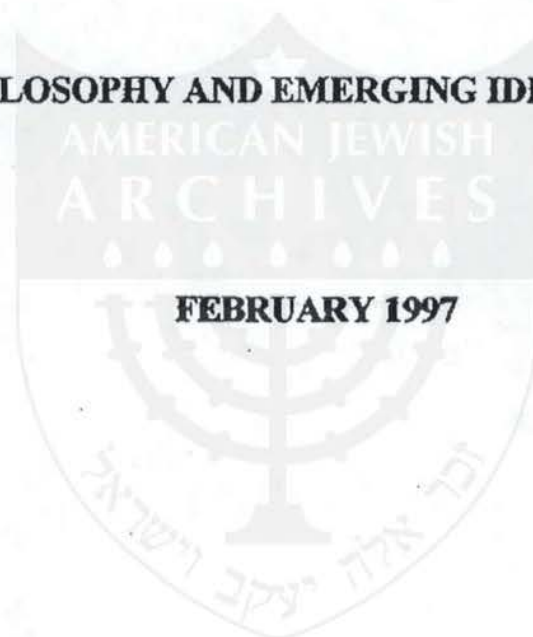Subseries 5: General CIJE Files, 1991–2008.

Box
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Folder
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CIJE Synagogue Change Research Project. Institutional Change Think-Tank. Notes, proposal, and meeting summary, 1997-1998.

For more information on this collection, please see the finding aid on the American Jewish Archives website.

CHANGE PHILOSOPHY AND EMERGING IDEAS ON STRATEGY

FEBRUARY 1997

# HOW WE BELIEVE INDIVIDUAL JEWS CAN CHANGE

Fundamental Belief	Explanation/Implications
The ultimate goal needs to be to transform the lives of individual Jews; to make being Jewish central to their lives and their quest for meaning.	We need to define success in terms of how we impact the minds and hearts of individual Jews and how that turns into action in their lives.
The "Direct Service" institution is the most important vehicle for changing the lives of individual Jews in North America. It is only by finding a sense of community within these institutions that Jews will become more committed to being Jewish.	Change needs to take place in institutions where Jews interface with Jewish learning and living (e.g., synagogues, schools, camps, JCCs) to make them more relevant and appealing to the majority of Jews. This means transformation of existing institutions. It may also mean building new institutions or creating new types of institutions. Any change program that does not ultimately transform "direct service" institutions is not worth investing in.
Multiple access points are needed to reach different types of Jews.	Change needs to happen across a broad range of direct service institutions to offer a diverse population of Jews the opportunity to connect with the tradition. Any type of institution that has potential to be a site for authentic Jewish learning and living should be included. Therefore focusing on one type of institution (e.g., day schools) is not the total answer.
The effect of multiple positive Jewish experiences on children and adults is synergistic. On the other hand, the effect of scattered, infrequent experiences is often nonexistent.	If resources are limited, it is better to concentrate resources so that they impact on a smaller number of individuals than to spread resources around so that they barely touch the lives of many people.
Family life is critical in the development of Jewish identity and commitment to Jewish living.	Change programs that focus on one age group are going to be less effective than those that focus on all age cohorts. Institutions need to be structured to support Jewish life in families.

WHAT WE BELIEVE ABOUT HOW INSTITUTIONS CAN CHANGE

Fundamental Belief	Explanation/Implications
Comprehensive Institutional change requires 6 things:	
1) Leadership is the most important factor in bringing about institutional change but (with the exception of the occasional genius) is not usually sufficient to bring about sweeping changes.	There needs to be an improved infrastructure to support the development of stronger lay and professional leadership for Jewish institutions.
2) Vision is the second most important factor. Vision cannot be created in a vacuum but must be supported by an "infrastructure of ideas."	An ongoing dialogue needs to be facilitated between the grassroots and the philosophical thinkers around the development of "big ideas." External facilitators will be needed to help institutions to adapt these ideas to their own situations.
3) Cultural change must be part of any change program. Without a real shift in mind set, change will not be ambitious enough and is unlikely to stick.	Institutional change programs need to explicitly address the culture of the institution. Tools need to be developed to help in this endeavor.
4) An explicit change process is needed as a road map for turning vision into reality.	Carefully specified methodologies need to be developed to help institutions through the difficult process of change. Ongoing evaluation needs to be a central piece of these methodologies.
5) Skill-building is needed to support the new methodologies and approaches initiated by change programs.	Training institutions need to become driven by their own vision of an educated Jewish leader and to build a program around that vision. New training programs or institutions may need to be created.
6) Sufficient and appropriate funding is needed to support a change process at the institutional level.	The funding approaches and methodologies of foundations and federations will have to change to focus resources on leadership development and institutional transformation, and to support longer time frames.

WHAT WE BELIEVE ABOUT HOW INSTITUTIONS CAN CHANGE - cont.

Fundamental Belief	Explanation/Implications
Piecemeal changes in institutions do not work. The whole institution must change from the inside out.	Isolated programs (no matter how good) that are not part of a broader vision of institutional change are unlikely to be effective in bringing about long-term meaningful change, especially when those programs are imposed from the outside. We need to help institutions transform themselves and design pilot programs for themselves that fit their long-term change vision.
The time frame of change is longer than most change programs acknowledge up-front	Transformational change programs need realistic time frames -- at least 5-10 years --and ongoing support throughout that entire period.
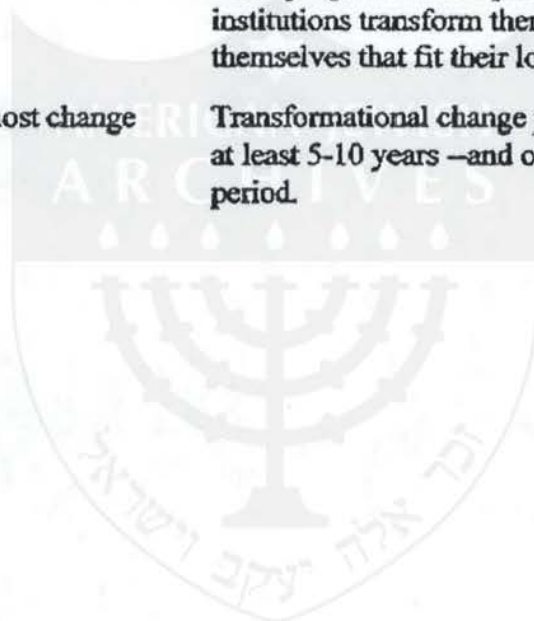
WHAT WE BELIEVE ABOUT HOW CHANGE IS DISPERSED

Fundamental Belief	Explanation/Implications
There is a model of change called the "S" curve, that is often used to describe the dispersion of technology. While it is not a perfect way of describing changes in educational systems and other highly complex social systems, it is a useful tool for thinking about dispersion of change. It suggests that the process of change has 5 stages (see Exhibit 1)	The focus of change efforts has to be on the development of models and ideas for change and on the integration of these models into leading edge institutions.

1. Problem awareness - the growing awareness and understanding of a problem with no real action taking place.

It is better to focus energy and resources on leading edge institutions in order to create effective change models. (i.e. "invest in the best") than to spread resources thinly across all institutions regardless of their readiness for change.

2. Invention - the development of new models and ideas to solve the problem.

3. Adaption - the integration of those new models and ideas into leading edge institutions.

4. Dispersion - The acceptance of the new ideas by the majority of institutions.

5. The institutionalization of the new ideas and the slowdown in the rate of change.

Jewish educational change is at stages 2 and 3.

WHAT WE BELIEVE ABOUT HOW CHANGE IS DISPERSED - cont.

Fundamental Belief	Explanation/Implications
There is a "tipping point" phenomenon* that can lead to rapid improvement in results when a critical mass of resources are concentrated in one place. (*see enclosed article)	Change programs are likely to be more effective if they apply enough energy in one place to reach the tipping point.
Change needs to happen in the way that institutions work together as a system.	The roles of different institutions and the boundaries between them need to be reconsidered to improve the functioning of the whole system.
Change needs to happen in the national infrastructure that supports direct service institutions (i.e. training institutions, movement, foundations)	National institutions need to develop their own change vision and process for supporting the change efforts of direct service institutions
Federations and central agencies can be an important vehicle (in some cases the most important vehicle) for planning and achieving transformation in direct service institutions. This importance is likely to vary from community to community.	Each community's landscape needs to be carefully assessed and a strategy developed for change that is specific to that community's situation.

THE PROCESS OF CHANGE
Exhibit 1

1- Problem identification
2- Invention
3 - Early Adoption
4 - Dispersion
5- Institutionalization

Numbers of
institutions that
change

time/effort

Synagogue Ch Mtgs 12/24/97

current CIJE view
— if ch syn s. bld w/o ch syn,
wold not work
SH — could ch chln's knowledge
but not attachment

BK — need to map linkages btwn
educ & other aspects of syn
— map actions of core indivs

SMC — J youngsters need a community
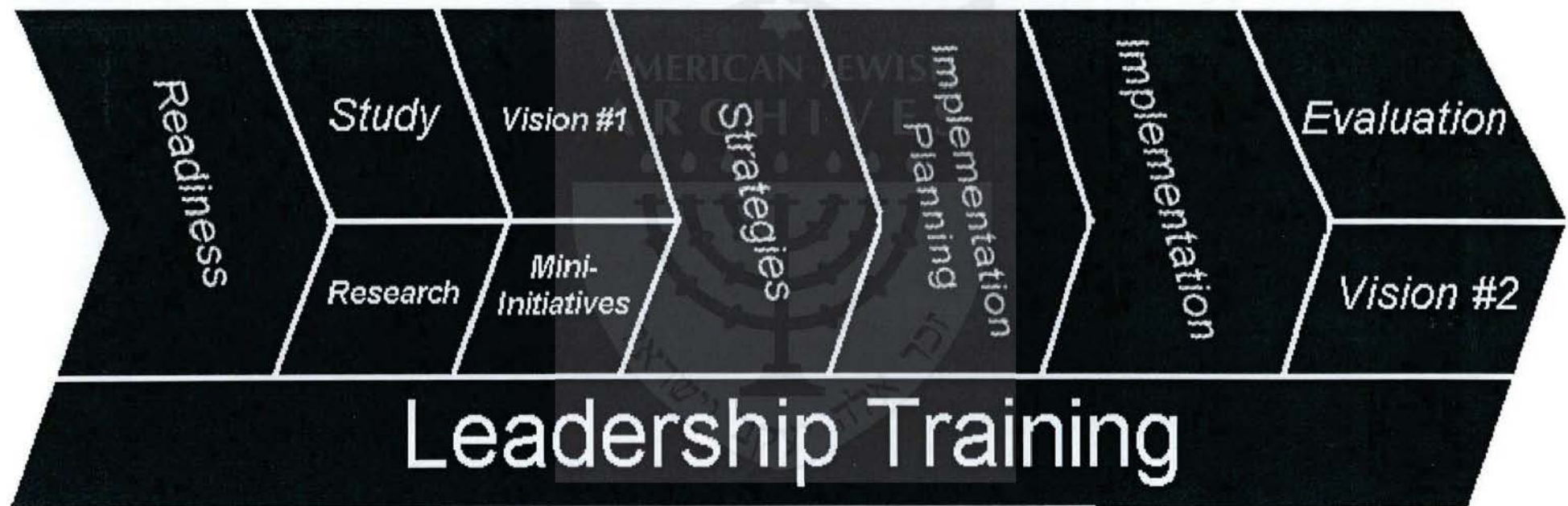in which they can enact
what they learn in the schl

Summary of Presentation on

SYNAGOGUE CHANGE PROCESSES

Change Think Tank
April, 1998

OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED CHANGE PROCESS

DETAILS OF PROPOSED CHANGE PROCESS

Stage of Process	Objective	Ideas
Readiness	Assess and build readiness for change	Writing why they want to change Congregation visioning day Telling them the tough truth about change Learning about our vision Visits to the "best practice" sites
Study	Change culture/mind-set Form the basis for a new vision	A curriculum of Jewish text and ideas, educational ideas, etc. for study and reflection
Research	Ground the approach in reality	Focus groups and parlor meetings
Vision #1	Articulate a inspirational vision for the congregation	A series of workshops on vision Involve the congregation in the process

Stage of Process	Objective	Ideas
Mini-initiatives	Develop a few "forays" into the world of change	Study of what others have done Set up a few initiative task forces
Strategies	Develop 2 – 3 strategies for broad-based change	Hold a strategic planning retreat or retreats
Implementation planning	Develop a practical plan for implementing the strategies	Work with existing structures to plan action steps, human resources, and funding
Implementation	*Do it!*	
Evaluation	Assess how well the changes are working	A survey instrument (pre- and post-)
Vision #2	Revisit the vision	Another workshop then involve the congregation

SYNAGOGUE CHANGE PROCESSES I'VE KNOWN
(my very subjective opinions)

Project	Strengths	Weaknesses
McKinsey	• Market research • Strategic orientation	• No content except business ideas
ECE	• Interaction between synagogues • Medium is the message • Strong process	• Not enough educational vision • Not enough content
Synagogue 2000	• Experiential • Great study itinerary • A vision (but weakly articulated)	• Weakly articulated process • Not enough consulting support • Hard to get beyond the "change club"

CIJE Synagogue Change Research Project

CIJE has been engaged in a number of projects that are designed to contribute to improving the quality of education in congregational schools. We have also observed and consulted to others working in this area. In our view, the overwhelming lesson of this work is that major change within the congregational school is unlikely to happen unless the entire culture of the synagogue changes. In other words, we must look at the synagogue as a holistic educational institution and examine how we can improve its effectiveness in this role. The congregational school is a piece of this, as are family education, adult education, synagogue retreats and the learning component of services. We must look at changing the priorities, the mind-set, the level of understanding of the leadership (lay and professional) before meaningful improvement in the quality of synagogue education will be possible.

This challenges us to ask the question "How can fundamental change be achieved in a synagogue setting?" We know it is not easy. Around the country there has been a wave of synagogue change projects. These include the Experiment in Congregational Education (ECE), Synagogue 2000, the McKinsey/NY UJA Federation Project, and many smaller projects sponsored by federations, foundations and by synagogues themselves. These projects, while relatively new, have already achieved some inspiring successes. Many of the people who have been involved with synagogue change feel that it would be beneficial to step back and to study carefully the successes and failures of these projects to-date with the following objectives:

1. Beginning to create a knowledge base about synagogue change that can inform the thinking of those doing the work around the country.

2. Beginning to develop a set of "lessons learned" based on looking across projects to determine:

   — What factors in these projects contribute to success or hinders success (e.g. change readiness, use of facilitators, features of the program itself)?
   — What are the different ways of defining success?
   — What are the different ways of evaluating success?

3. Helping to push forward the thinking of key people running major synagogue change projects by providing them with an opportunity to learn from each other's experience and to reflect on their own experience.

The research plan

We propose to put together a leadership-team that brings imagination, critical thinking, substantial experience with synagogue-change, and to put in its hands the responsibility for jointly developing the research design approach to change to change. Our current thinking is to include the following people:

Name	Institutional Affiliations
Karen Barth	CIJE
Larry Hoffman	Hebrew Union College/Synagogue 2000
Ron Wolfson	Univ. of Judaism/Synagogue 2000
Linda Thal	Union of Amer. Heb. Cong./Experiment in Cong. Education
Isa Aron	Hebrew Union College/Experiment in Cong. Education
Barry Holtz	Jewish Theological Seminary/CIJE
Jonathan Woocher	Jewish Edu. Service of North America
Rob Waitman	McKinsey & Company
Carolyn Keller	Boston Combined Jewish Philanthropies
Daniel Pekarsky	CIJE/University of Wisconsin

Our plan is to hire researchers who will meet with the leaders of major synagogue change projects and with the lay and professional leaders of a representative group of the synagogues themselves.

Interviews would be conducted in order to understand how the nature and the aims of the change process are understood by those engaged in those projects and to assess the degree of change underway, the extent to which the process itself helped or hindered change, the major obstacles to change and the key factors in examples of success. Cases would be compared to evaluate whether there are any systematic differences between the synagogues that are achieving greater success and those that are less successful. The researchers would also look at the ways in which Jewish learning and Jewish ideas are integrated into the change process.

The leadership team would meet 5-7 times to review and interpret the research as it unfolds and to begin to discuss and design a next-generation change process. A small working group would meet more often to plan these meetings and pre-digest the research data.

It should be noted that this research project is **not** an evaluation of any specific synagogue change program. It will only develop findings on the lessons learned across projects and will not comment specifically on the success or failure of any project.

***

The time is right for the development of effective methodologies for synagogue change. The demand is there from synagogue and communal leaders. The current projects will continue and new ones will start. We must refine our methods and move slowly to spread the use of these techniques on a broad basis, for **if we cannot build effective change techniques informed by compelling visions of congregations and of Jewish life, we run the risk that the "synagogue change movement" will become a fad that in its disappointments will leave a bad taste for decades**. On the other hand, this enormous interest in change is a terrific opportunity. If we can take advantage of this energy and openness to change, we have the potential to create vital institutions that could be at the very center of the revitalization of Jewish life in North America.

DRAFT RESEARCH DESIGN
FOR DISCUSSION

OBJECTIVE

To develop a knowledge base about synagogue change that can inform the thinking of those doing this work around the country.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the nature and scope of synagogue change projects happening around the country (including high-profile national projects, work being done by the Movements, work being done by foundations, and individual synagogue change projects)?

2. What are the characteristics of the synagogues involved in these projects?

3. What are the objectives of these projects?

   — What do the project organizers want the project to achieve?

   — What do the synagogues participating want the project to achieve?

4. What is their approach to change:

   — What is their change philosophy?

   — Do they involve outsiders or consultants? If so, in what way? Who are they? How are they selected?

   — Is there a specific change process explicit or implicit in the approach? If so what are its features

   — Is there specific content or answers that the leaders of the project are promoting?

   — What is the role of federations, movements and other organizations? How do the leaders of the project define success?

   — What is the evaluation plan, if any?

   — In what ways are Jewish ideas incorporated into these processes?

   — What does it cost?

5. What results have these projects achieved to-date, at the synagogue level?

—How do the leaders of the umbrella organization of each project (if any) perceive the results to-date?

—How do the lay and professional leaders of the synagogues perceive the results of the project to-date?

—Have major changes been made in the life of the synagogues as a result of these projects?

— Is there any tangible, measurable impact e.g. more people studying, more people attending services, etc.?

6. What do congregations go through to decide whether to join?

7. What aspects of process were the most helpful/most problematic for these synagogues?

— What do the leaders of the umbrella organizations (if any) perceive as the most effective/problematic parts of the process?

— What do the leaders of the synagogues perceive as the most effective/problematic parts of the process?

— In what ways has the process been tailored at the individual synagogue level? How has this helped or created problems?

8. Based on the above, are there any patterns that emerge in terms of:

— The process of change and resistance to change

— Characteristics of synagogues likely to succeed

— Characteristics of more successful processes

— Fit between synagogue characteristics and change process

— Typical stumbling blocks or issues

— Role of Jewish ideas

PROPOSED RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1. Review existing data and evaluations from projects

2. Select 40-50 synagogues from around the country that are involved in change programs

3. Develop a set of hypotheses based on the collective knowledge of the leadership group

4. Using a highly structured interview protocol, interview 4-5 lay leaders, the rabbi(s), cantor(s), senior educator(s), and (where appropriate) the executive director

5. Transcribe and summarize the interviews for review by the leadership team.

6. Draw both qualitative and quantitative results from the interview data.

7. Write results in a way that focuses on evaluating the hypotheses, and avoids any mention of individual projects or individual synagogues
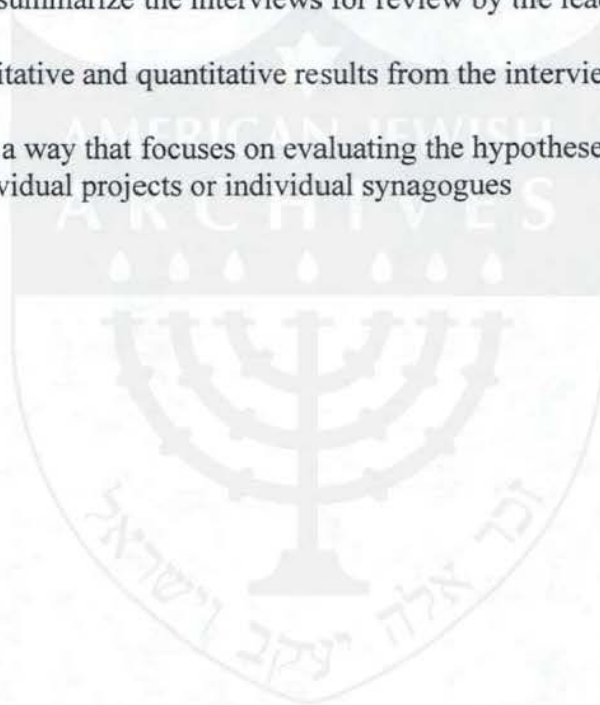
SECOND GENERATION SYNAGOGUE CHANGE PROJECT

PROJECT BACKGROUND

CIJE is committed to the revitalization of Jewish life through education. We believe that development of vibrant synagogues as centers of Jewish learning and living is a critical -- perhaps the most critical -- factor in meeting this challenge. As Dr. John Ruskay, Group Vice President Program Services, UJA-Federation of New York, wrote in *The Journal of Jewish Communal Service (Fall/Winter 1995/96)*:

> For Jewish education to be effective, there must be Jewish community in which what is being taught is visible and valued....If communal policy seeks to strengthen Jewish identity for marginal Jews, then creating compelling, engaging, inspired communities and institutions is necessary and must become a more significant communal strategy. Synagogues, JCCs, Hillels, and Jewish summer camps are of particular significance in the creation of compelling communities. For it is precisely in these institutions that marginal Jews encounter Jewish life. And of these institutions, the synagogue is of particular import because more Jews cross its portals than any other institution.

The synagogue today is in trouble. While 40-50% of U.S. Jews are members of synagogues, few of these seem to be seriously involved on a year-round basis in the study programs, prayer services and volunteer activities that the synagogue offers. Rabbis and synagogue lay leaders report frustration that so many members view their membership dues as a fee-for-service that buys them access to high holiday tickets, education for their children and the availability of a friendly rabbi for life-cycle occasions. Focus groups with less engaged members suggest that many find these occasional encounters with the synagogue to be unexciting and irrelevant to their lives.

Is it possible to change this? Is it possible to create synagogues where the majority of members are actively involved on a year-round basis? Where both adults and children are engaged in serious learning, prayer and volunteer work? Where these activities are infused with a sense of real meaning and are a vehicle for spiritual growth? Where even those who have previously rejected organized Jewish life can find something worth coming home to?

There are reasons to believe that it is. Around the country are examples of charismatic Jewish leaders who have created a synagogue, Hillel or adult study program that has begun to engage people on a large scale. In the Christian world, the mega-church phenomenon has demonstrated that redesigned churches can attract tens of thousands back into church life.

These examples give us hope, but there is still much work to be done to create a culture

of excellence in synagogue life with sufficiently developed models to inspire and guide the revitalization of synagogues on a broader scale. Around the country, there has been a wave of synagogue change projects. These include the Experiment in Congregational Education (ECE), Synagogue 2000, the McKinsey Synagogue Project and many smaller projects sponsored by federations, foundations and individuals. These projects, while relatively new, have already achieved some inspiring successes. However, many of us who have been involved with synagogue change projects feel that the success rate and the degree of change has been lower than we would like to see, and that we might benefit from stepping back, reflecting on what we are doing, and building a second-generation approach to synagogue change.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSAL

In the belief that such an effort is of critical importance, we are proposing to develop this second-generation approach to synagogue change, to pilot it in select synagogue settings, to systematically study and learn from our experience and to disseminate the findings. The objectives of the project we propose go far beyond the development of a few great synagogues. They include:

1. Beginning to create a knowledge base about synagogue change that can inform the thinking of those doing this work around the country

2. Creating written materials that can be broadly distributed and used in the training of rabbis, synagogue lay leaders and others in key leadership positions

3. Helping to push forward the thinking of the key people running major synagogue change projects by providing them with an opportunity to learn from each other's experience and to reflect on their own experience

4. Facilitating the development of a few synagogues as models of excellence that can become resources for the broader dissemination of the ideas and approaches that they have developed.

OUR APPROACH TO THE PROJECT

Our thinking about how to develop this second-generation approach to synagogue change brings together three significant elements which we believe will, through their dynamic interaction, produce credible and significant results:

1. Ideas about effective institutional change grounded in the experience of CIJE staff and consultants facilitating change in a variety of settings, as well as in systematic studies of change processes in different contexts

2

2. Commissioning a careful review of recent synagogue-change projects, a review designed to maximize our learning from what has already been tried

3. Establishing a leadership-team for this project that includes thoughtful and imaginative individuals with a range of important and complementary competencies who are serving as leadership in current change-efforts. The job of this team will be to scrutinize the ideas and findings identified in 1. and 2. and together to develop the project's second-generation approach to change

CIJE'S emerging ideas about change

Based on our work and research to date, we believe that effective institutional change requires systematic attention to six elements:

1. **Vision** - A clear articulation on the part of the leaders of the change project of the nature of the changes that the project is seeking to create, i.e. a clear statement of what about the new model is different from the old one. Such a vision must be based on ideas that are powerful enough to inspire real transformational change

2. **Leadership** - Internal leadership that is <u>ready</u> and <u>capable</u> of driving the change process. The leaders must be truly "on board" with the vision that the outside organization is offering

3. **Change process** - The project must have a change process that lays out the steps necessary to move the organization from where it is today toward the vision for the future. While every situation is different, such a process usually includes ways of involving a broad base of people in the change process and building toward consensus, a methodology for customizing the project's overall vision for the individual institution, an approach to communication with various constituencies, the development of a change leadership group, the design of the research, analysis and decision-making mechanisms necessary to put change initiatives in place, and a way of addressing the likely obstacles to successful change

4. **Culture** - The culture of the organization must support the desired changes. If it does not, specific approaches are needed that can move the culture and the mind-set of the congregation forward

5. **Skills** - The skills of the people who must do the work almost always need to be retooled in order for them to succeed in the changed environment. Change projects often deal with the above four issues but forget to address the skill needs of the people who will be left with the job of actually implementing the changes

3

6. **Resources** - The organization must have sufficient human and financial resources to implement change

Based on this model of change and other insights that have emerged in the course of our working with synagogues and other Jewish settings, we have developed a set of, we believe, powerful ideas about how to approach second-generation synagogue change efforts. While the design of the project allows for the possibility that these ideas will undergo interpretation and revision as the work unfolds, we are confident that they will significantly shape the direction of the work. They are:

- Clear specification of the **vision** of the revitalized synagogue, with a stronger focus on building something that works for "outsiders" to synagogue life

- An emphasis on encountering powerful Jewish ideas which have the capacity to illuminate the process and aims of the change project

- Extensive skills and ideas training built into the process for lay and professional leadership and for other employees of the synagogue

- Tough "admissions" requirements for synagogues with particular attention to the issue of leadership and to the availability of resources

- Sufficient planning time and resources up-front for careful design of the change process, based on serious reflection and analysis of what is working, what is not working in current synagogue change programs, and why

- A focus on serious Jewish learning as both a vehicle for change and an end product of change

- Sufficient funding and a small enough number of congregations to allow for intensive consulting resources to work with each synagogue

- Selection of synagogues from one geographic area to facilitate frequent meetings and cross-fertilization of ideas

In addition, while this project would address all aspects of synagogue life, we feel that there is a particular need to deal with the synagogue as a center for education. When we say education we mean it in the broadest sense as **the transmission of culture across generations.** Therefore, we believe that this project must pay careful attention to:

- Methodologies for education of adults that can both inspire and inform

- The challenge of the education of children and families i.e. the redesign of the system of supplementary education in synagogues

The leadership team

We propose to put together a leadership-team that brings imagination, critical thinking, substantial experience with synagogue-change, and to put in its hands the responsibility for jointly developing this second-generation approach to change to change. Our current thinking is to include the following people:

Name	Institutional Affiliations	Committed
Karen Barth	CIJE	Yes
Larry Hoffman	HUC/SYN 2000	
Ron Wolfson	UJ/SYN 2000	
Linda Thal	UAHC/ECE	Yes
Isa Aron	HUC/ECE	Yes
Barry Holtz	JTS/CIJE	Yes
Jonathan Woocher	JESNA	
Rob Waitman	McKinsey & Company	Yes
Carolyn Keller	Boston CJP	
Daniel Pekarsky	CIJE/University of Wisconsin	Yes

Reviewing first generation change efforts

Our plan is to hire researchers who will meet with the leaders of major synagogue change projects and with the lay and professional leaders of a representative group of the synagogues themselves. Interviews would be conducted in order to understand how the nature and the aims of the change process are understood by those engaged in those projects and to assess the degree of change underway, the extent to which the process itself helped or hindered change, the major obstacles to change and the key factors in examples of success. Cases would be compared to evaluate whether there are any systematic differences between the synagogues that are achieving greater success and those that are less successful. The researchers would also look at the ways in which Jewish learning and Jewish ideas are integrated into the change process.

The leadership team would meet 5-7 times to review and interpret the research as it unfolds and to begin to debate and design a next-generation change process. A small working group would meet more often to plan these meetings and pre-digest the research data.

THE PROJECT TIMELINE AND WORKPLAN

Year 1 of the project would be devoted almost exclusively to research and design of the process.

Midway through Year 1, we would begin to recruit synagogues and consultants for a project to start up at the beginning of Year 2. The leaders of the selected synagogues and the consultants would be brought into the design process toward the end of Year 1.

Year 2 would kick off the actual testing of the second-generation process. It is impossible to detail the exact activities of Year 2 ahead of time, since the specifics will be developed during Year 1, but its is likely that they would include some or all of the following:

- An intensive training program for lay and professional leadership focusing on powerful ideas that can help them to build a communal vision, and on the techniques of change leadership that can help them turn the vision into action

- A training program for the consultants to ensure that they are working with the synagogues in a consistent way and that have the necessary tools to do the work

- A retreat for participating teams from each synagogue to enable them to learn from each other in an intensive environment and to provide an opportunity to model the types of changes that are encompassed by the project's vision of a synagogue

- 4-6 additional meetings of the synagogue teams to touch-base and share problems and successes

- Intensive consulting support for the synagogues to guide them through the process and keep things moving forward

- A travel program for members of synagogue teams to visit centers of excellence.

In addition, the researchers would continue to work with the project to provide feedback to the leadership team, which would meet regularly to make mid-course corrections.

In Year 3, the project would likely begin to intensify its focus on making change happen within congregations. Ongoing consulting support and training for the synagogue leadership would continue to be provided and at least one retreat would probably be held for the synagogue teams. The process of ongoing reflection by the leadership team would continue, and the results of the first two years would be written up for publication.

All evidence suggests that three years is too short a time frame to complete a process of synagogue change. We are looking for funding partners who are willing to consider a renewal of funding for a second three-year period, if the evaluated results of the first three years suggest concrete direction and real promise for the future.

CIJE EXPERTISE

CIJE staff members and consultants bring unique expertise to this project. Karen Barth, Executive Director of CIJE, brings 10 years of experience working with large corporations on issues of change and innovation. She also has extensive experience with change projects in Jewish organizations and has been intensively involved in several important synagogue change projects. Barry Holtz, a Professor at the Jewish Theological Seminary and a consultant to CIJE, brings knowledge and experience about education in the synagogue setting. Dan Pekarsky, a Professor of Education at the University of Wisconsin and a consultant to CIJE, is an expert in questions of educational vision. He is one of the leaders of The Goals Project, a collaborative effort between CIJE and the Mandel Institue in Jerusalem to create new approaches for helping educating institutions to articulate and realize their visions.

* * *

The time is right for the development of effective methodologies for synagogue change. The demand is there from synagogue and communal leaders. The current projects will continue and new ones will start, but if we cannot build effective change techniques informed by compelling visions of congregations and of Jewish life, we run the risk that the "synagogue change movement" will become a fad that in its disappointments will leave a bad taste for decades. On the other hand, this enormous interest in change is a terrific opportunity. If we can take advantage of this energy and openness to change, we have the potential to create vital institutions that could be at the very center of the revitalization of Jewish life in North America.

INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE THINK-TANK
Summary of Meeting #1, April 29, 1998

BACKGROUND

The institutional change think-tank was called into being
with the aim of developing a meaningful and usable approach to
institutional change -- an approach which we could then
experiment with, revise, and refine through forays into the
field. Though our interest extends to educating institutions of
various kinds, our initial focus will be on synagogues. This
emphasis reflects CIJE's belief that the transformation of
synagogues is a critical ingredient in the effort to revitalize
American Jewish life, as well as our intention of launching a
Synagogue Change Project a year from now.

In preliminary conversations concerning the Think Tank, it
was projected that the group would meet 5 or 6 times in the
course of the year, and that at each meeting, it would have a
chance to encounter and learn from approaches to change
associated with a particular domain (e.g., general education, the
world of corporations, community-change efforts, and existing
synagogue-change projects). The challenge would be to assess the
relevance of the insights and approaches associated with these
other domains to our own work in Jewish education; and, by the
end of a year's time, to emerge with a serviceable approach to
change that is true to our own convictions and integrates
pertinent ideas encountered during the work of the Think Tank.

We also decided that prior to encountering beliefs about and
approaches to change associated with other domains, it would be
important for us to articulate our own present ideas concerning
the process and aims of the change-process. Through subsequent
encounters with various approaches to change throughout the year,
this body of ideas would then be deepened, revised, or refined.

These considerations led to a decision to devote our first
meeting to an effort to articulate CIJE's current approach to
change: during the first part of the day, we would focus on
fundamental CIJE convictions about the process and aims of
change; and in the second part of the day, we would look at a
concrete approach to change that reflects some of these ideas as
well as Karen Barth's experience in this domain. The day would
also include a chance to examine Jewish sources the might inform
our thinking about change, as well as an opportunity to think
about next steps.

In preparation for the meeting, Dan Pekarsky drafted a short

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document that attempted to articulate (what seemed to him) some central CIJE-beliefs concerning change. This document, along with his pieces on the place of vision in educational reform, the two pieces authored by Amy Gerstein for CIJE concerning the change-process, and Seymour Fox's piece on Ramah, were sent to participants prior to the meeting.

Critical to the success of the Think Tank, we realized, was not just our ability to identify articulate representatives of powerful approaches to change in different domains, but also our ability to bring to the table a thoughtful group of individuals bringing rich and complementary perspectives to our conversations concerning these different approaches. We were especially eager to include individuals who are already very sophisticated concerning educational change and individuals who could enrich our discussions with powerful Jewish ideas concerning the process and aims of change. The initial group of participants we agreed on included: a) core-CIJE staff, including Eli Holzer and Lisa Malik; b) members of the Guiding Ideas Study Group ("GUIDES"); and c) Hank Levin. It was understood that it may prove desirable to add other individuals to the group.

The following individuals were able to participate in our first meeting: Karen Barth, Gail Dorph, Amy Gerstein, Cippi Harte, Alvan Kaunfer, Hank Levin, Lisa Malik (via conference-call), Daniel Pekarsky, and Nessa Rapoport.

RESPONDING TO SOME FORMULATIONS OF CIJE'S IDEAS CONCERNING CHANGE

After some introductories, participants were invited to spend about ten minutes reviewing two documents purporting to express some basic CIJE ideas concerning change: a somewhat revised version of the piece by Dan Pekarsky that had already been sent out to participants; and a piece by Karen Barth, written some time ago, entitled "CIJE's Change Philosophy." **(See Appendix 1)** Below is a summary of some of responses to these documents:

1. The relationship between the "Building Blocks" document and the "CIJE Philosophy of Change" document was unclear to one participant.

2. There is a need to more effectively order the principles articulated in the Building Blocks document, so as to distinguish between philosophical commitments, strategic principles, and

other pertinent categories.

3. The Building Blocks document is insufficiently differentiated with respect to the different kinds of leaders involved in a change process (e.g. informal and formal, lay/professional), the respective roles of each, the relationship between the leadership-team and other constituencies in the process of identifying and coming together around a vision, etc. It was suggested that the distinction between a sales- and marketing-orientation among leaders would be pertinent to consider.

4. The Building Blocks document may suggest more orderliness than is characteristic of change-processes. Typically, even very successful processes are fairly messy and idiosyncratic. We should avoid language and metaphors that understate this messiness and suggest that change is clean. linear, and continuous.

5. The Building Blocks document could be taken to imply that the various tasks it identifies need to be addressed only once. In fact, many of the elements of a vital change process, (e.g. leadership, the nature of and buy-in to the vision, etc.) need to be returned to again and again. More radically, one person suggested that we should avoid thinking of the change-process as a whole as a one-time journey with a determinate beginning and end; rather, we should be thinking about institutionalizing a process that will be on-going.

6. We should not think that all of the conditions of change need to be in place for a meaningful change-process to be inaugurated. As Lizbeth Schor suggests in COMMON PURPOSE, it is often possible to develop those critical pre-conditions that are not initially present.

7. The "Why are we engaging in this time-consuming process?"-question needs to be revisited periodically during the process of change. Change is hard work, and along the way participants may lose sight of the purposes that have given rise to the process (with the result that they may grow disengaged or lose a sense of direction).

8. Because change is hard work, it is important that there be rewards for the participants along the way. These might range from opportunities to engage in serious Jewish study as part of the process (a strong perk for at least one participant!) to opportunities to implement certain do-able and meaningful changes early-on ("low-hanging fruit").

9. Who is change for?? These documents don't address the inreach/outreach issue. Is change aimed at those constituencies that are already actively involved -- or at the mass of individuals who are uninvolved? Typically, such processes are energized by those who are already very involved, and these folks tend to be individuals whose needs are already reasonably well met by the institution. A change-process organized by them is unlikely to meet the needs of, to draw in, the uninvolved. If our aim is "to bring people back", we must attend to this issue.

10. A vision must be palpable. Typically, the institutional/educational experience of most Jews in Jewish settings has been deadening and uninspiring. Progress requires a vision of something better; but for such a vision to take hold in the hearts of the critical stake holders, it has to be more real than rhetoric -- it must be palpable!! This means giving them powerful experiences through which they can "taste" the vision, experience it first-hand. Otherwise, there is a danger that they will aspire to no more than a somewhat improved version of the impoverished reality they have experienced.

11. Be sure not to confuse a vision with a vision-statement. At best a vision-statement is an articulation of an institution's living vision; at worst, it's a poor substitute.

12. The distinction between an institutional vision and the vision of an educated Jewish human being (or of a meaningful Jewish existence) that the institution is designed to encourage and support tends to be lost in these documents. There is insufficient emphasis on "existential vision" and its relationship to institutional vision in the synagogue-context. These matters need attention.

13. We should avoid viewing the institutional culture as an obstacle to change; we should try to identify the way in which it can be the ally of the change-process.

14. At least one participant encouraged us to revisit basic questions concerning why we believe synagogues need changing and to imagine a genuinely transformative vision. While not offering such a vision, she suggested that an adequate would need to respond to the deepest anxieties of our time and would interpret central Jewish categories in relation to them.

15. One participant asked us to consider the possibility that in practice - and perhaps in the ideal - synagogues feature more than one vision.

16. One participant discovered the following critical issues embedded in the documents:

a. **sustaining interest and involvement**. The idea of change may initially be very exciting. But the work is demanding and it takes a long time. Hence, the problem of sustaining interest and involvement.

b. **Meaningfully infusing powerful Jewish ideas**. It may be possible to engage the participants in a change process in serious Jewish study; but the encounter with powerful Jewish ideas, however meaningful to the participants, is no guarantee that these ideas will then infuse efforts to develop a guiding vision. Is there a way of introducing powerful Jewish ideas so that they do suffuse the change-process?

c. **The possibility of a powerful vision shared by diverse individuals**. In communities that feature substantial ideological diversity (for example, many synagogues), the development of a vision that is powerful, widely shared, and concrete enough to offer practical guidance may prove a difficult challenge.

d. **The problem of broad-based buy-in to the change process**. While it may be possible to generate high investment in the change-process among a core-constituency, it may be significantly more difficult to get a broad-base of buy-in from the membership of the institution. Can a change-process be successful without this broad buy-in? Are there ways of encouraging such buy-in?

e. **Readiness conditions**. Not all institutions will be ready for a serious change-process. What conditions need to be in place (or readily achievable) for a change-process to have a fighting chance of success?

f. **Role of "outsiders" in the process of change**. What role, if any, should be assigned to outside-facilitators in the process of change? How much and what kind of responsibility should they assume for guiding the process of change?

17. Enthusiasm was expressed for:

a. making Jewish learning and ideas central to the process

of identifying a guiding vision;

    b. making learning/education both the vehicle and the aim of the change process (although, it was suggested, this idea needs greater emphasis).

18. Our discussion was punctuated by repeated and varied references to individual change. It was suggested that:

    a. the ultimate goal of synagogue change-efforts is individual change -- facilitating deeper, richer, more spiritual experiences for the individuals who make up the institution's community.

    b. change in individuals is integral to the process through which institutional change takes place.

    c. there are significant and instructive parallels between individual change and institutional change.

DEVORA STEINMETZ'S SESSION ON JACOB

    #18 offers a springboard to the session led by Devora Steinmetz, which focused on the transformation of Jacob around the time of his leaving Laban and his re-encounter with Esau. In examining Jacob's growth, we considered a number of themes and insights that may be pertinent to our work, including the following:

    a. Jacob isn't entirely transformed; for better and/or for worse, some of the old survives in the new!

    b. some of the continuity of the old and the new arises from the circumstance that Jacob changes alone; that is, those who surround him haven't undergone a similar process of change.

    c. what makes Jacob capable of undergoing a series of changes is a larger sense of purpose (in relation to which specific goals and forms of conduct carry the experienced status of means/strategy).

    d. change is painful and involves struggle.

    e. outside catalysts may be necessary in order for significant change to come about.

COMPARING APPROACHES TO SYNAGOGUE CHANGE

Following lunch, Karen Barth developed an evaluative comparison of three major synagogue-change projects -- the McKinsey Project she had been engaged with, the Experiment in Congregational Education, and Synagogues 2000. In each case, she sought to highlight the project's best and worst features.

MCKINSEY

Strengths. Strong market-research. Excellent job of "listening to your customers" (i.e., congregants) via focus groups.

Weaknesses. Zero-content!! No new ideas are thrown into the mix, no taste of inspiring alternatives to what participants already know.

Karen notes that there is a need for strategic thinking between vision and implementation -- but it was, as I reviewed my notes, not clear to me whether this point was made in praise or in criticism of Mckinsey.

EXPERIMENT IN CONGREGATIONAL EDUCATION

Strengths. There is a lot of fruitful interaction between synagogues. The mind-set of lay-people is central to the process ??? [what does she mean?]. Jewish learning is at the heart of both the aim and the process of change. ECE is very strong on "process"!

Weaknesses. Though ECE speaks of "communities of learners", it offers no clear vision of a thriving community of learners. In addition, ECE is weak on "content": there is no menu of programming or curriculum-content suggestive of what could be done differently.

SYNAGOGUE 2000

SYNAGOGUE 2000 features two tracks , one Healing, the other Prayer. It's a two-year process. The first is designed to chart a change itinerary via a process of reflection and planning; the second is intended as an opportunity to implement a plan. As part of the kick-off year, participants undergo a powerful prayer-experience that offers them a sense of what's possible.

Strengths. Though weakly articulated [Explain!], the

experiential piece is very powerful.

Weaknesses. In part because of the experiential piece, there is a great gap between the central players in the change-process and the rest of the congregation. In addition, the actual change -process (intended for Year 2) is very weakly articulated.

After considering all three approaches, Karen notes one criticism that applies to all three: none of them addresses the skills needed by -- and needed to be cultivated in -- critical players (rabbis, cantors, educators, lay leaders, etc.)

ECE, WILLOW CREEK, AND INTERMEDIATE OPTIONS

In our discussion of ECE, a contrast was drawn between its completely open-ended approach to vision and the highly specified approach to vision of Willow Creek, which has, in the spirit of McDonald's, offered franchise institutions very specific guidelines regarding guiding vision and week-to-week implementation.

We considered (what seemed to us to be) more congenial, intermediate positions:

a. target-institutions agree to certain general visional principles, with the understanding that they will be differentially interpreted by different institutions. This is close to the practice of the Coalition of Essential Schools.

b. Along the way to a vision, participants encounter and are encouraged to struggle with powerful questions and content that have the power to deepen and expand (without dictating) their thinking about an adequate guiding vision.

BARTH'S FIRST ITERATION OF A CIJE APPROACH TO SYNAGOGUE CHANGE

For a careful account of Karen Barth's presentation of an approach to Synagogue-change, see Appendix 2. Comments evoked by her presentation are listed below:

1. Overall, the approach to Synagogue change she presented was greeted with enthusiasm. The sense of the group was that this was a great starting-point for the Think Tank's mission of emerging with a meaningful approach to change at the end of a year's time.

2. A couple of participants voiced the concern that the model did

not address the issue of governance sufficiently. (What is the group that steers the process? Who is it made up of? How are they chosen? What is the group's job? etc.)

3. The map and presentation that Karen offered look fairly linear, but the process itself is more web-like, with some activities going on simultaneously and some of them (like evaluation and the development of vision) going on indefinitely (alongside of, and feeding, other strands of the process). While Karen agreed with this critique, she added that in practice one often ends up doing one thing at a time, and she suggested that having a somewhat linear plan-of-action may be of value even if the process turns out to be very web-like.

Not only do some of the activities continue in an ongoing way, it was suggested by more than one participant that the process as a whole needs to be viewed not as an event in the life of the institution but as a way of thinking that becomes institutionalized.

4. Doubt was expressed concerning whether the process of study built into Karen's model would actually suffuse the effort to develop an institutional vision. It being possible that the activity of study, however rewarding, will be self-contained, one needs to ask: how structure the learning and/or the visioning so that these activities enrich one another?

5. It was reiterated that in the efforts to arrive at a meaningful vision, there should be opportunities to experience first-hand, to taste, richly meaningful forms of educational/Jewish experience that take the participants beyond what they have probably experienced in the past [in the way that, for example, participants in Synagogue 2000 were given the chance to undergo very powerful prayer-experiences]; otherwise, there is a strong probability that the possibilities entertained by those doing the visioning will be limited by their own, generally impoverished, past experiences in Jewish settings.

6. While the process articulated by Karen focused on the development of vision and on tracing out the implications of vision for practice, implementation itself was not strongly represented in her description. What provisions can be introduced to make it likely that practical efforts will follow or accompany efforts to articulate and think through the implications of a vision?

7. It was urged by one participant that the model must attend seriously to the gap that sometimes arises between "the leading-

vanguard" and the mass of constituents.

8. In the course of discussing Karen's approach, a kind of vision-continuum was articulated:

    a. At one end, the vision is completely and totally in your hands. Sit together and come up with what you will!

    b. At the other end, some outside expert or guru offers you a vision to work with, a vision which may vary in its specificity and openness to interpretation.

    c. In the middle is a position that sounds like this: "it's your job to come up with your vision, but along the way you need to struggle with a particular body of content and questions."

9. In relation to the issues discussed in #6, the question was raised: how do movements like the Coalition or Essential Schools arrive at the broad-based visions that inform their own work?; and the answer seems to be, "There is no one answer to this question!" It was suggested that, in the case of the Coalition, its guiding principles originated with Sizer. In the case of Accelerated Schools, the guiding vision grew out of reflections on responses elicited by three questions:

    a. Describe the dream-school for your own children and design a dream-school for children in an inner-city community. What are the similarities and differences between these schools?

    b. What should every child be able to do and to know?

    c. Describe a school that would meet your needs [as an educator or as a student??] as an adult.

10. In thinking about the upcoming work of our Think-Tank, it was suggested:

    a. that it would be important to identify and make part of our own group the site-coordinator who will be charged with overseeing the pilot-projects to be launched next year.

    b. that, in addition to following through on our original plan to look at some concrete cases of change and at approaches to change associated with different

realms of endeavor, it might make sense to launch some
exploratory interventions this year, informed by the
approach sketched out by Karen.

d. that "internal or inner work" should be a prominent
dimension of our own work this year. That is, we
should turn ourselves into a kind of focus-group that
struggles to find our own answers to such questions as
"What would an ideal Synagogue - the Synagogue that
would meet our own needs as individuals and families -
look like?" Or, if we were moving in a Sizer-direction,
what would our own eight or ten guiding principles look
like? Put differently, we should set before us and try
to answer for ourselves relevant counterparts of the
kinds of questions identified in #9.

11. A question was raised about the relationship between the work
undertaken by this group and the work of Synagogue Change
Research Project that Lisa Malik is steering. This matter needs
to be clarified.

12. Someone underscored the importance of on-going documentation
and evaluation of the process of change, evaluation conducted by
both internal and external evaluators.

Appendix

Materials Central to April 29 Meeting.

1. Some Building-Blocks of a CIJE Approach to Synagogue Change

2. Change Philosophy and Emerging Ideas on Strategy

3. Summary of Presentation in Synagogue Change Processes

SOME BUILDING-BLOCKS OF A CIJE APPROACH TO SYNAGOGUE CHANGE

Daniel Pekarsky, April 1998

INTRODUCTION

Embedded in CIJE's discourse are a number of principles that are relevant to institutional change-efforts (be they in schools, Synagogues, or any number of other Jewish educating institutions); while these principles may not tell us what to do in any very concrete sense, a number of them represent criteria or standards that need to be satisfied if a change-process and its outcomes are to be in our judgment adequate. Based on various consultations, informal conversations, conferences and other activities that a number of us have been engaged in, below I attempt (in a less than systematic or comprehensive way) to identify some of these principles. Many of these points are treated at somewhat greater length in the two accompanying papers dealing with vision and education; both of these papers grew out of conversations within the CIJE/Mandel Institute worlds. You are encouraged to highlight unclarities, to assess whether I am correct that these principles have been central to our thinking, to articulate doubts, and to identify principles and concerns not herein articulated that should have been.[1]

PRINCIPLES

1. We understand a Synagogue as an educating institution or learning community. Its various contexts and activities - ranging from formal educational arrangements to board meetings, religious services, communal meals, youth groups, wedding ceremonies, and funerals -- are all to be understood as avenues for the intellectual, spiritual, social and moral growth of its members.

2. A healthy synagogue (or any other educating institution) is organized around a shared and compelling vision that articulates its fundamental raison d'etre and aspirations and that guides decision-making, policies, and practices down to the institution's very details. Such a vision vividly captures what a thriving synagogue would look like, inclusive of the attitudes, aspirations, dispositions, etc. that mark members of this community.

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[1] Because my own work has been so closely connected with our Goals Project, the kinds of principles I identify in this document are closely related to the work of that project. This makes it all the more important to add to the list of principles summarized in this paper other ideas that grow out of other phases of our work.

How to infuse the change-process with powerful Jewish ideas in a way that will seem meaningful and relevant to the change process is a critical educational challenge that we have not yet adequately addressed; but we believe that this effort requires both pedagogical good sense and carefully designed materials (articles, exercises, etc.). Efforts, like those undertaken by the Mandel Institute's Educated Jew Project, to develop materials that can be used as part of a serious change-process are to be encouraged.

7. An important component of the process of change is an effort to look honestly and thoughtfully at "what is". This involves several inquiries:

a. At any given time in its history, a vision (or visional elements, more or less clear and compelling, and more or less coherent with one another) are embodied in the culture of an institution -- in its policies, practices, forms of organization, and budgetary commitments. Unearthing the values and assumptions (about education, about Judaism, about children, etc.) implicit in existing practice is an important phase of the process of becoming a more vision-driven institution. In some cases, it will be an ideal starting-point for deliberations concerning what the Synagogue's guiding vision should be.

b. Equally important is the effort to identify the purposes at work in existing practices and policies and, through a process of self-examination, to assess the actual outcomes of these practices and policies.

c. Looking at "what is" includes a careful attempt to understand the perceptions and attitudes of the Synagogue's varied constituencies, including - and perhaps especially - what they take to be problematic in the life of the synagogue. Clarifying "the problem" as undestood by different cnstituencies is essential.

8. As critical as is the effort to clarify the Synagogue's guiding vision is the willingness to deliberate seriously, honestly and imaginatively about what would be required, given current realities, for this vision to be meaningfully reflected in the life of the congregation.

The relation between vision and practice is complex and multi-levelled. Seymour Fox has identified five such levels: these are Philosophy; Philosophy of Education; Theory of Practice; Practice; and Evaluation. Familiarity with these levels and the relationship between them, and the capacity to

continually assessing where the learner (the community as a whole or individual members) is and, in light of this, developing educational experiences (made up of questions, content, and activities of a certain kind) that have the power to stimulate appropriate forms of growth. What these forms of growth are (reflecting on the relationship between aspirations and practice; encountering a challenge to one's aspirations, etc.) will depend on an assessment of immediate circumstances; c) a living bridge to powerful Jewish ideas and texts -- a person who is able in a timely way to infuse the deliberations of the Synagogue community with powerful Jewish ideas that enrich their thinking and range of options.

14. The willingness of a Synagogue to undertake a serious change-effort depends on a measure of confidence that fruitful change is possible. Powerful and accessible examples of institutions that have undergone and profited from a serious process of change will prove invaluable in fostering this confidence; so will examples of what we have been calling "vision-driven institutions."

To: Participants in CIJE's Think Tank on Institutional Change
From: Dan Pekarsky and Nessa Rapoport
Re: Our August 19 session
Date: August 4, 1998

Enclosed are background-materials for our August 19 meeting, which will be held at CIJE from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. We have included a fairly extensive summary of our last discussion, which highlights issues that were identified, along with the materials around which that discussion was organized. Also included are some writings by or about Abraham Joshua Heschel, on whose work we will be focusing on August 19. The rationale for this focus will be explained below.

As you may recall, and as the meeting-summary suggests, the sense of our group on April 29 was that it would be valuable to look in greater depth at some of the critical phases of the change-process described by Karen Barth. Among these phases, there seemed to be a special interest in the one associated with the development of a guiding vision. This interest seemed to have two dimensions: first, many of us felt that a distinctive and valuable CIJE contribution will be the development of an approach to the problem of vision that is deeply respectful of the voices of critical institutional stake holders **and which also** involves, as an integral component, challenging encounters with powerful Jewish ideas; second, many of us felt that it would be important and also exciting for our own group to do what was called "inner work: -- to grapple ourselves with some of the difficult questions concerning vision that we hoped participants in an institution would address in the contest of a change-process. How, it was asked, might we ourselves, both as a group and individually, approach the challenge of articulating a compelling synagogue vision, and might our effort to do this teach us something important that would illuminate the work of this Think Tank?

These considerations have shaped the agenda for our August 19 meeting. Through a set of activities that will include an effort to think, both individually and together, about the kind of synagogue-vision that might excite us, we will have an opportunity to develop insights and raise questions concerning the process through which a synagogue-community might develop a powerful guiding vision. Because we believe that the process of envisioning an exciting synagogue can be profoundly enriched through the encounter with Jewish content, we thought it essential to incorporate into our conception of the day a chance to wrestle with the ideas of a powerful Jewish thinker, with attention to their implications for a vision of Jewish life and synagogue design. Because we think that his views speak to the concerns of many in our generation, we decided to look at Abraham Joshua Heschel at our upcoming meeting; but we recommend focusing on him with the expectation that in subsequent meetings we will encounter very different but equally powerful thinkers, and consider the implications of their ideas for our work. More strongly, we think it essential that the effort to envision a thriving synagogue include opportunities to wrestle with very different kinds of perspectives.

We are excited about the chance to think about Heschel, about our own visions of Jewish and synagogue life, and about the relevance of all this to the work of the Think Tank. In preparation for our meeting please try to read the essays authored by Heschel and "Carl Stern's Interview with Dr. Heschel". The essay by Laurence J. Silberstein is included in case you are interested in a comparative and somewhat theoretical discussion of Heschel's ideas.

All the best until the 19th.