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Outreach [Intermarriage], 1985-1994.

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#### RELIGION

### Despite Prohibition, Estimated 40% Will Wed Jews to Non-Jews

# **Area Reform Rabbis Open to Mixed Marriages**

By JOHN DART, Times Religion Writer

PALM SPRINGS—About 40% of the Reform rabbis in Los Angeles and Orange counties will officiate at weddings of a Jew and a non-Jew under some conditions despite their own denomination's guidelines opposing so-called mixed-marriage ceremonies.

That estimate, by Rabbi Lennard R. Thal, a regional Reform executive, is higher than generally supposed. Thal estimated that between 30 to 40 rabbis out of 85 affiliated with the liberal wing of Judaism perform such services.

Rabbis who perform such weddings rarely talk about the issue

For one thing, they are going against Judaism's legal tradition forbidding intermarriage. That law is strictly observed by Orthodox and Conservative rabbis, and widely supported by most Jewish community leaders, who fear that intermarriage is partly responsible for American Jewry's eroding numbers and decline in religious observance.

It is estimated that one Jew in three marries outside the faith, although studies vary widely.

Most Reform rabbis who officiate at mixed marriages believe that refusing to do so will do nothing to stem their proliferation. They believe they are taking a constructive step toward preserving Jewish identity within families with one Jewish spouse.

Some of these rabbis, who say they do not worry about criticism from their peers, are reluctant to be identified for another reason: "The demand for mixed-marriage ceremonies is so great that I would be overrun with requests," said a well-known Los Angeles rabbi.

Thal, however, contends that while while "the phone might go off the hook" for popular rabbis, "there is no shortage of people relative to the need." Thal is director of the Pacific Southwest Council, the Los Angeles-based association of 64 synagogues aligned with Reform Judaism's Union of American Hebrew Congregations. He was attending the Palm Springs meeting of the Pacific Assn. of Reform Rabbis.

Rabbis who refuse to officiate at mixed marriages say it is a matter of personal and religious integrity. "I can't look a non-Jew in the eye and say this wedding is sanctioned by the Jewish people and have him break the glass at the end of the bis, on the other hand, seem more tradition-bound, Glaser said.

Two rabbis who do perform mixed marriage ceremonies—Leonard Beerman of Leo Baeck Temple, Los Angeles, and Henri Front, Temple Beth David, Westminster—said they will not co-officiate at so-called ecumenical weddings with a priest or minister. Both said they require that the couple agree to study Judaism, have a Jewish home and raise the children as Jews.

Beerman said he has always been

to break with tradition?

A possible factor is that most. Reform synagogues have been lenient on the issue—unlike major temples in some other cities.

The late Rabbi Edgar F. Magnin occasionally performed mixed marriages, said his longtime associate at Wilshire Boulevard Temple, Rabbi Alfred Wolf.

"As long as the Jewish partner had a firm commitment to Judaism, the couple intended to have a Jewish home and the non-Jewish partner had no conflicting faith commitment," Magnin would disregard the Reform guidelines, last re-stated in 1973, said Wolf, who is now retired.

These days, in Los Angeles County, Thal said, "to the best of my knowledge, the majority of rabbis of congregations with 400 families or more will officiate under a variety of circumstances." Put another way, he said, "There are two or three senior rabbis of large congregations in Los Angeles who do not officiate at mixed marriages."

One of those apparently is Rabbi Daniel Polish of Hollywood's Temple Israel. He was among 24 rabbis who recently signed a nationwide protest statement against a privately published argument for mixed-marriage weddings.

The statement, mailed last week to almost 1,000 U.S. and Canadian Reform rabbis, responded to criticism by Prof. Eugene Mihaly of Reform's Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati of the basis on which mixed-marriage ceremonies are discouraged.

At the same time, the protest statement suggested that the refusal to officiate at mixed weddings may harm a rabbi's career.

"What is intimidating is the fact that some congregations are screening out pulpit candidates who do not officiate at mixed marriages," the signers said.

Reform officials interviewed here, however, said that is not usually the case.

"It's not an illegitimate area of questioning," Thal said, "but in the 3½ years I've been in my position there has not been one congregation that has made a decision based on that."

One rabbi, who did not wish to be identified, said he was recently tempted to change his, stance against mixed-marriage ceremonies in order to beat out a rival candidate whom he thought condoned the practice. The other rabbi got the pulpit, but it turned out that he also opposed such marriages.

"He convinced the selection committee that it was not the most important thing by which to judge a rabbi," the losing rabbi said.

Rabbi A. Stanley Dreyfus of New York, the national placement director for Reform Judaism, said, "We encourage synagogues not to make it a prime factor and we prepare panels of candidates without regard to whether they do or they don't" (approve of mixed marriages).

Dreyfus, who said he resisted pleas for mixed marriages for 14 years at a Brooklyn synagogue without losing many members, nevertheless acknowledged the difficulty each rabbi faces:

"It's hard to turn people down, hard to be turned down, especially since the parents at a time like that feel that somehow they have failed. When the rabbi says no, that confirms this view of themselves."

## 'They felt the people they had turned down, they had sort of lost. These rabbis were going to take another tack now.'

ceremony; it's hypocritical," Rabbi Larry Goldmark of La Mirada said. "I'm not a rent-a-rabbi."

Surprisingly, Thal said, those who do officiate in the Los Angeles area tend to be older rabbis, some of whom once consistently declined requests.

Rabbi Joseph B. Glaser, executive vice-president of Reform Judaism's Central Conference of American Rabbis, based in New York, said the same is true in Northern California.

"I was very much surprised when I began to hear who was doing it in California, because many of them were very traditional in other ways," Glaser said.

After talking to some of these rabbis, Glaser said, he found that "it was not that they had been worn down by the constant pressure but that they felt the people they had turned down, they had sort of lost. These rabbis were going to take another tack now."

The younger generation of rab-

willing to sanction such marriages. "If anything, I've been more liberal in recent years," he said.

Front said he once opposed mixed marriage weddings. However, about 15 years ago, he took his turn conducting Reform's Introduction to Judaism classes, mostly for people who were about to be

"After a year's experience with hundreds of these people, I realized my former position was in error. We live in an age of romantic love—people are going to get married regardless of who marries them," Front said. "I am not so interested in halakha (Jewish law) as I am in the future generations of Jews in this world."

Why is Southern California a place where so many have agreed

TEMPLE BETH EL

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14

March 7, 1991

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler President, UAHC 838 Fifth Avenue New York, NY 10021

Dear Rabbi Schindler:

Although I have been Administrative Secretary at Temple Beth El for 14 years and you may even recall meeting me a few times, I am not at all writing you in any official capacity. I am writing about a concern about something I see happening in Judaism which you may be aware of but in all good conscience I felt the need to write.

The subject is rabbis performing mixed-marriages. I have read some things that you have written on the subject and I know you encourage rabbis to handle each case individually and not to be offensive. I think you realize that this is one of the main ways we are losing people. I have heard rabbis tell the Jew that we'd rather see them convert to Christianity than create a mixed marriage. People move here and I hear their tales of disgust at not being able to find a rabbi to marry them and falling away from their religion for that reason. We have successful mixed marriages in our congregation (50%) and they still maintain their Judaism. It's not ideal but is the alternative any better? Jews do fall in love with non-Jews.

What really concerns me now is the commercialism of rabbis who do perform mixed marriages. I have been quoted fees of \$1,000 to \$1,200 per marriage plus expenses. There are rabbis who perform 4-5 per day and are getting rich on this black market. There is a need and this is how it is being filled. People are very creative.

What are your feelings on this? Are there any guidelines for what kind of fees should be charged for life-cycle events? Now that spring is here I'm getting many requests for help in finding rabbis and I would like to have better answers for these people than "how much money are you willing to spend?" I would appreciate hearing from you. Thank you very much.

Carla J. Fachini, CPS Administrative Secretary

/cjf

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RABBI ALEXANDER M. SCHINDLER • UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS
• PRESIDENT • NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021 (212) 249-0100

March 11, 1991 25 Adar 5751

Ms Carla J. Fachini, CPS Administrative Secretary Temple Beth El 809 Eleventh Avenue South Fargo North Dakota 58103

Dear Ms Fachini:

As you may know, I do not officiate at mixed marriages for a whole variety of reasons with which you are surely familiar. I heeded this principle even when my daughter was involved. I had a Justice of the Peace perform the ceremony and I said some words as did her father-in-law after the couple had been pronounced man and wife.

This does not mean that I do not respect those rabbis who do officiate at intermarriages. An argument on principle can be made for that case, too.

In either case, I am convinced that it doesn't matter whether you do or do not officiate. What matters is how you approach the couple and how you explain your position to them.

Note if you will, that I said that I respect those rabbis who officiate at mixed marriages "on principle" I do not respect those who see this as a means of making a lot of money. Crass commercialism and greed are not a matter of principle. I, myself have never, in my entire rabbinic career - when I was in a congregation or out - accepted a fee for such a life cycle rite. Occasionally, people make a charitable contribution in my honor, but that is all. This is the guideline that I have set for myself. Unfortunately, I am not in a position to set such guidelines for anyone else. It is a matter of everyone having to live with his own conscience.

I know that does not help you very much, but it is the best that I can offer.

Cordially,

The facility for the com Temple Sinai 6227 St. Charles Avenue New Orleans, Louisiana 70118 Dear Betty:

No fueller

February 14, 1985

Mrs. Betty G. Zivitz, President

Thank you for your letter of January 24. I appreciate your sharing your own personal reactions to the pamphlet on mixed marriage.

I think it important to note that this was a publication undertaken by a group of rabbis on their own, and without the blessing, funding or endorsement of either the UAHC or the CCAR. I fully expect that the other side will be heard from shortly, and that of course will also have to be undertaken as a private matter.

The UAHC as an institution should not enter into this debate. The ultimate decision as to officiation or non-officiation at mixed marriages lies with the individual rabbi. This is, therefore, a matter that must be debated in rabbinic circles, and resolved to the extent that it will ever be resolved.

I would suggest that you send a copy of your letter to Rabbi Maslin. It is Rabbi Maslin and his colleagues who should have the benefit of your opinion. Thanks again for also sharing it with me.

Kindest personal regards.

Cordially,

Charles J. Rothschild, Jr.

CJR: tb

bcc: AMS

Rabbi Seltzer Rabbi Syme Lydia Kukoff

January 24, 1985

Mr. Charles Rothschild Chairman of the Board Union of American Hebrew Congregations 838 Fifth Avenue New Yark, New York 10021

Dear Chuck:

I have recently finished reading the pamphlet on Reform Rabbis and Mixed Marriage' and the cover letter signed by Rabbi Simeon Maslin. The letter states that this pamphlet is available to congregational board members as well as members of the CCAR. This being so, the question has now been formally opened to the lay community. It is with that in mind that I express my own personal attitude on the matter.

First of all in the letter, Rabbi Maslin begins with a concern that "deserving colleagues are not being considered or even interviewed for certain pulpits because of their refusal to officiate at mixed marriages." This, I hasten to add, is true as well in cases of his colleagues who do officiate at mixed marriages.

While it is the right of each rabbi to determine what is right for him or her, it is also the right of each congregation to determine what is right for it and who can best serve the needs of its membership.

Second, Rabbi Maslin states "something had to be done to counter the common perception that, while Orthodox and Conservative rabbis do not officiate at mixed marriages, Reform rabbis do."

Here again, I believe Rabbi Maslin 'misses the mark." The perception more accurately stated is that Orthodox and Conservative rabbis don't perform mixed marriages and Reform rabbis may. A fact which I personally

For a group of Reform rabbis to take this position, in this manner, questioning the rabbinic integrity of their own colleagues who for just and valid reasons differ with them is, I believe, most inappropriate and divisive.1

Within the pamphlet itself, we are treated to a new phrase which I presume is to be supportive of the position taken - "according to the heritage of Moses" - an interesting phrase. Where else could we use such a phrase to re-fundamentalize Reform Judaism?



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Assistant Rebb)

HERBERT BARTON Executive Director Mr. Charles Rothschild Chairman of the Board, UAHC

- Janua

January 24, 1985

According to the heritage of Moses, debts are to be forgiven after severn years.

According to the heritage of Moses, a stubborn and rebellious son is to be stoned to death.

According to the heritage of Moses, a woman may not wear garments which pertain to a man.

According to the heritage of Moses, we may not wear cloth of wool and linen together.

There are those of our own brethren who state that according to the heritage of Moses, only a child born of a Jewish mother is a Jew; an interpretation denying patrilineal descent.

We Reform Jews now are so strongly embracing "Outreach." What a noble term! The same rabbis who have signed this document no doubt welcome couples of mixed marriage into their congregations and their children into religious school ;.. as long as someone else does the deed.

The final statement in this pamphlet that these rabbis have been "dealing with the problem of mixed marriages" is presumptuous to say the least. All Jews have been dealing with the question of interfaith marriage, but we come to different yet equally gut-wrenching conclusions. Interfaith marriage is not, I believe, a problem that can be solved by saying "No." Rather it is a question that can be addressed by saying "Maybe."

One final note -- what threatens the survival of Judaism may well not be interfaith marriage. It may be that those responsible for keeping our Jewish batteries charged are in some cases searching for the peak on the wrong mountain.

Sincerely,

Betty G Zivitz

President

BGZ/ba

# DRAFT LETTER to Betty 4VITZ

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President

BGZ/ba

Israel's national existence comes from the Arab armed forces and that "the limited threat to Israel,

not the major one," is posed by terrorism.

Whenever we deal with Israel's security we have to bear in mind the existence of these two levels of threats. No terror organization can threaten the very existence of Israel, not the PLO, not the Shiites and who knows who in the future. But at the same time they carry out the daily threat to the normal way of life of the Israelis. When we talk about Lebanon, we talk only about terrorism. Lebanon never was and will not be in the foreseeable future an Arab country than can build an armed force that can be of any threat to Israel."

Premier Shimon Peres, addressing the same mission said: "I know that many of us were suspicious that deep in our hearts we want to expand, we want to gain land. Nathing is more wrong than that. We have withdrawn from Sinai though we could have remained there. We are withdrawing from Lebanon though we have the military strength to stay there. What we are doing represents a policy, a moral commitment, not a military must nor an expediency in political terms."

Israel is land and it is people. Since 1948, Israel has absorbed more than 1.8 million Jews from 120 dountries, speaking 70 languages. But above all else Israel is a word -- and that word is Shalom.

SURVEY SHOWS INTERMARRIAGE AMONG FRENCH JEWS IS PERVASIVE By Edwin Eytan

PARIS, March 28 (JTA) -- From the mid-sixties until now, more than 50 percent of French Jews who married took a non-Jewish spouse, according to a survey carried out by the French National Research Center and the Hebrew University's Institute of Demographic Studies.

The 400-page study, just released here by the National Research Center, also found that there are 535,000 Jews currently living in France, about 200,000 fewer than previous estimates, and that the

average age of French Jews is increasing.

The principal authors of the study are Prof. Doris Bensimon of Caen University, who is chief research scientist at the National Research Center, and Dr. Sergio Dela Pergola, of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. They reported that the high rate of inter marriage "is particularly serious" for the future of the Jewish community because 60 percent of the Jewish partners in mixed marriages are women.

The researchers noted that in French society "it is the father who is the dominant note in the family's religious practices and cultural options. "They predicted that there will be fewer Jewish males available for marriage in the years ahead, according to demographic trends in France, and that consequent ly, an every larger proportion of Jewish women will

marry non-Jews.

On the basis of current demographic trends in Western Europe as a whole, and especially in the European Jewish community, the study predicts "at the best" a stabilization of the French Jewish community and probably a drop in its numbers by the end of the century. The French Jewish community is the largest in Western Europe.

Dela Pergola warned that the community's average age will continue to increase and this ageing process will affect the number of active community members. This factor must be borne in mind by Jewish community leaders and organizations when they allocate resources and lay the groundwork for educational institutions during the next 10-15 years, Dela Pergola wrote.

So far, community leaders have had no comment on the study's findings. Most lay and professional leaders said they have not yet had an opportunity to thoroughly study its hundreds of pages and dozens of tables and

graphs.

ROCKEFELLER U., WEIZMANN INSTITUTE COLLABORATION MADE POSSIBLE BY \$5 M CONTRIBUTION BY RAPID-AMERICAN CORP.

NEW YORK, March 28 (JTA) -- An unprecedented collaboration between two of the world's foremost research institutions, the Rockefeller University and the Weizmann Institute of Science, will be made possible through a contribution by the Rapid-American Corporation (R-AC), it was announced today by Mona Ackerman, R-AC president.

A new foundation, the Foundation for the Rockefeller University and the American Committee for the Weizmann Institute of Science, Inc., will be funded by the Rapid-American Corporation through a contribution of \$5 million which is expected to generate

\$500,000 per year from investment.

It is anticipated that the beneficiaries of the new foundation will ultimately share in an aggregate of at

least \$14 million.
"The magnitude of the research efforts undertaken by these two institutions is enormous and they have already contributed significantly toward finding solutions to the world's most pressing problems, "Ackerman said. "Our ardent hope is that the award will enable the Rockefeller-Weizmann scientific teams to work together even more intensively and fruitfully to eradicate disease.

According to Dr. Joshua Lederberg, president of the Rockefeller University, the establishment of the new foundation will bring the two institutions closer together in ways that would not otherwise have been possible.

"We expect that the foundation will support work in many fields, but many of its initial efforts are likely to be in biomedical research areas like cancer biology, the neurosciences, molecular genetics, immunology, plant genetics and parasitic diseases, as well as other fundamental science, "Lederberg said. "Research in these fields would impact on a wide range of human

Prof. Michael Sela, president of the Weizmann Institute of Science, said that this new formal link with the Rockefeller University will serve as the catalyst for Weizmann and Rockefeller scientific teams, both in New York and in Israel, to deepen their range of pot-entially life-saving research. "The formalization of the Weizmann Institute's link with the Rockefeller University adds a bold new dimension to the relationship between the two institutions -- we are most grateful to the Rapid-American Foundation and the Riklis family,

Additionally, the subjects and findings of the research supported through the new foundation will form the basis of international symposia involving leading scientists from institutions throughout the world.



BEHIND THE HEADLINES THE OTHER FACE OF ISRAEL: A REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK By Murray Zuckoff

(Last article in a series.)

JERUSALEM, March 28 (JTA) -- Israel is not only a place, it's also a state of mind, a bitter-sweet reality. It's ebullience, verve and vitality. It's the quiet measured pace of 19th century Mea Shearim, and the now, the in, the where-it's-at dizzying and bedazzling Dizengoff Street.

It's where a Cabinet Minister can stand on a street corner chewing the fat with a crony and where a disgruntled citizen can chew out a Cabinet minister. It's where the speech of a Prime Minister is interrupted on TV and radio so that an international soccer match in which an Israeli team is involved can be

telecast and broadcast.

It's where young men and women soldiers stand at bus stops waiting to hitch rides. It's where bus drivers are kings and riders are peasants in their eyes. It's where motorists vie with each other to see who can drive faster than a Concorde plane. It's where every red-blooded Israeli aspires to become a "pakid" (bureaucrat) and where every pakid reigns supreme in his or her own office or cubicle.

It's Yad Vashem and King David's Citadel. It's where every street is named after known or obscure Zionists, Jewish writers, poets and philosophers — and American Presidents like "Avraham Lincoln." It's arms tattooed with concentration camp numbers, faces from almost every corner on the globe, and where the worst form of intermarriage is that between a Litvak and a Galitzianer.

Israel is also a place where primary school students dressed as American Indians put on a Purim play for recently arrived Ethiopian Jewish immigrants at the Kfar Saba absorption center. Why American Indians? A Jewish Agency official was quick to explain: "Why not? Who's to say that Mordechai and Esther weren't Indians?"

Israelis have always been known for ignoring lines and for breaking into them at will at bus stops at supermarkets, at movies, wherever. It was a chal-lenge. The usual response from those waiting was always a boisterous, "Rega, Rega," (roughly translated as "wait a minute" or "hold it.") No more. Lines are respected, and if someone should revert to the primeval, the offender will immediately say, "slicha" (excuse me.) Unbelievable, but true.

Taba is little more than a hotel and a strip of sandy beach. The Egyptians and Israelis are trying to settle a dispute over the ownership of this enclave near Eilat. But the Israeli and Egyptian soldiers who stand on either side of the border, which is demar-cated by nothing more than two oil drums with a heavy metal rod across them, are more concerned with who is going to get the latest container of coffee for each other than who owns the land. Fraternization is the order of the day.

Some 40 members of the 80-member United Jewish Appeal Ambassadors' Mission visited an Air Force base somewhere in the Negev. While there, they planted trees. With uncanny adroitness, every one of them picked up a shovel, dug up some earth and patted it down around the saplings.

Having finished their task, they boarded a waiting bus to take them to their next destination. As the bus, filled with contented UJA tree planters, left the base it passed by the area of the planting. Out in the field IDF soldiers were busy re-planting the saplings, "doing right what we screwed up," some of the UJA members said wistfully.

Kibbutz Grofit, in the Negev near Eilat, across from Aqaba, has what might be a unique relationship with Jordan. Through a tacit agreement with the kibbutz and with the Israel government, Jordanian security authorities notify the kibbutz whenever they know or suspect that terrorists might be in the vicinity. The Jordanians are practical about this arrangement they don't want their only port city disrupted, and so they keep the kibbutz informed. "A cat couldn't slip through the area without us being informed," said one leading member of the kibbutz.

One of the hottest items in Israel is a T-shirt with the inscription: "America, feel safe. Israel is behind you."

Owners and workers in the "shuk" (open air market) in the Old City are inveterate hawkers and talkers. They entice customers into their emporiums by assuring each and every passerby, "Come in, doesn't cost any-thing to look." Once in, the customer is asked his place of residence. In my case, the answer was New York. It seemed as if almost every merchant -- if one took seriously every one of them -- had either visited New York, intended to visit it or had friends or relatives who lived or had visited the city. Invariably, the areas were identified as "Central Park West," "Forest Hills," or "West End Avenue." Real Arab enclaves.

Tourists love to take pictures. And what better place is there than at an absorption center for Ethiopian Jews. The ever-smiling youngsters are a joy to behold. And so, on this afternoon a group of American tourists were cocking shutters, flashing bulbs and having a time photographing the Ethiopian youngsters and each other photographing the youngsters. One of the Ethiopian children turned to his counselor and asked, in all innocence: "Are Americans born with cameras?"

Few Israeli civilians are seen in Nablus. The few that are are cabbies. It seems that they come here to have work done on their cars because the mechanical work is better and cheaper than it is in Jerusalem. Although it might take a whole day for the job to be done, the cabbies don't mind. While waiting for their cabs, they sit around at the local cafes and sip coffee at a leisurely pace.

On a recent Saturday night a group of young Orthodox Jews sat around a TV set in a hotel lobby. They were entranced by an episode of the popular "A-Team," with Hebrew subtitles. They chortled and chuckled with delight whenever the A-Team good guys would clobber the baddies.

Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin, addressing the Ambassadors' Mission, stressed that the basic threat to Edith J. Miller

Karen Lurie

Joan Greenberg; Edith Lerner

In response to your memo of the policy to turn over all inquifaith marriages to the NYFRS a very close personal friend I firmly believe that this shall UAHC offices.

March 28, 1984

In response to your memo of March 27 you should know that it has been my policy to turn over all inquiries regarding rabbis who officiate at interfaith marriages to the NYFRS -- or the proper UAHC region. Unless it is a very close personal friend asking the question I bow out of the picture. I firmly believe that this should be the policy for your office, indeed for all UAHC offices.

There was a time when this question was simply not answered, certainly names were not shared. Times have changed and with the Outreach Program a different view is being taken on the part of some. There have been discussions of this subject by the staff cabinet and there will undoubtedly be continued discussions. But until a final ruling is made, I would urge that your turn over all calls for this information to the NYFRS.

In re your comments on Outreach and encouragement, I take a different view.

I am firm in my belief that each rabbi must determine personal policy on interfaith weddings. I do not believe we can tell any rabbi he or she must or must not officiate at such ceremonies. On the other hand, if a rabbi chooses not to officiate this does not mean the door is closed to the couple. The rabbi should be open, should take time to chat with the couple and share the reasons why his/her participation is not possible. There are many ways to provide encouragement short of denying one's own principles.

Know, too, that even if we were to provide a listing of rabbis who perform such ceremonies the utmost of care must be taken. Many of the rabbis have rules and regulations as to when they will or will not officiate. Many of the calls come from people who have no ties to the Jewish community beyond wishing to have a "Jewish wedding." We can't have our rabbis inundated with calls from such couples. It is not a cut and dried, black and white subject. there are many, many areas to be considered. Therefore, I once again urge that you transfer all calls requesting names of rabbis to proper Regional offices.

Edith J. Miller

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From

Karen Lurie

Date 3/27/84

To

Edie Miller

Copies

Joan Greenberg, Edith Lerner

Subject Requests for Rabbis to perform "mixed marriages".

Edie, I spoke with a woman yesterday who wanted to know if I could suggest a rabbi (in this case, one located in the Metropolitan area) who would perform a "mixed" marriage ceremony.

From what I gather, the UAHC policy is not to give out names. In the above case, I asked the New York Federation to send the woman a listing of congregations in the area. Rabbi Zlotowitz sent her a Brooklyn listing.

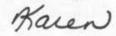
Usually, Edith Lerner gets these calls, but when she is not here, I answer her phone. We receive many requests for this type of information.

I am writing to you to ask whether, indeed, UAHC policy is not to give out specific names. If this is the case, perhaps you can inquire whether this policy can be changed.

It seems to me that the Union's position on Outreach would go hand in hand with honoring "mixed marriage" requests for a rabbi to perform the ceremony. If we are trying to encourage non-Jews to adopt our faith, then this encouragement should start from stage 1: arranging the wedding. If we are cooperative in the very beginning, I believe we establish good relations which will last past the actual ceremony.

Is it possible to have a listing of rabbis who will perform these weddings for those people who request it from our office?

Thanks for your help,





# NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON PROGRAMS FOR THE INTERMARRIED

Co-Sponsors: American Jewish Committee, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, United Synagogue of America, Federation of Reconstructionist Congregations and Havurot

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION PACKET

Conference Coordinator:

Nina Mizrahi Union of American Hebrew Congregations 838 Fifth Avenue New York, New York 10021 (212) 249-0100, ext. 511

# National Conference on Programs for the Intermarried

Co-Sponsors: American Jewish Committee, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, United Synagogue of America. Federation of Reconstructionist Congregations and Havurot

#### REGISTRATION

Name				
City			State ———	Zip
			(Buisness)	
Please indica	te Workshop ch	noice by number:		
	"Introduction 1:00-12:30 PM	to Judaism - Pro	grams of Study and	Experience"
1st choice	2nd choice			
WORKSHOP II: Tuesday, 2:		ews-By-Choice int	to the Synagogue ar	nd the Community"
lst choice	2nd choice			
	"Outreach to		es and their Child	lren"
	2nd choice			
100 00100	zna choice			
WORKSHOP IV:	"Outreach to	Jewish Parents of	Interfaith Couple	es"
Wednesday,	2:00-3:30 PM			
1st choice	2nd choice			
can Hebrew Congre	gations			

Conference Coordinator: Nina Mizrahi Union of American Hebrew Congregations 838 Fifth Avenue New York, New York 10021 (212) 249-0100, ext. 511 Please respond early.

Fee: \$75.00, includes lunch\*, registration packet and all materials.

\* dietary laws observed

Make checks payable to: NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON PROGRAMS FOR THE INTERMARRIED

Send to: Nina Mizrahi, Conference Coordinator Union of American Hebrew Congregations 838 Fifth Avenue

New York, N.Y. 10021

# MEMORANDUM

From

Nina Mizrahi

Date 5/6/85

To

Rabbi Alexander Schindler

Copies

Subject

You are scheduled to deliver keynote address III, on Wednesday, 5/22/85, 9:30-10:30 AM at the Stephen Wise Free Synagogue. Information on the workshops following your address can be found in the enclosed registration packet.

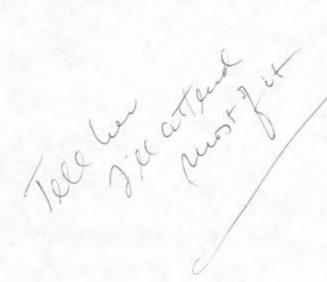
Please let us know what parts of the conference you plan to attend in addition to your address. We would also appreciate knowing if you will join us for lunch on one or both days of the conference. Please specify.

Thank you for your assistance. We are looking forward to your important contribution to this historic event!

Best regards,

Nina Mizrahi

Conference Coordinator



# NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON PROGRAMS FOR THE INTERMARRIED

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#### PROGRAM

MAY 21-22 STEPHEN WISE FREE SYNAGOGUE, N.Y.

Tuesday, 5/21	34/6
9:00-9:15 AM	Check-in, pick up registration packet
9:15	Greetings
10:00	Keynote I: "Introduction to Judaism - Programs of Study and Experience" Keynote speaker: Dr. David Gordis
11:00	Workshop I: Introduction to Judaism Models
12:30 PM	Lunch and Browse in Resource Center
1:30	Keynote II: "Integrating Jews-by-Choice into the Synagogue and the Community" Keynote speaker: Rabbi David Teutsch
2:30	Workshop II: Integration & Post-Conversion Models
4:00	Discussion: "What Research Tells Us"
5:30	First Day Wrap Up

#### \*\*\*\*\*

Wed	inesday,	5/22
		-,

9:00 AM	Coffee/Tea		
9:30	Keynote III: "Outreach to Interfaith Couples and Their Children" Keynote speaker: Rabbi Alexander Schindler		
10:30	Workshop III: Models for Interfaith Couples and Their Children		
12:00	Lunch		
1:00 PM	Keynote IV: "Outreach to Jewish Parents of Interfaith Couples" Keynote speaker: Rabbi Alexander Shapiro		
2:00	Workshop IV: Models for Parents of Interfaith Couples		
3:30	Directions for the Future		

Thank you for the schedule for the National Conference on Programs for the Intermarried. I appreciate your keeping me posted with all of the details of the Conference.

I will do my best to attend as much of the Conference as possible, I'll probably be there for most of the time. Again, my thanks for all your efforts.

Nina Mizrahi

Thank you for the schedule for the Na $oldsymbol{\omega}$ ional Conference on Programs for the Intermarried. I appreciate your keeping me posted with all of the details of the Conference.

I will do my best to attend as much of the Conference as possible, I'll probably be there for most of the time. Again, my thanks for all your efforts.

#### WORKSHOP I

Tuesday, 5/21/85, 11:00-12:30 PM

"Introduction to Judaism-Programs of Study and Experience"

#### 1. Presenter: Rabbi Stephen E. Einstein

A cum laude-Phi Beta Kappa graduate of UCLA, ordained at HUC-JIR, Rabbi Einstein is the spiritual leader of Congregation B'nai Tzedek, Fountain Valley, CA. He has taught the community-wide Introduction to Judaism course for nine years, and is the co-editor of Introduction to Judaism: A Course Outline. He is past president of the Orange County Board of Rabbis and the Jewish Educators' Association, Vice President of the Bureau of Jewish Education, and has served on the Board of Jewish Federation and Jewish Family Service. He was recently elected to the Fountain Valley School Board. Rabbi Einstein is married and the father of four children.

Workshop: A description of and sample lesson from the Introduction to Judaism course developed by Rabbi Einstein and Lydia Kukoff. The course combines Jewish learning and Jewish doing, utilizing the holidays and life cycle as points of entry into Jewish theology, ethics, history, literature and observance.

#### 2. Presenter: Rabbi Steven E. Foster

Ordained by the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati, is currently serving as Senior Rabbi of Temple Emanuel, Denver, Colorado. He is a former Dean of the Denver Institute and College of Jewish Studies. Rabbi Foster is a Co-Chairperson for the Commission on Reform Jewish Outreach and Vice-President of the Denver Area Interfaith Clergy Conference. A former board member of Jewish Family and Children's Service, Rabbi Foster currently serves on the Boards of the Jewish Marriage Encounter of Colorado and the Allied Jewish Federation.

Workshop: Rabbi Foster will outline the conversion process that he uses in Denver. Included in the process will be the ten commitments that have become a part of the requirements for conversion, and the topics with some conclusions of his group process that every prospective convert enters. Rabbi Foster will also comment on some of the problem/areas for prospective converts together with some possible solutions for the helping professional.

#### 3. Presenter: Dr. Edward L. Greenstein

Is Associate Professor in Bible at the Jewish Theological Seminary and the Author of many academic and popular writings. For the second year he has been teaching introductions to Judaism in a

small-group format, last year for the Federation of Reconstructionist Congregations and Havurot and this year for Derekh Torah in New York.

Workshop: Dr. Greenstein will discuss the rationale for and structure of an introduction to Judaism that seeks to develop participants' involvement in Jewish community and culture as well as instruct them in the history and subject matter of Jewish civilization. Participants will examine a 30-week course using a small-class format in which participants become connected to the Jewish community through a network of Jewish hosts.

#### 4. Presenter: Rabbi Stephen C. Lerner

Is founder and director of the Center for Conversion to Judaism with offices in Manhattan and Teaneck, New Jersey. He is also chairman of the Committee on Conversion of the Rabbinical Assembly, the international organization of more than 1,200 Conservative rabbis. He has made programs for potential converts his major rabbinic work for much of the past decade.

Workshop: Learning about Judaism with conversion in mind is best done in individualized, caring, hands-on programs which not only impart information about Judaism but also try to expand the experiential dimension so that the potential ger (convert) comes to identify with the Jewish people as well.

#### 5. Presenter: Ann Lynn Lipton

Ms. Lipton is the Director of Jewish Education of our Jewish Federation and brings to the position much experience in education and in Jewish community work. Ms. Lipton holds a B.A. degree in American Jewish History from Hunter College and an M.A. degree in American Jewish History from the College of William and Mary. She is presently working on her Doctoral Degree in Jewish Education at New York University where she spends the summers studying.

Ms. Lipton is also involved in educating young men and women who "chose Judaism" in Palm Beach County. Working with the Board of Rabbis she is the instructor for all potential converts who are also in counseling with their respective rabbis. This program has been an overwhelming success with some 30 couples and individuals going through the 16-week course of instruction in the past year.

Ms. Lipton is interested in the issues of Jewish identity and Jewish survival. She has great interest in furthering the Jewish life of our community. As Jewish Education Director of Palm Beach County, she is 1 of only 5 females out of more than 50 individuals who hold this position in the U.S.

Workshop: The "Introduction to Judaism" course sponsored by the Palm Beach County Board of Rabbis was created to meet the needs of individuals and couples from different congregations who were considering choosing Judaism.

The members of the class study for 16 weeks, 2 hours each week, while also meeting with their respective rabbis for counseling and discussions. They also must be sponsored by a Rabbi who agrees to meet with them and to assist them as they explore Judaism.

The unique quality of this program is that it is taught by a Jewish Educator and that there is a partnership with the rabbis who are involved on a weekly or monthly basis with their respective students. Also this program crosses movement lines and presents all aspects of Jewish life equally. As a result there is a quality of sharing and mutual understanding of all aspects of Jewish life. In addition it enables all students—whether they come from a large or small synagogue—the same, quality education supplemented by interested and caring counseling from the rabbis in the community.

The program has been so successful that 33 couples have gone through it in the past 18 months and another 6 couples are presently enrolled in the program. Of the 33 who entered the program 28 have proceded to chose Judaism. The program has a very high visibility in the community as well as an excellent reputation.

#### 6. Presenter: Rabbi Ira J. Schiffer

Is a graduate of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College and holds a Master's degree from Brown University in History of Religions. He has done training in pastoral care and counseling and has served Temple Beth El in Newark, Delaware for eight years. He was recently elected President of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association.

<u>Workshop</u>: This workshop will present a model program based on the cooperative efforts of a community's Reform, Conservative and Reconstructionist rabbis. Issues concerning selection for the program, course content, relational concerns and integration into the community will be discussed.

Discussion will be encouraged to explore the model's appropriateness and implementation in various communities.

#### WORKSHOP II

Tuesday, 5/21/85, 2:30-4:00 PM

"Integrating Jews-by-Choice into the Synagogue and the Community"

#### 7. Presenter: Rabbi Ephraim Z. Buchwald

Rabbi Ephraim Buchwald has been the educational director of Lincoln Square Synagogue for thirteen years, during which time the Joseph Shapiro Institute of Adult Jewish Studies, which he directs, has achieved national acclaim as one of the largest and most successful adult Jewish education programs in the country. He has also pioneered in outreach efforts to non-affiliated Jews with programs such as the "Beginner's Service" for those with little or no background, and "Turn Friday Night into Shabbos," a community Shabbat experience.

#### Workshop:

Lincoln Square Synagogue in New York City, an Orthodox synagogue, has long been a center for Jews returning to observance, and Jews-by-Choice. Rabbi Buchwald will share with you from the experiences of converts in Lincoln Square Synagogue and their transformation from almost unwelcomed guests to fullfledged members in a traditional synagogue setting.

#### 8. Presenter: Rachel Cowan

Is Director of Derekh Torah, a Jewish Learning Center which is a program designed to provide a solid intellectual and experiential introduction to Jewish thought, prayer, history and community for people—Jews and non-Jews alike—who are considering a commitment to Judaism. It seeks to integrate its graduates into the Jewish community by helping them to establish personal friendships with observant Jews and to study with a rabbi who will introduce them into his/her congregation. Students study in groups of 12 with one teacher for 30 weeks. Ms. Cowan is a Jew-by-Choice.

#### Workshop:

This workshop will discuss the needs of Jews-by-Choice who have recently converted, and will discuss ideas and programs for integrating them into the Jewish community, and helping them work through the feelings they have about leaving a familiar environment and joining a new one--whether it be holidays and ceremonies, or culture and life style, or issues of relations with family, either the Jewish or non-Jewish.

#### 9. Presenter: Dru Greenwood

Became a Jew-by-Choice in 1970. She has served as the Chairperson of B'nai Abraham, a post conversion support group sponsored by Temple Israel of Boston. Ms. Greenwood has also served as Post-Conversion Program Coordinator and Outreach Coordinator of the UAHC Northeast

Council. Currently, she is the Outreach Coordinator for the New Jersey-West Hudson Valley Council of the UAHC.

Ms. Greenwood holds a B.A. in English from Smith College.

#### Workshop:

Integrating new Jews-by-Choice into the community. This workshop will deal with the multitude of issues and challenges faced by the new Jews-by-Choice in the process of becoming part of the Jewish community and by the Jewish community in its attempt to reach out to new Jews. A variety of specific programs for the education and sensitization of the community and two models for support of new Jews-by-Choice will be discussed in detail.

#### 10. Presenter: Rabbi Frederic Margulies

Is the Associate Rabbi of Valley Beth Shalom in Encino, California and, as an instructor in the Introduction to Judaism Course at the University of Judaism, has taught many Jews-by-Choice. In addition, he has been instrumental in coordinating various programs at the synagogue to enrich the conversion process.

#### Workshop:

Rabbi Margulies will describe the Outreach Program developed at Valley Beth Shalom. Under this program, Jews-by-Choice have been matched with synagogue families for home hosting to celebrate Shabbat and holidays. They have developed a program of Friday night dinners at the synagogue. Rabbi Margulies will share materials that have been developed to implement these programs.

#### 11. Presenter: Lena Romanoff

Born in Italy, earned a B.S. in Nursing and an M.A. in Educational Psychology from the University of Pennsylvania. She underwent Orthodox conversion in 1973. In 1983 she became involved with the Jewish Converts Network, founded at the Penn. Hillel, and established the main line chapter the following year.

The Jewish Converts Network is an informally affiliated network of locally autonomous groups of individuals who have chosen Judaism or who may be contemplating conversion. People come to JCN with a need for information, counseling, support, guidance, and socialization. JCN offers these people an opportunity to share their thoughts and experiences with other people of similar background in a friendly and informal setting. Meetings are held in the homes of members on a monthly basis, however much of the support that JCN provides is done

on an ongoing individual basis either personally, over the phone, or by letter.

#### Workshop:

It will deal with the following concerns: 1) Organizing local chapters of JCN - "Who Needs this Anyway?"; 2) A typical meeting of a JCN chapter - "What's Going on Here?"; 3) Converts experiences in the process of Jewish acculturation - "How Can you Be a Real Jew with a Face like That?"; 4) Interaction with local synagogue rabbis - "Don't Call us, We'll Call you when We Need You!"; 5) Support and rapport among members of the extended families on both sides - "I Win - You Win!"

#### 12. Presenter: Erica Bard Riley

Attended the State University of New York at Stony Brook and the University of Louisville where she received an M.A. in Clinical Psychology. Most recently, she coordinated the two-year Project on Intermarriage/Jews-by-Choice at the Jewish Family and Vocational Service in Louisville, KY.

#### Workshop:

The integration of the Jews-by-Choice into the community is a challenge both for the new Jews and for the community. Utilizing the model developed by the Jewish Family and Vocational Service in Louisville, Kentucky, for its Project on Intermarriage-Jews-by-Choice, this workshop will focus on the practical aspects of integration. Approaches designed to ease the new Jew's entry into the community will be discussed as well as methods devised to increase community awareness and sensitivity. Discussion groups, workshops and other means of addressing these issues will be described.

#### WORKSHOP III

Wednesday, 5/22/85, 10:30-12:00 PM

"Outreach to Interfaith Couples and the Children"

#### 13. Presenters: Judy Aronson and Rabbi Joel Oseran

An alumna of both Harvard Divinity School and Brandeis University, Judy Aronson is Education/Administrator of the New Reform Congregation in Encino, California. Judy has facilitated interfaith couples' groups for the U.A.H.C. for the past two years, and has worked with many children of interfaith marriages in her school.

In 1983, Judy was a presenter at a conference entitled Women, Religion, and Social Change at the Center for the Study of World Religions at Harvard.

An honors graduate of U.C.L.A., Rabbi Oseran earned a Master of Science degree in Education at U.S.C. before being ordained at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in New York. His specialty in Jewish education has been supplemented with doctoral work at Hebrew University's School of Education in Jerusalem and now at Hebrew Union College in Los Angeles.

For many years, he was associated with the Brandeis-Bardin Insitute, serving as program director and then director of the Institute's Camp Alonim. In addition, he has served as Rabbi and educational consultant for Vista Del Mar's Child Care Service.

Following his ordination in 1976, Rabbi Oseran moved to Israel where he became a member of the HUC-JIR faculty in Jerusalem.

In 1982, Rabbi Oseran served on an interim basis at Temple Judea in Tarzana. He is currently the rabbi/educator at the University Synagogue in Los Angeles.

#### Workshop:

The workshop is entitled "The Times and Seasons--A Jewish Perspective" and is part of the UAHC's Outreach Effort to Interfaith Couples.

The workshop session will focus on the following key dimensions of the course: 1) The philosophical and theoretical goals for the course - Why was it created? For whom? What constitutes success? Failure?; 2) A specific class by class (8 classes in all) explanation of approach and methodology. What happens in each class, what is the thread which connects one class to the next; 3) What we have learned about Interfaith Couples and their Children? Prominent issues which seem to arise in every group. What Interfaith Couples are looking for in such a course. 4) Suggestions for instituting such a couse in "your community." Factors for consideration; what experience has taught us.

#### 14. Presenter: Rabbi Andrew Baker

He is the Washington Area Director of the American Jewish Committee and co-author of Working with the Intermarried: A Practical Guide to Jewish Community Workshops. His work in Washington has led to a number of jointly sponsored AJC-Jewish Social Service Agency workshops for interfaith couples, seminars for community lay leaders and a guide to area congregations for intermarried families.

Rabbi Baker is also the First Vice President of the Interfaith Conference of Washington, a member of the board of the National Catholic Conference for Interracial Justice and a Commissioner of the D.C. Human Rights Commission.

#### Workshop:

While this session will discuss the practical elements of establishing a community workshop for intermarried couples, it will give special focus to dealing with the Jewish communal questions and concerns and bridging the traditional gap between rabbi and social worker.

#### 15. Presenter: Rabbi Howard I. Bogot

Rabbi Bogot is Co-Director of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Department of Education, Director of Curriculum Development and Teacher Education, and the Co-Director of the Joint Commission on Jewish Education of the UAHC, the Central Conference of American Rabbis and the National Association of Temple Educators.

Rabbi Bogot served as a Regional president and Educative Board member to the Central Conference of Amercian Rabbis and is co-author of five newly published UAHC books for young children: Prayer Is Reaching, My Body Is Something Special, I Learn About God, I'm Growing, Books Are Treasures and author of the synagogue text, Yoni, as well as of numerous syllabi for learners of all ages. His newest text, Alef-Bet of Jewish Values, is a lexicon of Hebrew concepts basic to Jewish thought.

#### Workshop:

This workshop will review a selection of home and school activities designed to sensitize young people (Pre-School-High School) in the realms of Jewish Identity Assertiveness and Jewish Identity as Choice. Participants will sample a variety of educational tasks published in the UAHC William and Frances Schuster Curriculum, "To See the World Through Jewish Eyes."

### 16. Presenter: Nancy Kleiman

She is co-chairwoman of the Jewish Family Connection, the Outreach program of Temple Israel, Boston, MA. A former nun, Nancy has lived in a Mixed Marriage for the past ten years with her husband, Ed, and sons Danny, age 5, and Sam, age 3. This year Nancy converted to Judaism and is involved in running support/discussion groups for Interfaith families.

#### Workshop:

The Jewish Family Connection, the Outreach Program of Temple Israel, Boston, offers hospitality, support, and education to Interfaith Couples and their children through the following vehicles:

- 1. The IFC Network to refer callers to a personal contact;
- 2. Major Events workshops, panels and guest speakers;
- 3. Support/Discussions led by a licensed social worker;
- 4. JFC Newsletter and mailing list;
- 5. Rabbinic Counselling

#### 17. Presenter: Fradya Rembaum

She is the assistant director of the Council on Jewish Life, Jewish Federation Council, Los Angeles, California, and is the Staff Coordinator for the Commission on Outreach to Jews-by-Choice and the Commission on Outreach to Mixed Married Couples. Fradya completed her Masters in Social Work at the University of Southern California. She has counselled children and families in a family service agency and in private practice. Prior to her current position, she was Parent and Family Education Consultant to the L.A. Bureau of Jewish Education, where she developed and implemented family education programs in cooperation with local religious schools and synagogues.

#### Workshop:

"Bridge to Understanding: How to Raise a Jewish Child in a Home in Which only One Parent Is Jewish." This six session series provides Intermarried Couples with an opportunity to grapple with their individual and family definitions and expectations of Jewish Identity through a combination of discussions and didactic presentations. Also discussed are tensions within the extended families, holiday celebrations, religious education and finding a niche in the Jewish community. This session will also include information about the L.A. Jewish community's experience of interagency and transideological cooperative efforts in community planning for outreach to mixed married couples.

#### WORKSHOP IV

Wednesday, 5/22/85, 2:00-3:30 PM

"Outreach to Jewish Parents of Interfaith Couples"

### 18. Presenters: Rabbi and Mrs. Robert A. Alper

Dr. Robert A. Alper is spiritual leader of Congregation Beth Or, Spring House, Pennsylvania. He was ordained in 1972 by the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati.

He is active in many local, regional and national organizations, from the Ambler Ministerium and chaplancies at Northwestern Psychiatric Center and the Horsham Clinic to the National Vice-Presidency of the Institute of Creative Judaism. He has recently been elected President of the Delaware Valley Association of Reform Rabbis.

In May, 1984, Rabbi Alper received the Doctor of Ministry degree from the Princeton Theological Seminary.

Sherri Alper received her B.A. degree from Bennington College and her Mater's in Social Sercice from the Bryn Mawr Graduate School of Social Work and Social Research. She is currently employed full-time at the Fox Chase Cancer Center where she provides direct service to individuals, families and groups and is responsible for a number of inter-disciplinary teaching and community outreach activities. In addition, she maintains a private practice in partnership with Psychiatrist Robert C. Cohn, primarily focusing on marital and family issues.

Ms. Alper is a member of the Rabbinical Counseling Service of the Philadelphia Federation of Reform Synagogues. In that capacity, she counsels intermarrying and intermarried couples and individuals and conducts workshops on the psycho-social aspects of conversion and intermarriage as part of the Introduction to Judaism classes sponsored by the Federation. She has conducted workshops and seminars on intermarriage at various regional gatherings.

#### Workshop:

### Support Group for Parents of Intermarried Jewish Children.

Parents of intermarrying or intermarried Jewish children hold a unique position in the Jewish community: They are often active participants in the marriage process, yet their needs are largely ignored. This support group model, co-led by a Rabbi and a social worker, assumes that parents of intermarrying Jewish children have personal and theological issues worthy of attention by the community and rabbi, as well as relational skills in need of development in light of new realities.

This support group model provides a vehicle through which participants informally set the agenda under the guidance of the group leaders. The primary goals are to: 1) normalize the feelings and reactions of participants by enabling them to share their experiences with others in similar circumstances; 2) lessen isolation, thus insuring that such Jewish parents will not be lost to their community; and 3) aid participants in development of relationship skills for further interaction with the

newlyweds and non-Jewish in-laws.

# 19. Presenters: Harriet Feiner and Rabbi Lee Friedlander

Harriet Feiner (M.S.W.) is Associate Professor of Social Work at the Wurzweiler School of Social Work at Yeshiva University. A member of the Task Force on Mixed Marriage of the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York, she is the consultant to Samuel Fields Y on developing workshops for intermarried couples and/or their parents. Professor Feiner is a founding member of the Reconstructionist Synagogue of the North Shore.

Lee Friedlander (M.A. in Religion) is the Rabbi of the Reconstructionist Synagogue of the North Shore. He has run a workshop for inter-married couples and their parents with Professor Feiner for his congregation.

#### Workshop:

### Models for Parents of Interfaith Couples.

Group composition, auspice, program and process in outreach to the parents of intermarried couples will be discussed in the context of a commitment to Jewish survival. The relationship between rabbi and social worker in their respective roles as groups leaders will also be explored.

#### 20. Presenter: Diane Baxter

She is currently the Adult and Family Program Director at Leo Baeck Temple and a family therapist in private practice. She was the Consultant for Family Life Education at the Los Angeles Bureau of Jewish Education. Her degrees are in the fields of sociology and psychology and she is a Ph.D. candidate in Psychological Anthropology at UCLA.

#### Workshop:

This four session program is designed for the Jewish parents of Interfaith Couples. Participants will examine their own Jewish identity and commitment, as well as the expectations they have for their children. The methodologies include experiential learning and group discussion.

#### 21. Presenter: Phoebe Starr Sharaf

She earned her MSW at the UCLA School of Social Welfare. She served as Director of Volunteer Services at Jewish Family Services of Los Angeles for a number of years. Currently, she is the Director of the Volunteer Bureau of the Jewish Federation Council of Greater Los Angeles. Ms. Sharaf has extensive experience in the organization and presentation of workshops, seminars, and conferences. One of her areas of expertise is in Gerontology.

#### Workshop:

This four session program is designed for the Jewish parents of Interfaith Couples. Participants will examine their own Jewish identity and commitment, as well as the expectations they have for their children. The methodologies include experiential learning and group discussion.

#### 22. Presenter: Carol Frank

She is an MSW-LCSW. She worked. She worked at Jewish Family and Children's Service in Baltimore as a caseworker and then Director of Jewish Family Life Education for 14 years. She became interested in the issues of Intermarriage through groups for recently married couples. Ms. Frank holds a Masters of Jewish History from Baltimore Hebrew College. She is presently in private clinical practice and provides consultation regarding intermarriage to individuals, families and organizations.

#### Workshop:

This workshop is designed for the Jewish parents of children who are either intermarried or about to intermarry. It is also a model for couples who will or have already intermarried. The model focuses on confronting feelings of guilt, anger, and failure, while evaluating and exploring Jewish identity. The intermarried couples will consider personal identity as well as marginality, priorities, and values.

# NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON PROGRAMS FOR THE INTERMARRIED

Co-Sponsors: American Jewish Committee, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, United Synagogue of America. Federation of Reconstructionist Congregations and Havurot

### REGISTRATION

Name	4.270
Address	
	State Zip
	(Buisness)
Please indicate Workshop choice b	y number:
WORKSHOP I: "Introduction to Jud	laism - Programs of Study and Experience"
Tuesday, 11:00-12:30 PM	
1st choice 2nd choice	
	ੁ* <sup>*</sup>
WORKSHOP II: "Integrating Jews-By	-Choice into the Synagogue and the Community"
Tuesday, 2:30-4:00 PM	
1st choice 2nd choice	
WORKSHOP III: "Outreach to Inter	faith Couples and their Children"
Wednesday, 10:30-12:00 PM	*
1st choice 2nd choice	
WORKSHOP IV: "Outreach to Jewish	Parents of Interfaith Couples"
Wednesday, 2:00-3:30 PM	
1st choice 2nd choice	

Conference Coordinator.

Nina Mizrahi Union of American Hebrew Congregations 838 Fifth Avenue New York, New York 10021 [212] 249-0100, ext. 511 Please respond early.

Fee: \$75.00, includes lunch\*, registration packet and all materials.

\* dietary laws observed

Make checks payable to: NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON PROGRAMS FOR THE INTERMARRIED

Send to: Nina Mizrahi, Conference Coordinator Union of American Hebrew Congregations 838 Fifth Avenue New York, N.Y. 10021 MN

August 15, 1985

Rabbi Simeon J. Maslin Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel York Poad and Township Line Elkins Park, Pennsylvania 19117

Dear Shim:

I have your letter of August 13 and hasten to respond. At the outset let me make it clear that Danny Syme was not acting inilaterally when he contacted you in regard to providing information to lay leaders on the subject of mixed marriage. He was in touch with you following discussions with a number of staff members of the Union, including the writer, and a select group of our lay leaders.

The Task Force on Outreach (now the Commission) named a sub-committee to study the matter of rabbinic participation in mixed marriage ceremonies. The agreed upon two conclusions and these were placed before the full Commission which voted unanimously - rabbinic as well as lay members - in support of the following:

1/ An affirmation that the question of officiation is a matter of individual and personal rabbinic conscience.

2/ In order to open doors of understanding and encourage a sharing of thoughts between rabbis and laypersons, the UAHC was aked to establish "Listening Post" to provide information on this sensitive area of concern.

Thus the correspondence from Dan to you. We want very much to fulfill the Commission's mandate and to set up a system which will provide Listening Posts for our people. Let me reassure you that we will not utilize wither Gene Mihaly's document or the one which you helped to create. We may destermine to prepare an independent document for our purposes.

With all good wishes from house to house and with warm regards, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

cc: Rabbi Joseph B. Glaser Rabbi Walter Jacob Rabbi Sanford Seltzer Rabbi Daniel B. Syme Limeon J. Maslin, D. Min., D. D.
SENIOR RABBI

Reform Congregation KENESETH ISRAEL York Road and Township Line ELKINS PARK, PENNSYLVANIA 19117

August 13, 1985

Rabbi Alexander Schindler U.A.H.C. 838 Fifth Avenue New York, New York, 10021

Dear Alex:

I believe that Danny Syme has conferred with you about our correspondence of June 27-July 3. I thought it best to write to you now directly so that there be no misunderstanding on my part (and on the part of the colleagues who share my concern) about the intentions of the Union in regard to keeping the laity informed about rabbinic officiation at mixed marriages.

As you know, it was Danny Syme's intention, either unilaterally or in consultation with others at the Union, to distribute 3000 copies of Eugene Mihaly's "Responsa on Mixed Marriage," along with our "Reform Rabbis and Mixed Marriage" and the report of the Commission on Outreach. According to his letter of July 3, this was not a unilateral decision but rather his interpretation of the mandate of the Commission.

It was my understanding, when I was appointed as a CCAR representative to the Research Task Force on Interfaith Marriage, that the subject of rabbinic officiation was to be shelved until the Task Force brought in its report. One of the aspects of mixed marriage that the Task Force was mandated to study was the effect of rabbinic officiation or non-officiation on the attitudes of mixed couples. If, as I have been led to believe, the subject of rabbinic officiation is then shelved for the time being, why would the UAHC even consider distributing as partisan a statement as Mihaly's?

I could see distributing Walter Jacob's 1982 responsum on rabbinic officiation; it is an official statement of CCAR policy. Mihaly's overblown pamphlet is an affront to the CCAR. And, if you have read it, you know that it is a perversion of the very halachic process

which, for whatever misguided reason, he invokes. It is of a piece with his 1976 responsum defending and, in fact, recommending marriages on Shabbat!

Danny's letter of July 3 assures me and all who share this concern that the proposed packet, including Mihaly's pamphlet, will not be sent out by the Union. What worries me now is his statement: "We will simply have to find another mechanism." What other mechanism? For what purpose? I would appreciate some reassurance from you that neither Mihaly's pamphlet nor any part of it will be distributed by the Union in the future.

With the approach of Elul, my best wishes to you and Rhea for a Happy and Healthy New Year.

Shalom,

Simeon J. Maslin

SJM:mb

cc: Rabbi Joseph Glaser

Rabbi Daniel Syme Rabbi Walter Jacob Rabbi Sanford Seltzer



Union of American Hebrew Congregations

PATRON OF HEBREW UNION COLLEGE – JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION 838 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021 (212) 249-0100 CABLES: UNIONUAHC

June 27, 1985

Rabbi Simeon J. Maslin Keneseth Israel Reform Congregation York Road and Township Line Elkins Park, Pa. 19117

Dear Shim,

It was good seeing you in Minneapolis, however briefly. I had to return to New York before the conference concluded, and therefore did not have a chance to speak with you regarding an upcoming UAHC mailing on which we'd like your help.

Sometime this fall, we would like to distribute a kit of materials to our congregations, containing the following items:

- 1. The statement of "The Committee of 100"
- 2. Eugene Mihaly's responsum.
- The statement of the Commission on Outreach affirming the principle of rabbinic conscience in officiation at mixed marriages.

In providing these materials, we hope to share the most thoughtful papers available on this subject.

Gene has graciously arranged for us to receive 3,000 copies of his responsum. I hope it will be possible for you to help us in a similar manner with the statement of the "Committee of 100." If a reprinting of the booklet is required, we will be happy to assume printing costs.

Please let me know at your convenience how we might proceed.

Have a wonderful summer. I'll look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Rabbi Daniel B. Syme Vice-President.

DBS/e

bcc: Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler



### Commission on Reform Jewish Outreach

UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS—CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN RABBIS 6300 WILSHIRE BOULEVARD, SUITE 1475, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90048 (213) 653-9962 1330 BEACON STREET, SUITE 355, BROOKLINE, MASSACHUSETTS 02146 (617) 277-1655

July 2, 1985 13 Tammuz 5745 THOR

#### MEMORANDUM

TO: RABBI ALEXANDER M. SCHINDLER, RABBI DANIEL B. SYME, RABBI STEVEN FOSTER, DAVID BELIN

FROM: LYDIA KUKOFF

I just thought you'd like to know Outreach has finally arrived as far as the Conservative Movement is concerned. I have learned that the RA is setting up a Task Force on Intermarriage which will begin this fall. I have also learned that the Jewish Theological Seminary will offer a course on intermarriage which will be mandatory for all rabbinic students at the Seminary. This course has been funded by Leonard Greenberg of Caleco fame. It will begin in the spring and be taught by a special adjunct professor. It will also have a programmatic component which will be linked with a consortium of synagogues. I will keep you informed of any further developments.

LK/mf

Chairman
David W. Belin
Co-Chairman
Rabbi Steven Foster
Director
Lydia Kukoff
Los Angeles
Co-Director
Rabbi Sanford Seltzer
Brookling

Union of American Hebrew Congregations 838 Fifth Avenue New York, N.Y. 10021

September 1985

SAFEGUARDING JEWISH IDENTITY: THE ANTENUPTIAL AGREEMENT

By Rabbi Sanford Seltzer

Director of Research
Union of American Hebrew Congregations

In August, 1981, an Horizon Report, entitled, Intermarriage, Divorce and the Jewish Status of Children, dealt with the role of civil courts in adjudicating custody disputes between divorcing parents in a mixed marriage over the religious upbringing of children. Since then, civil courts have become progressively more embroiled in the resolution of such controversies. This trend has raised concerns regarding the constitutional propriety of judicial intervention into what are basically sectarian disagreements. The increase in the number of divorces involving mixed married couples has also prompted a search for more creative and legally acceptable methods of insuring a child's religious upbringing in a specific faith when parents are of different religious backgrounds. Foremost among these has been the recommended use of antenuptial agreements heretofore utilized primarily for the settlement of monetary questions.

The issue has been further complicated by recent changes in the divorce laws of a majority of the 50 states which now provide for a presumption of joint or shared legal custody of children in the event of divorce. Such statutes by definition grant both parents equal responsibility for decisions affecting a child's educational, moral and religious welfare. While the limited research that is available appears to support the view that shared custody is psychologically beneficial for children, its religious implications, particularly in situations where parents are unwilling to surrender their legal rights to inculcate their own religious values in their children, have not been investigated. <sup>2</sup>

This Horizon Report will examine various aspects of these developments as they impact upon the rearing of children of mixed marriages as Jews subsequent to divorce. Reference will also be made to the dilemma of reform Judaism as it ponders such legal devices as the antenuptial agreement, the use of which may be antithetical to its time honored opposition to any infringement of the doctrine of separation of church and state as found in the first amendment to the Constitution.

#### ANTENUPTIAL AGREEMENTS

As previously mentioned, in the past, antenuptial agreements were drafted primarily for the settlement of financial problems between men and women about to marry who were seeking some legal instrument for protecting previously accumulated assets. Such contracts have never received widespread court approval.

The Horizon Institute, a center for research, policy and planning for the UAHC and its member congregations, provides principled and appropriate Jewish responses to the demands of a complex modern society, and is dedicated to the belief that the Synagogue remains the central institution for the preservation of Judaism and the survival of the Jewish people.

One author, in noting that even today, despite their growing popularity, only a minority of jurisdictions recognize them, adds that "courts subject stipulations regarding children to higher degrees of scrutiny than they would apply to monetary disputes" and suggest, therefore, that they be avoided in agreements dealing with support and custody. 3

Although admitting that contracts directing the religious upbringing of children have not enjoyed judicial favor, Kenneth Ernstoff, Dean of Students, Boston College Law School. has called for the employment of such agreements as a means of safeguarding the Jewish upbringing of children after the divorce of a mixed married couple. Excerpted sections of his proposal which he believes would be judicially acceptable follow:

...the parties to this agreement make the following provisions for the religious upbringing of our child(ren): ... We agree that religious training and practice is an important and integral part of our lives and our children's lives. It is our joint resolve that our children practice and receive a formal education in the Jewish religion....Subsequent to their Bar or Bas Mitzvah our children shall be provided with the opportunity to choose whether to continue their formal religious education....Should one or all children reside in the care and custody of a single parent, we agree that parent shall carry this provision to the best of his or her ability and shall cooperate with the non-custodial spouse to that end.

The draft has been so worded to anticipate joint custodial situations as well as the more traditional practice of vesting legal and physical custody in one parent. Rabbis and Jewish educators may take issue with the clause in the agreement according the child the right to discontinue Jewish education subsequent to Bas and Bar Mitzvah. The reasoning behind Ernstoff's emphasis upon that event is unclear given the prevailing Jewish position that terminating one's Jewish education at that point is wholly inappropriate.

There is no indication whether this prerogative is to be exercised because in the author's opinion it is normative in Jewish life to end one's Jewish education at that time or it is to be a special consideration granted children of mixed marriages. In the latter instance, it raises the question of whether such an arrangement is intended to placate the non-Jewish parent who may have signed the agreement reluctantly and who, in the event of a child's decision to discontinue formal Jewish training, can now exert his or her own religious influence.

Although the Ernstoff proposal requires much more clarification and additional study, it represents a significant beginning, particularly in light of newly evolving shared custodial arrangements. Whether such agreements will meet judicial standards remains to be seen. Whether any legal instrument is a solution for deeply felt interpersonal religious needs and family conflicts remains unanswered.

Whether Reform Judaism can live with antenuptial agreements focusing upon religion is an equally vexing problem.

#### THE QUESTION OF CONSTITUTIONALITY

In 1971, the Supreme Court of the United States, in a decision in Lemon vs Kurzman that became known as the Lemon Law, established a series of criteria that were to be met if a statute with religious implications was to be deemed constitutional. These criteria have become the basis for judicial rulings in church-state disputes. They require that the law in question have a legitimate secular legislative purpose, that its primary effect neither advance nor inhibit religion and that the statute not foster an excessive governmental entanglement in religion. 5

A number of articles in the legal literature have charged that more recently, the Supreme Court, perhaps reflecting the changing tenor of public opinion in the United States regarding the role of religion and responding to the emerging cultural phenomenon of deconstruction, has so loosely interpreted the Lemon Law as to render it meaningless.

The Virginia Law Review of May 1985 has criticized two recent rulings of the Court which, in the Journal's opinion, exemplify this tendency. One is a 1983 decision in which the Court upheld the right of the State of Nebraska Legislature to pay chaplains to open its legislative sessions with prayer by arguing "the historical and nearly universal acceptance of legislative prayer." 7 The second was a 1984 ruling upholding the right of the city of Pawtucket, Rhode Island, to display a nativity scene on the town green since, in the Court's words, "the benefits to any particular religion were insignificant and minor and remote." §

A note in the 1984 June issue of the Michigan Law Review is even more specific in its condemnation of judicial attitudes as these pertain directly to child custody cases involving religion. It accuses many courts of openly favoring religious parents over non-religious parents despite the fact that such decisions are clear violations of the neutrality principle of the first amendment. The author contends that courts should consider religion only when a child has expressed a custody preference predicated upon personal religious beliefs and not upon parental convictions. Even then, the child's religious preference should be weighed in the context of all other pertinent factors before an award of custody is made. 9

The article fails to address how one is to determine the origins of a child's avowed religious preference or whether it is possible to isolate the expression of such beliefs from the influence of one or both parents, a factor particularly telling in the case of very young children. It would appear that if courts were to base their rulings in custody cases on the conditions set forth in the Michigan Law Review article, the antenuptial agreements suggested by Dean Ernstoff would not be admissable.

The unwarrented intrusion of secular courts into the religious realm is also deplored by Joan Wexler, Professor of Law at the New York University Law School, in an article, entitled, Rethinking the Modification of Child Custody Decrees. 10 Wexler is critical of the ease and frequency with which she believes divorce courts are currently granting petitions for the modification of child custody decrees. They fail in the process to give ample regard to the growing body of sociological and psychological insights regarding the needs and behavior of children as they adapt to the post divorce configuration of the family. Instead, she asserts, "judicial judgements of what constitutes a child's best interests have become a product of the personality, temperament, background, interests and biases of the trial judge or the community that elected him"11

Wexler's contentions are especially relevant in light of the example she cites in her article, the 1980 New York case of Friederwitzer vs Friederwitzer. Originally both parents had been granted joint legal custody and the mother physical custody of their two children. Later the father sued for physical custody of the children on the grounds that Mrs. Friederwitzer had violated various tenets of Orthodox Judaism by her behavior, tenets which she had agreed to honor and instill within the children.

In holding for Mr. Friederwitzer, the court observed that in general, religious beliefs should play only a small part in custody decisions and that it was not clear whether the contradictions between Mrs. Friederwitzer's behavior and her religious teachings had upset the children. Still, it concluded, "such contradictions can only cause confusion in the minds of children of tender years and be detrimental to the development of a religious feeling." 12

Wexler challenged both the right and the capacity of a secular court to evaluate what constituted religious training and to then transfer custody "unless there is evidence of serious harm to the children. None was presented in Frieder-witzer." The author stressed that in awarding custody to the father, the court had not bothered to consider his fitness as a custodial parent. "The court," she wrote, "did not examine his religious or sexual behavior, his care for the children prior to divorce or his plans relevant to their case if his motion were granted." 14

#### IMPLICATIONS FOR REFORM JUDAISM

The ongoing controversy in legal circles over the extent to which courts should delve into religious matters has been accompanied by a perceptible shift in the attitudes of some segments of the Orthodox and Conservative Jewish communities. The latter are now turning to civil courts for the redress of religious grievances based upon violations of Halakhic aspects of marriage and divorce. Friederwitzer is one example. A second is that of Avitzur vs Avitzur. Here, a Jewish husband was ordered by the New York Court of Appeals to honor the obligations contained in the Conservative Ketubah he and his wife had signed as a condition of their marriage and to grant her a Get, a Jewish divorce, which he now refused to do.

In an article, entitled, Jewish Divorce and the Promise of Avitzur, the author hailed the court decision as a milestone "reflecting society's desire to

see matters of marital settlements resolved by the spouse's themselves."<sup>15</sup> In the author's opinion, the decision laid important groundwork for the re-education of the Jewish community regarding the merits of antenuptial agreements in general and their specific application to such Jewish concerns as Get and the questions of the Aguna. <sup>16</sup> While the Avitzur article makes no reference to child custody and mixed marriage, it is of relevance in this context as well.

Unlike its Conservative and Orthodox counterparts, Reform Judaism has up until now steadfastly resisted any breach in the wall of separation between church and state and has insisted upon a strict interpretation of the first amendment. 17 At the same time, it continues to deny the binding validity of Jewish law particularly as it applies to marriage and divorce even though Halakhic issues served as the basis upon which civil courts were drawn into the disputes raised in Friederwitzer, Avitzur, et al. Nor has any other movement in Judaism been more sensitive to the findings of the social sciences and applied them more consistently in reconciling the traditional teachings of Judaism with needs of modern Jews. Reform Judaism has never taken an official stand on the question of joint custody. It may now find itself obligated to do so in light of its concerns over the future of the Jewish family.

Antenuptial agreements have not been endorsed by the reform movement although a special committee of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations does exist for the purpose of studying them. The absence of any official position may change as the incidence of divorce grows and as anxieties regarding the Jewishness of children of mixed marriages are heightened. The complexities of the subject demand lengthy and serious debate. Its implications go far beyond the question of how to safe—guard the Jewish identity of children of mixed marriages. The matter of church—state relationships will have to be probed as well. For should antenuptial agreements be deemed appropriate, their use will mark a radical departure from Reform's longstanding aversion to secular involvement in religious questions. This in turn may augur a more flexible approach to other church—state issues in the future.

#### Notes

- "Recent Developments In Custody Standards," <u>Family Law Quarterly</u>, Volume XVIII. No.4, Winter 1985, pp. 432-36.
- Constance Ahrons, "Divorce Before, During and After," Stress and the Family. Volume I, Hamilton I. McCubbin and Charles R. Figley, Eds., Brunner/Mazel Publisher, New York, 1983, pp.112-13.
- Marcia Mobilia, "Antenuptial Agreements, Anticipating Divorce, How Effective Are They?" Massachusetts Law Review, Volume 70, No.2., June 1985, p.90.
- Kenneth Ernstoff, "Forcing Rites On Children," <u>Family Advocate</u>, Volume 16, No.3, Winter 1984, p.15.
- "The Establishment Clause and Religion In Child Custody Disputes: Factoring Religion Into the Best Interest Equation," <u>Michigan Law Review</u>, Volume 82, No.7, June 1984, p.1708.
- 6. See Allan C. Hutchinson, "From Cultural Construction To Historical Deconstruction."

  Yale Law Journal, Volume 94, No.1, November 1984, pp.209-237. See also Sanford

  Levinson, "On Dworkin, Kennedy and Ely: Decoding the Legal Past,"

  Review 2, Volume LI, No.2, 1984, pp.240-64.
- "Beyond the Establishment Clause: Enforcing Separation of Church and State Through State Constitutional Provisions," <u>Virginia Law Review</u>, Volume 71, No.4, May 1985, p.629.
- 8. Ibid.
- 9. Michigan Law Review, op cit., p.1729.
- 10. Joan G. Wexler, "Rethinking the Modification of Child Custody Decrees," Yale Law Journal, Volume 94, No.4, March 1985, pp.757-820.
- 11. Ibid., p.762.
- Memorandum Supreme Court Nassau County, Sharon Friederwitzer Plaintiff vs Elliott Friederwitzer Defendant, Index No.21095/78, Cal. No.80N01539, October 2, 1980.
- 13. Wexler, op cit., p.773.
- 14. Ibid., p.772.
- 15. Linda S. Kahan, "Jewish Divorce and Secular Courts: The Promise of Avitzur," <u>The Georgetown Law Journal</u>, Volume 73, 1984, p.222. See also David Ellenson and James S. Ellenson, "American Courts and the Enforceabilty of a Ketubah as a Private Contract: An Investigation of Recent U.S. Court Decisions," <u>Conservative Judaism</u>, Spring 1982, pp.35-42.
- 16. Kahan, op cit., p.224.
- 17. See "Where We Stand," Social Action Resolutions, adopted by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, revised edition, 1984, Commission On Social Action, UAHC, New York, p.74.

#### HORIZON REPORTS

August 1980	Membership Status of Non-Jews: A Review of Congregational Policies
August 1981	Intermarriage, Divorce and the Jewish Status of Children
September 1982	Christian Mixed Marriages: Implications for Jewish Researchers
October 1983	Conversion To Judaism: Filling Some Significant Knowledge Gaps
October 1984	Who Enrolls In the Introduction To Judaism Program? A Report From Four American Cities
September 1985	Safeguarding Jewish Identity: The Antenuptial Agreement

For copies, write to:

Rabbi Sanford Seltzer 1330 Beacon Street

Suite 355

Brookline, MA 02146



### Research Task Force on Interfaith Marriage

UMON OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS—CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN RABBIS
— HEBREW UNION COLLEGE-JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION

1330 BEACON STREET, SUITE 355, BROOKLINE, MASSACHUSETTS 02146 (617) 277-1655

September 12, 1985

Paralendo

Dear Task Force Member:

This is to remind you of the forthcoming meeting of the Research Task Force to be held on Thursday, October 10, from 1 - 9 P.M. at the House of Living Judaism, 838 Fifth Avenue, New York. Cocktails and dinner will be served.

Under separate cover, you will shortly be receiving a copy of the Biennial delegate's questionnaire which will be discussed at the special Biennial breakfasts in Los Angeles. The questionnaire represents months of diligent preparation by the members of the Task Force Design Subcommittee chaired by Paul Gans. A full agenda is enclosed. Please make every effort to be with us. May we take this opportunity to wish you and your loved ones a happy and a healthy New Year.

Sincerely.

Alan V. Iselin

Chairman

Research Task Force

Rabbi Murray I. Rothman

Co-Chairman

Research Task Force

#### Agenda Research Task Force October 10, 1985

- I. Welcome and Opening Remarks Alan V. Iselin Rabbi Murray I. Rothman
- II. Report of the Project Director: What We Have Achieved Rabbi Mark L. Winer
- III. Report of the Design Subcommittee Paul Gans
- IV. The Biennial Questionnaire Rabbi Mark L. Winer
- V. The Biennial Briefing Breakfasts Paul Gans
- VI. Fundraising: The Role of the Task Force Alan V. Iselin

#### Research Task Force

I will	I cannot attend the meeting of the Research
Task Force to b	e held on Thursday, October 10, at the House
of Living Judai	sm, New York.
I plan on	having cocktails and dinner.
I will not	be having cocktails and dinner.
NAME	
ADDR ESS	
CITY/STATE/ZIP_	

Please return to: Rabbi Sanford Seltzer UAHC

1330 Beacon Street, Suite 355 Brookline, MA 02146





RABBI ALEXANDER M. SCHINDLER • UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS
PRESIDENT • UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS
838 FIFTH AVENUE NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021 (212) 249-0100

( ) Dread

December 16, 1991 9 Tevet 5752

Cantor Raymond Smolover Jewish Community Center 252 Soundview Avenue White Plains, NY 10606

Dear Ray:

Thank you for sending me the materials on the subject of interfaith marriages. I have not had time to read it yet but I am certain I will find it interesting.

I hope that life is treating you well.

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

#### Jewish Community Center 252 Soundview Avenue, White Plains, New York, 10606

Dr. Raymond Smolover, Cantor

December 12, 1991

Rabbi Alexander Schindler, President Union of American Hebrew Congregations 838 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10021

Dear Alex:

The enclosures will be of special interest to you since we had the occasion to discuss the subject of interfaith marriages in depth some time ago, when we met to discuss officiating at Reggie Port's daughter's marriage.

I was delighted to congratulate Mel Merians on his being elected to chair the Board of Trustees and I know that this will be a dynamic period of accomplishments for the UAHC and for Reform Judaism.

I am also taking this opportunity to send you and Rhea and your family our best wishes for a happy and healthy holiday season.

Sincerely,

Raymond Smolover

# MAY THE JCC SANCTUARY BE USED FOR INTERFAITH MARRIAGES?

The Board of Trustees has set up an Ad Hoc Committee to study and report to it on this question. We, the Ad Hoc Committee, would appreciate your objective input as a part of our study.

- 1. Call any member of the Committee to discuss it.
- 2. Write your thoughts and forward them to the AD HOC COMMITTEE c/o JCC.
- 5. Ask any committee member to arrange a time for you to meet with members to express your views.

#### JCC AD HOC COMMITTEE...1991-1992

MARGERY ARSHAM - - 472-0856 JERRY FEINBERG - - 723-6725 RUTH GRAVITZ - - 761-2880 RENEE KARAS - - 212-289-1690 JOHN LAEMLE - -949-7267 ABE LANDAU - - 428-0049 IRWIN ROLL - - 946-3442 RICHARD SARNA - - 948-2439 HELANE SMITH..(CHAIR) - - 235-1891 SUSAN STRICKLER - - 997-7764 IRWIN WADLER - - 723-8717 LYNN WINSTON - - 948-4280

# Interfaith Marriages

Questions, Responses and Commentaries

Dr. Raymond Smolover

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# Interfaith Marriages

### Questions, Responses and Commentaries

by Dr. Raymond Smolover

#### 1. The survival of the Jewish people

Current statistics indicate that the Jewish population is in alarming decline. A number of reasons have been advanced, including low birthrates, disaffiliations, conversions and interfaith marriages. The following addresses only one of the factors: that of interfaith marriages.

Question: Do interfaith marriages endanger the survival of the Jewish people?

**Response:** An impartial reading of history suggests that interfaith marriages have at times been beneficial, and at other times detrimental to Jewish survival (see sections 3 and 4). The constant threat to Jewish survival, however, has always been "intolerance." Being Jewish in a world that is intolerant to differences resulted in anti-semitism, exiles, pogroms and in history's most devastating tragedy: the genocide of the holocaust, with the loss of millions of Jewish lives.

Commentary: Helping to create a world that is tolerant, sensitive, and appreciative of differences, enhances Jewish survival - as well as the survival of other minorities. Being supportive of the intermarrieds helps to establish an environment of tolerance. Making our synagogues available to our children prior to an interfaith marriage manifests our tolerance, increases their sense of belonging, and diminishes their sense of rejection. This may be a time in history when welcoming our intermarrieds prior to their wedding can once again benefit Jewish survival, when reaching beyond "outreach" can become an "ingathering."

#### 2. The beginning of the Jewish people

Question: When and where does the history of the Jewish people begin?

Response: The history of the Jewish people does not have an arbitrary beginning; it does not begin wherever we would prefer it to begin. It does not begin with the Patriarches, with Moses, with the Kings or the Prophets; not with the destruction of the Temple, nor the Exile, nor with the decrees of Ezra, nor with Yohanan ben Zakkai. It cannot arbitrarily begin with halachah, the teachings of the talmud, or rabbinic judaism. Nor does it begin with the Bal Shem Tov and the founding of Hasidism, nor the Enlightenment in the 18th century, nor with the founding of Reform Judaism in 1810, nor with the redemption of the State of Israel in 1948. The history of the Jewish people, according to Torah, begins with God the Creator, and the creation of humanity.

Commentary: As described by the authors of Torah, the history of the Jewish people could have begun with Abraham. Instead it begins with Adam and Eve, and with the three covenants: (1) God's covenant with Noah - that the earth would never again be destroyed (the rainbow being the sign of the covenant); (2) God's covenant with Abraham that he will be the father of a multitude of nations through the descendants of Isaac and Ishmael (circumcision being the sign of the covenant); and (3) God's covenant with Moses at Sinai that the children of Israel will be His people and He will be their God (the sign of the covenant being the Ten Commandments).

#### 3. The beginning of Jewish intermarriage

Question: When and where did intermarriage begin?

Response: Intermarriage obviously began with the first Hebrew. Abram, son of Terah, of the tenth generation from Noah through the line of Shem, was a Babylonian from the city of Ur in the Chaldees. With God's covenant (Genesis 17:10) Abraham became the first Hebrew. He "took" two wives: Sarah, and the Egytian, Hagar. Upon the death of his wife Sarah, Abraham married Keturah, one of his concubines, who bore him six sons. At Abraham's death, he was buried by his two sons: by Isaac, son of Sarah, and by Ishmael, son of Hagar (Genesis 25:9). His grandson, Jacob, "took" two non-Jewish wives, Bilhah and Zilpah. Jacob's sons, Reuben, Simeon and Judah married Canaanite women. And Joseph, "took" an Egytian, Asenath.

Moses' wife, Zipporah, was the daughter of a Midianite priest and idolator, Jethro. Following the death of Zipporah, Moses married a Cushite - an Ethiopian. (Numbers 12:1).

Ruth and her sister Orpah were Moabites. They married Naomi's sons, Mahlon and Chilion. The sons died and Orpah returned to Moab. Ruth followed Naomi, saying "your people shall be my people." She married Boaz, a kinsman of Elimelech, Naomi's husband, and bore him a son, Obed, the father of Jesse, the father of David the King.

King David married Maccah (daughter of the king of Geshur, who bore him Absolam) and Bath-Sheba, a Gilonite - who was the wife of Uriah the Hittite. David and Bath-Sheba's son, King Solomon, married a number of foreign women - Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians and Hitties, including the daughter of the King of Egypt.

#### 4. The beginning of prohibitions against intermarriage

Question: Where and when did the first prohibitions against intermarriage begin?

**Response:** An early prohibition against worshipping other gods includes a warning against intermarriage. It is to be found in Deuteronomy 7:1-3 (prior to the conquest of Canaan by the Israelites): "...Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son ... that they may serve others gods."

The most often cited prohibition is stated in Ezra 10:2-3 (following the return to Zion after the Babylonian exile in 536 b.c.e.): "We have broken faith with our God, and have married foreign women of the people of the land; yet now there is hope for Israel concerning this thing. Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives, and such as are born of them, according to the counsel of the Lord, and of those that tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law."

Today intermarriage is forbidden in the State of Israel. According to section 2 of the Rabbinical Courts Jurisdiction (Marriage and Divorce) Law, 5713/1953, no marriage of Jews in Israel is valid unless contracted "in accordance with the law of the Torah."

**Commentary:** The prohibition against intermarriage in the biblical period was to prevent the worship of other gods. The prohibition against intermarriage by contemporary orthodox and conservative denominations is based on "halachah" (sacred law); "marriages must be in accordance with the law of the Torah." Reform Judaism does not consider halachah to be binding law. In keeping with the democratic precepts of respect for the individual and for private conscience, Reform Judaism does not encourage, nor prohibit intermarriage.

#### 5. Wedding ceremonies, rites and traditions

Questions: What is the history and meaning of the wedding ceremony and traditions?

**Response:** There is little data about marriages in biblical times. The act of marriage was simply "taking" ("when a man taketh a wife," Deut.24:1). That celebrations took place is evident in various passages of the bible, but without description.

In Talmudic times, from the third through the fifth centuries b.c.e., the wedding ceremony contained two separate aspects: Kiddushin or erusin, meaning betrothal, and nissu'in, the marriage proper. During the Kiddushin, the bridegroom presented an object of value to his betrothed in the presence of two witnesses and recited the marriage formula: "Behold, you are consecrated unto me with this ring according to the law of Moses, and Israel." During the second ceremony - nissu'in - the bride was inducted into the groom's home (chuppah) at which time the marriage was consummated. During the middle ages these two ceremonies - kiddushin (erusin), and nissu'in were merged into one ceremony.

**Ketubbah** (marriage document): the ketubbah represents the act of Kinyan - acquisition, the conditions of which are detailed in a written deed (a ketubbah). In Reform Judaism the ketubbah takes the form of a marriage certificate minus the aspect of the acquisition of the bride and exchange of property.

**Chupah** (bridal canopy - or bridal chamber): In ancient times the chupah represented the tent or room of the groom into which, at the end of the betrothal period, the bride was brought in festive procession for the marital union. In the middle ages the chupah was not used at the wedding ceremony. Today, the chupah is ceremonial, sometimes consisting of a self-standing structure, a floral arrangement, or a tallit supported by hand-held rods to symbolize the home of the newlyweds.

Ring: Traditionally a ring - or a coin, in oriental communities - which belongs to the groom (free of precious stones) was used as an act of acquisition. In Reform and Conservative congregations a "double ring" ceremony is often practiced. (Since, according to the halachah, it is the groom who is acquiring the bride, this innovation raises serious halachic doubts which, according to some authorities, even affects the validity of the marriage.)

The marriage formula recited during the ring ceremony: "Harei at m'kudeshet liy b'tabaat zo k'dat Moshe v'Yisrael" is literally translated, "Behold, thou art betrothed unto me with this ring, in accordance with the Law of Moses and Israel." Inasmuch as Reform Judaism regards halachah as traditions rather than binding laws, this formula is reinterpreted accordingly: "Be consecrated to me with this ring as my wife/husband in keeping with the heritage of Moses and Israel.

Tallit (prayer shawl): Originally, the word meant "gown" or "cloak, which was a rectangular garment worn by men in ancient times. At the four corners of the tallit, tassels were attached in fulfillment of the biblical commandment regarding "tzizit" - fringes (Numbers 15:38-41, "And it shall be unto you a fringe, that you may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the Lord, and do them...") In some communities, it is customary for the groom to dress in a prayer shawl - tallit, during the Chupah ceremony. (It is likewise customary to bury male Jews in their tallit from which the fringes have been removed or torn.)

**Kipah** (Yarmulkah - head covering): There is no Biblical law or directive for covering the head. According to the Talmud (Ned.30b) it was optional. To cover one's head with a turban or a skullcap as a sign of humility, respect and reverence has been a widespread custom among the Hindus, Arabs, and Persians. In the middle ages the Jewish sages in Palestine considered it proper to go bareheaded even during worship. The Sephardim, however, followed the teaching

of the academies in Babylonia where the practice was to cover the head as a sign of piety. This became a western custom until the founding of Reform Judaism in 1810.

**Breaking the Glass**: The custom in the Ashkenazi tradition of breaking a glass originally represented a defense against evil spirits. The custom has been reinterpreted from time to time to temperate the celebration in keeping with the Jewish tradition of moderation.

#### 6. Officiating at interfaith marriages

Question 1: What is the official position of Jewish clergy on officiating at interfaith marriages?

Response: (Orthodox and Conservative): Orthodox and conservative clergy are prohibited from officiating at interfaith marriages unless the non-Jewish person has been converted to Judaism "in accordance with the law of Torah" - at which time, of course, it is no longer an interfaith marriage. According to halachah, however, converting for the purpose of marriage is unacceptable; such a conversion being considered "of impure motive."

Jewish missionaries were very active and conversions to Judaism were extremely successful long before Christianity, especially during the early Hellenistic era, in Arabia and in the vast Khazar kingdom. However, animosity between Christian missionaries and Jewish missionaries eventually discouraged the process of missionizing by both faiths.

Response (Reform): The Joint Outreach Task Force of the Union of American Hebrew congregations and the Central Conference of American Rabbis prepared the following statement in September 1985: "The Task Force unqualifiedly affirms the right of every rabbi to act in accordance with his/her religious conscience in the matter of officiating at interfaith marriages free from any external pressure." This statement was issued in response to the "Committee of 100" reform rabbis (out of some 1,500) who advocated non-participation in "mixed marriages."

Rabbi Eugene Mihaly, professor of Rabbinic Literature and Homiletics, Executive Dean of Academic Affairs of the Hebrew Union College was called upon by the Task Force to respond to the "Committee of 100" in a "Responsa on Jewish Marriage." Dr. Mihaly's response to the four arguments was: (1) It is not the Rabbi, according to our Jewish tradition, who marries a couple; the bride and groom marry one another. (2) Kiddushin is clearly a rabbinic metaphor and refers to a man's acquisition of a woman through an act of appropriation, it is not to be translated as "sacred Jewish marriage," (3) "The Sheva Berachot (seven benedictions) were classically not part of the marriage service until after the medieval period when Kiddushin (betrothal) and nissu'in (marriage proper) were merged. (4) The Central Conference of American Rabbis is a deliberative not a legislative body. It cannot and does not dictate to its members what they may or may not, should or should not believe, do, advocate, preach or practice.

Commentary: In a landmark decision by the Israeli Supreme Court two and a half years ago, only orthodox rabbis authorized by the rabbinate as recognized by the Chief Rabbinate of Israel are permitted to register marriages with the Interior Ministry. That means Jewish weddings performed halachically in Israel by Reform, Conservative or Reconstructionist rabbis have no legal standing in Israel.

Question 2: Are cantors authorized to officiate at marriages?

**Response:** Cantors are Jewish clergy. Historically and traditionally - as well as by the approbation of the Federal Government, the Hebrew Union College, and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations - cantors are vested with the authority to officiate at all life-cycle events. The position of the American Conference of Cantors - which represents the Reform Cantorate - is in agreement with the above statement of the UAHC-CCAR Outreach Task Force.

#### 7. Believing-In-Belonging

Question: Do Jews have to "believe" in order to "belong"?

Response: Belonging to the Jewish people does not require that one believe in a specific theology or philosophy. The three main contemporary belief systems are represented by: (1), the orthodox, who believe the Bible to be the literal word of God, containing obligatory laws for all Jews; (2), the conservative, who adjust and interpret this belief to meet the needs of the times; and (3), the reform, who believe the bible to be the divinely inspired creation of the genius of the Jewish people, containing history, saga, poetry and prayer.

There are also Jewish atheists, Jewish agnostics, Jewish secularists, Jewish culturalists, and Jewish nationalists-- any or all of whom may or may not believe in any specific form of "Judaism" but who nonetheless have a strong and positive sense of belonging to the Jewish people.

Whereas other "belonging systems" may require a doctrine of belief in order to belong, the Jewish people has not and does not demand an affirmation of belief in order to belong.

**Commentary:** We are born "belonging" not "believing." Belonging is a genetic need whereas believing is an acquired condition. If born wanted and nurtured, we expand our nuclear family to include their believing systems as well as their belonging systems. If born unwanted, uncared for, abused or abandoned, we will continue to seek that to which we can belong; be it constructive or destructive.

Those Jews who enter into an interfaith marriage and want a Jewish clergyperson to officiate are voicing their intent to continue to belong to the Jewish people, and are expressing their sensitivity to the "sacred" in life. They are also demonstrating their pride in belonging to a "belonging system" that provides the freedom to believe or not to believe, without being coerced into accepting established dogma.

#### 8. Statistics

The 1990 survey by the Council of Jewish Federations, and the 1991 survey by the Graduate Center of the City University of New York showed that of the 110,000 polled, 86% of Americans identify themselves as Christians, 2% as Jews, one half of 1% as Muslims and the remaining indicating no affiliation.

Among the major findings of the new survey is that the Jewish population is a good deal larger than 2% when nonreligious Jews are taken into account. The 2% of the earlier religious survey, representing 4.3 million Jews, grows to 5.5 million Jews when secular Jews are included. The number rises to 6.6 million when people of Jewish heritage, including converts to Christianity, are included.

Dr. Barry Kosmin, a sociologist who headed the team pointed out that an even broader category exists which he calls Jews by association numbering 8.2 million. They are among those who live in a household with at least one Jewish person.

- While 44% of Jews still live in the Northeast, the Jewish population in the South and West has doubled since World War II.
- Forty-five percent define themselves as liberal; 20 percent as conservative, with 80% registered voters.

- Approximately the same number of Christians convert to Judaism (185,000) as Jews who have converted to Christianity (210,000).
- In 1965, 91% of the Jews married Jews. Since 1985, only 48% of the Jews marry Jews. In other words, in 1965 the rate of intermarriage was 9% and in 1985 it was 52%. From 1985 to 1991 it has increased to 55%.
- Twenty-eight percent of the children of intermarrieds are raised Jewish. 31% are raised without religion, and 41% are being raised in another religion.

Commentary: Since approximately 98% of the Jewish clergy do not officiate at intermarriages, and inasmuch as synagogues are not available for interfaith wedding ceremonies, these statistics represent, in the main, those who were rejected by the synagogue and by the Jewish clergy. The effect upon these statistics might be substantially different if the intermarrieds were welcomed by the synagogue and the clergy prior to their wedding; especially with regard to raising their children Jewish and retaining an affiliation with a synagogue.

Question: What accounts for the increase in interfaith marriages?

**Response:** Contemporary interfaith marriages differ from those of post-biblical times in a number of ways: In the recent past, interfaith marriages were often the means by which Jews could try to escape anti-semitism, enter the larger community, have access to higher educational opportunities and better professional positions.

Today, having achieved access to the mainstream of society, interfaith marriages are more a result of a democratic open society, and a wider sensitivity to the commonality of humanity made possible by a "particularistic/plural" society. Represented in the higher levels of the arts, the professions, politics, and commerce, Jews who were formerly the "seekers" have often become the "sought afters."

Commentary: Regarding their Jewish identity, young American Jews after the holocaust, have the same options faced by their ancestors, as described by Professor Irving Greenberg in "Crossroads to Destiny." Like their ancestors following the destruction of the Temple in 70 c.e., they can choose to identify with any of the branches of Judaism, or they can identify as Jews without having to choose a religious connection. Today, many reject the current religious choices and become zionists, culturalists, secularists or humanists, for the following reasons:

- 1. Many who want a religious connection reject orthodox Judaism because it is associated with authoritarianism, exclusivity and coercive practices; and because it remains fixed in a 19th century life-style.
- 2. Conservative Judaism, standing midway between orthodoxy and reform, calls for preserving traditions based on re-interpreting the laws of Torah. But for many young American Jews, these traditions seem more of a life-style based on nostalgia rather than law. It too is often accused of being intolerant toward those who differ with them.
- 3. Reform Judaism originally stressed the universality of the teachings of Judaism the tenets of which have been accepted by most civilized societies- leaving it with a lack of "particularity." Without the "authority" of halachah, traumatized by the holocaust, as well as inspired by the redemption of the State of Israel, Reform Judaism seems unable to decide whether to retreat to the "traditionalisms" of the past in order to seem more "authentic," or, to find the courage to continue in the path of creative reform.

#### 9. The Synagogue and Intermarriage

Question 1: Do any congregations provide their synagogues for interfaith weddings?

**Response:** More than one synagogue in our community has provided the use of the synagogue for an interfaith marriage in a special circumstance. However, virtually all churches welcome interfaith wedding ceremonies. Almost all will adjust the wedding service to meet the suggestions of a Jewish co-officiant, or the desires of a Jewish bride or groom.

Commentary: Many intermarrieds belong to families who are members of a synagogue. Most became b'nei mitzvah or confirmed. They consider marriage to be a sacred event in their lives in which they can express their Jewishness. Suggesting that they be married in a place other than a synagogue, or by a justice-of-the-peace instead of a Jewish clergyperson is to question their sense of belonging and religious sincerity. To refuse them the use of the synagogue for their wedding ceremony and then to offer them free membership for one year following their marriage, is to to question their intelligence and to add insult to rejection.

Question 2: What is the history of interfaith marriages at JCC?

Response: There are three histories: (1), that of the congregants, (2), of the synagogue, and (3), of the clergy.

- Congregants: Although statistics regarding our congregation and intermarriage do not exist, communities such as ours are estimated to be in the top percentage of interfaith marriages.
- 2. Synagogue: Over the years, the use of our synagogue has been refused to those members of our congregation who have requested them for interfaith marriages. The formation of the Committee to consider the use of the synagogue for interfaith marriages is the first time this issue has been brought before the congregation.
- 3. Clergy: At the initial presentation to the Central Conference of American Rabbis, chaired by the late Rabbi Bamberger, Rabbi Schwartz voted in favor of officiating at interfaith marriages. However, the majority of the vote was "not to solemnize intermarriage." Rabbi Schwartz agreed to abide by the majority vote. (Bamberger later stated that he had made a mistake and should have voted in favor.) Neither Rabbi Davis, Rabbi Winer or any of the associate or assistant rabbis officiated at interfaith marriages while employed by our congregation.

Personal Comment: In 1973, I officiated at the marriage of my son, David, to Barbara who was not Jewish. The ceremony took place on her father's farm in Yorktown Heights. Shortly thereafter a number of congregants requested that I officiate at the weddings of their children. The president, Lawrence Foster, and Rabbi Davis agreed. I have since officiated at interfaith weddings for many families of our congregation as well as for the unaffiliated but not in our sanctuary or the chapel.

Commentary: A distinction must be made between a specifically "Jewish ceremony" and a "religious ceremony" performed in our synagogue. For example: our congregation has often hosted the annual community Thanksgiving service at which priests, and ministers of our community participate on our pulpit in a service of thanksgiving to God. It is not a Jewish worship service, but it is a religious worship service. How can we justify refusing the use of our sanctuary to our own Jewish families on the grounds that it is not a Jewish ceremony, knowing full well that it is indeed a religious ceremony?

#### 10. Recommendations:

There are positive and negative factors to be considered in providing the use of our synagogue to our members for interfaith weddings:

**Negative:** Some will interpret our providing the use of our synagogue for interfaith marriages as an endorsement, or an encouragement of interfaith marriages. We will be criticized for being "out of the mainstream" of reform congregations.

Commentary: Being the target of criticism is part of the "tradition" of Reform Judaism. From its very inception in 1810, Reform Judaism - which was created by lay leaders - met with harsh criticism. The first reform synagogue in Seesen, Germany, was literally forced to leave town. Reform was accused of contributing to the demise of the Judaism. Almost one hundred years later, Reform Judaism generated similar criticism when it decided to recognize as Jewish those who are born to a Jewish father; thus re-establishing patrilineal descent.

**Positive:** Making the synagogue available to our congregants for interfaith wedding ceremonies is not an endorsement of intermarriage: it is an endorsement of our children! It affirms our confidence in them, and provides their families with a support system for encouraging a continued identification with our congregation, and the universal teachings of Judaism.

Commentary: Our congregation has a history of adhering to democratic processes; such as when the congregation commendably voted to permit our senior rabbi to wear a yarmulke on the pulpit - for the first time in our history - despite the fact that over 90% of our members do not wear them. Refusing the use of the synagogue to members of the congregation because of differences in theology or philosophy is discriminatory and undemocratic.

Conclusion: There were times when the existence of a Diaspora contributed to the survival of the Jewish people (Babylon 586, b.c.e.). There were times when it did not (Germany, 1939). Similarly there were times when interfaith marriages benefited the survival of the Jewish people (1800-900 b.c.e.), and there were times when it did not (500-300 b.c.e.). This is a time when the fact of interfaith marriages may once again be used to benefit Jewish survival.

**Commentary:** At this stage in history, our children will not abandon the benefits of living in an open society; nor will they give up their right to act in accordance with their consciences for acceptance by an authoritarian orthodoxy, a nostalgic traditionalism or an insecure reform. It is doubtful that any Jewish bride or groom decided <u>not</u> to intermarry because they could not obtain a Jewish clergyperson to officiate, or a synagogue in which to be married. Our children will continue to intermarry in increasing numbers. They will be married by a justice-of-the-peace or a non-Jewish clergyperson. They will be married in their homes, in restaurants, hotels and country clubs, or even in a welcoming church.

The varieties of strategies attempting to stem the tide of intermarriages: education, affiliation and encouragement; intimidation, coercion, restrictions, scare-technics, prohibitions and rejections: all have failed! Welcoming our children and their families prior to an interfaith marriage is the only option that has not been tried. Exposing them to a tolerant and embracing Judaism may inspire them - as well as ourselves - to continue to try to realize the teachings of an enduring faith: that ...

"The stranger that sojourneth with you shall be unto you as the home-born among you, and you shall love them as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt; I am the Lord your God" (Leviticus 19.34).



CONFIDENTIAL QUESTIONNAIRE

#### STUDY OF JEWISH IDENTITY, RELIGIOUS PRACTICES AND BELIEFS, AND MARRIAGE PATTERNS

Please complete this questionnaire by following the directions at each question. You will be asked to do one of three things. --

- circle a code number to the right of the answer you choose, or circle one code number in each row, etc., or
- (2) fill in a number (for example, your zip code), or
- (3) write in a word or short explanation (such as your specific answer, if the stated choices are not appropriate).

If you are uncertain or do not know the answer to any question, just leave that item blank and go on to the next question.

### SECTION I. RESIDENTIAL BACKGROUND AND COUNTRY OF FAMILY ORIGIN.

	(City/Town) (S	tate/	Pro	vince)	7	Zipcode)	
2.	How many years have you lived in the city or town where you live now?			ye	ars		
				10			
5.	This question is about place of birth.						Meso Silence
	First, please indicate in column A whe your parents were born, and in column of your mother's family and your father JUST GIVE US YOUR BEST GUESS.	s D a	bne	E the	country	or region	of origi
	PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER IN EACH COLUMN. [IF MORE THAN ONE ANSWER IN COLUMN D OR E, CIRCLE TWO NUMBERS.]	You		B. Your nother	Your father		E. Father's family
	USA or Canada	1		1	1	1	1
	Russia, Poland, or other parts of Eastern Europe	2		2	2	2	2
	Germany	3		3	3	3	3
	Austria, Hungary, or other parts of Central Europe (except Germany)	4		4	4	4	4
	Other, please specify below and circle the "5" in the appropriate column.	5	7	5	5	5	5
	A Mariel Phron Eggran						
	For each in Question 3 NOT BORN IN THE USA OR CANADA, please write in the (approximate) year(s) of	A. You	T	B. Your other	C. Your	D. Mother's family	E. Father's family

SECTION II. IN THIS SECTION WE WILL ASK ABOUT YOUR FAMILY AT VARIOUS STAGES PRIOR TO ADULTHOOD. IF ONE OF YOUR PARENTS WAS DECEASED OR IF YOUR PARENTS WERE NOT LIVING TOGETHER, YOU MAY CHOOSE TO ANSWER EITHER ABOUT THE DECEASED PARENT, OR ABOUT A STEP-PARENT OR GUARDIAN, OR WRITE "not applicable."

#### A. "WHEN YOU WERE SIXTEEN. . ."

	(City/Town)	(State/Province)		
6. A. When you were	16, what was your	mother's and your father's (u		occupation?
JOB TITLE OR	POSITION	A0019001   104-00-00441	127641112	SH (MPSSMESH
NATURE OF WOR	RK DONE			
TYPE OF BUSIN	NESS OR INDUSTRY			
	ents self-employed s described above?		FATH	ER
	Yes No Don'f know		1 2 3	
	5, what did each consider themselves		ther	Father
your parents co	Disider Themserves	Orthodox Jew	1	1
(PLEASE CIRCLE		Conservative Jew	2	2 3
IN EACH COLUMN	1)	Reform Jew	3	3
		Just Jewish	*	4
		Catholic	5	5
(Please specify	/ denomination) →	— Protestant	6	6
_		her (Please specify and circle		
		he "7" in appropriate column)	7	7

#### B. "DURING YOUR CHILDHOOD. . ."

8.	Please read the ventor frequently y												
	your childhood.		Onc	е а	year	2-	5 tim	es 6-	11 tir	nes	12 t	imes	a

	Never	Once a year or less		-11 times a year	12 times a year or more
lave Jews visit in your home?.	. 1	2	3	4	5
lave non-Jews visit in your ome?	. 1	2	3	4	5
ttend synagogue services?	. 1	2	3	4	5
ttend church services?	. 1	2	3	4	5

9.	Please tell us a	about	life cycl	e ceremonies	you	(and	your	siblings)	have
	experienced.			r					

(PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER IN EACH ROW)	Yes	No	I had no brothers	l had no sisters	Don't   recall
Were you confirmed?	1	2		558	
Were any of your brothers or sisters confirmed?	1	2	3	4	5
Did <b>you</b> have a Bar or Bat Mitzvah?	1	2			22
Did any of your brothers have a Bar Mitzvah?	1	2	3		5
Did any of your sisters have a Bat Mitzvah?	1	2		4	5

10. Was there a religious ceremony in	Yes, for all 1
connection with the circumcision of	Yes, but not for all 2
each of your brothers, and (if you	I had no brothers 3
are male) your own circumcision?	No, for none 4
P.D. 21 CARRESSER - INC. 1922 P.M. (1924 P.M. 1924 P.M.	Don't recall 5

<ol> <li>Did your parents name their children</li> </ol>	Yes, all 1
in synagogue? (PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER)	Yes, but not all 2
WE CO. THE SAME STATE CONTROL STATE OF THE SAME STATE OF THE SAME STATE STATE OF THE SAME STATE OF THE	No, none 3
	Don't know 4

12. This question is about Jewish family customs. Most of the time during your

childhood, was it your family's practice to			
(PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER IN EACH ROW)	Yes	No	Don't Recall
Light Sabbath candles?	1	2	3
Have mostly Jewish friends?	1	2	3
Eat no bread on Passover?	1	2	3
Live in a "Jewish neighborhood"?	1	2	3
Sit shive after the death of a relative?	1	2	3
Build a Sukkah?	1	2	3
Keep Kosher?	1	2	3
Have or attend a Passover Seder?	1	2	3
Light Hanukah candles?	1	2	3
Have a Christmas tree?	1	2	3
Fast on Yom Kippur?	1	2	3
Light Yahrzeit candle at home in memory of a relative?	1	2	3
Eat pork or pork products?	1	2	3
Observe Yizkor on Yom Kippur in synagogue in memory of a deceased relative?	1	2	3
Have a Mezzuzah on your front door?	1	2	3

13. Now we would like you to tell us about some of the educational, social, and cultural activities in which you participated as you were growing up.

PLEASE INDICATE THE NUMBER OF YEARS OR SUMMERS YOU ATTENDED BEFORE YOUR 22ND BIRTHDAY.

In thinking about it now, on the How many years whole was it a positive, neutral, did you attend? or negative experience? Activity Positive | Neutral | Negative Sunday School (1 weekly session) 1 2 3 Yiddish School (1 weekly session) 2 3 Synagogue School (2 or more weekly sessions) 2 3 Jewish Day School or Yeshiva (all day, 5 days a week) 2 3 Other Jewish schooling, please specify 2 3 Synagogue or Temple Youth Group 2 3 Other youth group with Jewish content and/or members 2 3

	6				
13. (Continued)					
	How many	In thinking			
	summers did	whole was it			
Activités	you attend?	or negative	experienc	e?	
Activity		Positive	Neutral	Negative	
Summer camp of Jewish religio movement (such as UAHC)	us 	1	2	3	
Summer camp with Jewish progr	am	1	2	3	
Mostly or all Jewish summer o without Jewish program	amp	1	2	3	
Summer study or touring in Is	rael	1	2	3	
Semester or year in Israel	-	1	2	3	
Other Jewish activities, plea	se	20			
specify		(1)	2	3	
IF YOU ATTENDED COLLEGE: What the name of the undergraduate lede you attended (the longer	col- College	Some college  College graduate  Some graduate school			
the name of the undergraduate	col- College				
lege you attended (the longes	(1번 NOS 1번째				
		degree or equ			
		ee doctorate			
(Name of College)		ctorate			
than or our ego,		Other, please specify			
				_ 0	
c. "You	R HIGH SCHOOL YEA	vrs "			
5. When you were in high school, how often did you attend an	(PLEA	ASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER)			
organized Jewish activity, in	- Rarely o	r never		. 1	
cluding religious services?		About once a year			
IF THE FREQUENCY VARIED DURIN	IG than on	ce a month		. 3	
YOUR HIGH SCHOOL YEARS, ANSWE				. 4	
FOR THE YEAR(S) YOU WERE MOST		imes a month		. 5	
ACTIVE JEWISHLY.	Once a w	eek or more .	• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •	. 6	
6. When you were in high school,	did you date	.(PLEASE CIRCL	E ONE NUMB	ER)	
A. IF YOU DIDN'T DATE IN HIGH SO	HOOL. I didn't	date .(PLEAS	E READ A)	. 1	
please circle an additional n					
for the answer that best desc	ribes Mostly J				
the group with whom you socia	lized Jews and	non-Jews equa	11v?	. 4	

Jews and non-Jews equally? .... Mostly non-Jews? .....

Only non-Jews? .....

4 5

for the answer that best describes the group with whom you socialized most.

IF	YOU	WERE	JEW	SH AS	A TEE	NAGER, ple	ase ans	wer Q.	17A				
IF	YOU	WERE	NOT	JEWISH	AS A	TEENAGER,	please	answer	Q.	17B	and	17C.	
500	A 255%			8 8	2	70	77.	8 9 8		g 5	98	9 8 8	2

17 <b>A.</b>	If you were Jewish as a teenager, your parents' approach toward your	which of the statements below best of dating non-Jews? (PLEASE CIRCLE ON					
	They encouraged me to date non-Jews		1				
	They expressed no preference		2				
	Although I think they preferred that no opposition to my dating non-Jews	I date Jews, they expressed	3				
	Although they stated their preference permitted me to date non-Jews	e that I date only Jews, they	4				
	Although they strongly opposed my da forbid it		5				
	They would not permit me to date non	-Jews	6				
	The issue never came up because		7				
· 1 7 <b>B</b> .	If you were NOT Jewish as a tee	17A, PLEASE CONTINUE WITH QUESTION 1 mager, which of the statements be oward your dating Jews? (PLEASE CI	low best				
	They encouraged me to date Jews		1				
	They expressed no preference		2				
	Although I think they preferred that they expressed no opposition to my		3				
	Although they stated their preference that I date only people of my own faith, they permitted me to date Jews						
	Although they strongly opposed my da	ting Jews, they did not forbid it	5				
	They would not permit me to date Jews						
	The issue never came up because		7				
1 7C.	If you were NOT Jewish as a teenage religious education.	er, please give a brief description	of your —				
18. <u>y</u>	then you were college age, whether	or not you actually went to coll	ege, how				
	often did you attend an organized Jewish activity, including religious services?	Rarely or never	1 2				
	IF THE FREQUENCY VARIED DURING THOSE YEARS, ANSWER	than once a month	3				
	FOR THE YEAR(S) YOU WERE	About once a month	4 5				
	MOST ACTIVE JEWISHLY.	Once a week or more	6				

Α.	dat • IF an tha	YOU DIDN'T DATE, please circle  additional number for the answer  best describes the group with  you socialized most.  Mc	didn't date .  nly Jews?  ostly Jews?  ews and non-Jew  ostly non-Jews?  nly non-Jews?	(PLEASE	READ A)	. 1 . 2 . 3 . 4
SEC	TION	III. ABOUT YOU AS A JEWISH ADULT -	YOUR CURREN NOWLEDGE, PRACT	IT ATTI	TUDES, BEL	IEFS,
20.	What	I was born Jewish:  Both parents were Jewish Only mother was Jewish Only father was Jewish I converted without specific plans for I converted prior to marriage, but woul I converted prior to marriage, but woul without specific plans for marriag I converted, but don't regard myself as I never converted, but I feel Jewish I never converted, and although my spou consider myself Jewish Other, please specify	marriage to a d have convert d NOT have con ge to a Jew really Jewish	Jew ed anyw verted  I do no	2 3 4 4 7 5 5 6 7 7 8 8 + 9	
21.	Α.	OU CONVERTED TO JUDAISM:  Under whose sponsorship did you convert?  (PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER)	Reform Conservative Orthodox . Other, pleas	e		
	В.	For how long a period did you formally study Judaism before conversion?				
	c.	At the time of your conversion, you mig	ght have partic	ipated	in one or	more
		of the rituals listed below. For each you participated in it.  (PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER IN EACH RO		ndicate Yes	whether o	r not

23. Religious beliefs vary widely. In this question we list a number of statements of religious belief. Please tell us about your own belief by indicating the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement.

(PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER IN EACH ROW)	Strong Agree				Strongly disagree
A person can be a good Jew without beleiving in God	1	2	3	4	5
People who think there is a divine purpose to things that happen in their lives are fooling themselves	1	2	3	4	5
The Torah is the word of God given to the J	ews 1	2	3	4	5
Jerusalem is no holier to the Jews than to Christians or Muslims	1	2	3	4	5
Belief in God gives people a false sense of security		2	3	4	5
God has a special concern for the unfortunate and the oppressed	1	2	3	4	5
We have the ability to appreciate what is beautiful in the world because something of God is in each of us	1	2	3	4	5
The concept of God is an old superstition that is no longer needed to explain things in the modern era	1	2	3	4	5
A strong belief in God strengthens the will to live when a person is seriously ill		2	3	4	5
God is not aware of our actions	1	2	3	4	5

24. Many reasons have been given for remaining Jewish. Please indicate by CIRCLING ONE NUMBER IN EACH ROW frow important each of the five is to you as a reason for remaining Jewish.

remaining Jewish.	Extremely important	1 h			Not at all
The satisfaction I get from being Jewish	1	2	3	4	5
I owe it to my parents, grandparents, and ancestors	s. 1	2	3	4	5
I don't want to give Hitler his victory after all	1	2	3	4	5
Jews have a special task to be examples to the world		2	3	4	5
I was born a Jew and see no reason to change		2	3	4	5

25.	Much has been written and said following statements comes c means to you? (PLEASE CIRCLE	d about Jews as the "chosen people." Which of losest to describing what the term "chosen peo ONE NUMBER)	th€ ople"
	The Jewish people w	as chosen to bring the knowledge	
	of God to the w	orld 1	
		Jewish people literally was chosen	
		ve had a special role in history 2 hosen, they must be better 3	
		y chosen; they have been simply	
		umstance 4	
26.	What is your current marital s	tatus are you(PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER	)
	Married	[PLEASE	1
	Separate	1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1	2
	Divorced	WITH	3
	Widowed	Q. 27]	4
	Never ma	rried (PLEASE CONTINUE WITH Q. 38)	5
27.	How many times have you been	Once(PLEASE CONTINUE WITH Q.30)	i
	married [including your	Twice	2
	current marriage]?	Three times CONTINUE	3
	(PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER)	Four times WITH	4
_	TELEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER?	More than four times Q. 28]	5
28.	Was your <b>former</b> spouse Jewish?	(PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER) Yes, born Jewish	1
	IF MORE THAN ONE FORMER	Yes, converted to Judaism before marriage	2
	SPOUSE, ANSWER FOR FIRST	Yes, converted to Judaism after marriage	3
		No, not Jewish	4
29.	While you were divorced or wide proportion of the people you	owed (before your most recent marriage), about dated were Jewish? (PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER)	what
		Did not date then 0	
		None 1	
		Almost none 2	
		A few 3 About half 4	
		Most 5	
		Almost all 6	
		All 7	
30.	Is your present (or most recen	t) spouse Jewish? (PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER)	_
	Yes, by birth	[CONTINUE 1	
	Yes, by conversion t	pefore marriage WITH 2	
	Yes, by conversion a	after marriage Q. 35] 3	
	No	(PLEASE ANSWER Q's 31 - 34) 4	

NOT	E: QUESTIONS 31 THROUGH 34 SHOULD BE ANSWERED ONLY IF RECENT, IF YOU ARE DIVORCED OR WIDOWED) SPOUSE IS NOT JI	WISH.		(OR MOST
	Yes	No		
31.	A. Was your present (or most recent) spouse married before?	2	(CONT. WI	TH Q.32)
	B. Was (his/her) former spouse Jewish? 1	2		
	C. Are there any children from your spouse's previous marriage? 1	2	(CONT. WI	TH Q.32)
	D. Does your spouse rear his/her child(ren) from a previous marriage as non-Jews within your home? 1	2		
	E. Does your spouse celebrate Christian holy days with his/her child(ren) in your home? 1	2		
	F. Does/Do your spouse's child(ren) who does/do not live with you, visit your home regularly? 1	2		
32.	In some families non-Jewish spouses do Jewish things; in o	thers	they do	not. <u>If</u>
	your spouse is not Jewish, does he/she			
	(PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER IN EACH ROW)	Yes	No C	No l hildren
	attend synagogue services as often as you do?	1	2	_
	participate in some synagogue activities?		2	_
	participate MORE actively in the synagogue than you do		2	-
	refrain from involvement in Jewish religious activities	3		
	with you (and your children)?	1	2	-
	attend church services on special holy days?		2	_
	attend church services somewhat regularly?		2	-
	take your child(ren) to church services sometimes?		2	3
	rear your child(ren) in a faith other than Judaism?	1	2	3
33.	This question asks about your present or most recent spouse and (his/her) parents.	IF N	0: In whi	ch coun- he born?
	A. Was your spouse born in the USA or Canada? 1 2		(Country	`
	B. Was your spouse's mother born in the USA		Coodiffiy	,
	or Canada? 1 2		10	
	C. Was your spouse's father born in the USA		(Country	,
	or Canada? 1 2		(Country)	
	D. IF ALL THREE OF THEM WERE BORN IN USA/CANADA:  From what country or part of the world did most of your spouse's ancestors come?		(Country	,
	(Cou		or region	of
	(IF MORE THAN ONE, PLEASE NAME THE ONE YOUR SPOUSE IS MOST LIKELY TO IDENTIFY WITH.)	famil	y origin)	

consider themselves, as far as				spouse's p	-
	you know?		Spot	use's Spous	e's
(PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER	IN EACH COLUM	IN)	Mo	ther Fath	er
	Catholic			1 1	E
Please specify denomination) -	— Protestant		. :	2 2	2
~					5
			13 h	77	
	Just Jewish		• '	6	)
				7	7
	Don't know		•	8 8	3
efore your (first) marriage, dated were Jewish?	approximately				2 "
DOMESTIC TOP STATE OF					0
(PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER)					2
					3
					4
					5
					6
					7
How old were you when you were	(first) marrie	ed?			
	most				1
					2
(PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER)		Some other p	olace	(Please	
		specity ty	ре от	prace	3
	-				- 3
					-5
. And who performed that wedd	ing ceremony?	A rabbi or o	antor		1
3. And who performed that wedd (PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER)	ing ceremony?	Non-Jewish o	lergy		
	ing ceremony?	Non-Jewish of A judge or	lergy Justic	e of the	1 2 3
	ing ceremony?	Non-Jewish of A judge or peace Jewish and r	lergy Justic non-Je	e of the	1 2 3
-	dated were Jewish?  (PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER)	Conservative Reform Jew Just Jewish  Other (Please the "7" in app Don't know  efore your (first) marriage, approximately dated were Jewish?  (PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER)  Now old were you when you were (first) marrie  Where were you married (the most recent time)?	Conservative Jew	Conservative Jew Reform Jew Just Jewish  Other (Please specify and circle the "7" in appropriate column)  Don't know  Don't know  Did not date then None Almost none A few About half Most Almost all All  Now old were you when you were (first) married?  New Mere were you married (the most recent time)? (PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER)  In a synagogue recent time)? (PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER)  Some other place	Conservative Jew

39. Thinking about the people whom you (PLEASE READ A & B AND CIRCLE ONE				5,	
TELASE READ A & D AND CIRCLE ONE	A.	THE EACH COL	Ornivy	В.	
about w	hat pro	portion .	about	what prop	ortion of
					ur Temple?
AII	5			5	
Almost all	4		• • • • • • •	4	
Most	3			3	
About half Less than half	2		• • • • • • •	2	
Almost none or none	ó			0	
STATE OF THE STATE		F-14			
40. For approximately how many years ha to the Temple where you are a memb			·	years	
41. Please read the various activities how frequently you participate in					
ROW).				S PER YEA	
Attend a sports event, such as	Never	Once or less	2-5	6-11	12 or more
a ball game?	1	2	3	4	5
Visit a museum or attend a symphony concert, theater, or other live					
cultural event?	1	2	3	4	5
corrural evenit		2	,	-	,
Have Jews visit in your home?	1	2	3	4	5
Have non-Jews visit in your home?	1	2	3	4	5
Attend synagogue services?	1	2	3	4	5
Attend church services?	1	2	3	4	5
Attend Jewish adult education class or lecture?	1	2	3	4	5
		-	-	7	-
Attend general adult education class or lecture?	1	2	3	4	5
crass or recrure:	1.	4	5	4	9
Read a book with Jewish content?	1	2	3	4	5
Read a book without Jewish content? .	1	2	3	4	5
Read a Jewish magazine or newspaper?	1	2	3	4	5
Attend meetings of, or perform organizational functions for:					
Your own Temple?	1	2	3	4	5
Jewish organizations other than your own Temple?	1	2	3	4	5
General organizations or civic groups?	1	2	3	4	5

	its charit	able giving? (We don't want amounts just the organizations.) PLEASE ENTER A PERCENT FROM 0% TO 1 OLUMN ADDS TO 100% (APPROXIMATELY).	percent	to var	ious
		Your Temple or synagogue	%		
		Reform Jewish national institutions, such as UAHC, HUC-JIR, or ARZA	170		
		UJA/Jewish Federation			
		Other Jewish causes or organizations			
		Other general causes or organizations	g		
			100 %		
_					_
43.		on is about customs in Jewish families. Is it the property of the contract of	SECOND		your
			Yes	No	
	Light	Sabbath candles?	1	2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2	
		o bread on Passover?	!	2	
		hiva after the death of a relative?	+	2	
		Kosher?	i	2	
		or attend a Passover Seder?	1	2	
		Hanukah candles?	1	2	
	Have	a Christmas tree?	1		
		on Yom Kippur?	1	2	
		Yahrzeit candle at home in memory			
		relative?	1	2	
		ork or pork products?		2	
	Obser	ve Yizkor on Yom Kippur in synagogue	,	2	
	Have	emory of a deceased relative?	í	2	
	W		NUMBER	OF CHII	DREN
44.	A. How many who may	children do you have, all together, counting any not be living now (and any by a previous marriage)	PC-00111201	01 0111	-
	B. How many	of your children are married?	-		-0
	C. If any o non-Jew	f your children are married, how many are married t s?	0 -		-
		(more) children do you (and your spouse) expect (in addition to those you already have had)?			

IF YOU HAVE HAD, OR EXPECT TO HAVE, ANY CHILDREN, PLEASE CONTINUE WITH Q. 45. IF YOU HAVE NO CHILDREN NOW, AND EXPECT TO HAVE NONE IN THE FUTURE, PLEASE CONTINUE WITH Q. 50.

45.	In this q	question	we would	like you to	tell	us about	your	child(ren)'s	education-
	al, soci	al, and	cultural	activities.					

First, please give us the age and sex of (each of) your child(ren) in Part A below.

Next, in Part B, please indicate on the line the number of years or summers each attended or took part in the activity before his/her 22nd birthday.

Third, please rate in the box the quality of the experience on your child's growth as a Jew, using the following rating scale:

EXAMPLE: Six years, a positive rating = 6

+ = Positive blank = Neutral - = Negative

PLEASE INDICATE THE NUMBER OF YEARS OR SUMMERS CHILD ATTENDED BEFORE HIS/HER 22ND BIRTHDAY. IF CHILD IS NOT YET 22 YEARS OLD, PLEASE ANSWER PART A FOR HIS/HER PRESENT AGE AND PART B (number of years/summers) FOR WHAT YOU EXPECT HE/SHE WILL DO BY AGE 22 (and skip the rating for the young child(ren)).

Part A.	Age:	#1	Child	#2	Child	#3	Child	#4
	Male 1 Female 2	R	1	— R	1	– R	1	R
<u>Part B</u> .	Number of	A	Number of	A	Number of	A	Number of	A
Activity	years (or summers)	E	years (or summers)	E	years (or summers)	E	years (or summers)	E
Temple Sunday school (1 weekly session)								
Temple Hebrew school (2 weekly sessions)								
Jewish Day School or Y (all day 5 days a wee								
Temple Youth Group			920.00					
Other youth group with and/or members	Jewish∀							
UAHC Summer camp								
Other summer camp with Jewish program	37							
Mostly or all Jewish o without Jewish progra			(222)					
Summer study or								
touring in Israel							[	
Semester or year in Is	srael						[	
Other Jewish activitie specify	es, please					$\Box$	Г	

46.	Have you had (or will you have) ceremony in connection with cir your son(s)?			Yes, No, Have	for all but not for none no sons plan to	for a	3
47.	Please tell us whether or not you the following practices?	ou observe			Yes,		Have no children & do not
	(PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER IN	EACH ROW)		Yes, all	but not all	No,	plan to have any?
	Did you (or will you) name your in synagogue?			1	2	3	4
	Have your children been confirm they be when they are old			1	2	3	4
	Did (or will) your son(s) have	a Bar Mit	zvah?	<sup>22</sup> 1	2	3	4
	Did (or will) your daughter(s)	have a Ba	t Mitzvah?	1	2	3	4
	you would feel about it if a ch IN EACH ROW)	A great	IT WOUL	D BOT			NOT at All
	became an Orthodox Jew?	1	2		3		4
	converted to Christianity?	1	2		3		4
	married a non-Jew?	1 4 5	2		3		4
	settled in Israel?	1	2		3		4
	married a convert to Judaism	1? 1	2		3		- 4
	became a Unitarian?	1	2		3		4
	decided not to attend or dropped out of college?	1	2		3		4
49.	Which of the following statement child(ren) dating non-Jews?  I encourage them to date non-Jet express no preference	(PLE	scribes yo ASE CIRCLE	ONE N	NUMBER)		1
	Although I prefer that they dat no opposition to their dating	e Jews, I non-Jews	express				3
	Although I state my preference I permit them to date non-Jews		date only				4
	Although I strongly oppose thei						
	I do not permit them to date no	37					
	The issue never comes up becaus	е					7

50. Jews differ in their beliefs as to the circumstances under which a rabbi ought to officiate at a wedding between a Jew and a non-Jew (who has not converted to Judaism). Please indicate below, by circling one number in each row, whether

A rabbi should officiate if	Yes	No	Don't
the parents of the Jewish partner are members of the rabbi's temple	1	2	3
the couple getting married joins the temple	1	2	3
the couple promises to rear their children as Jews	1	2	3
the non-Jew has completed all of the requirements for conversion except for the conversion ceremony	1	2	3
the couple is not planning to have children together	1	2	3
the couple promises to expose their children to Judaism along with the religion of the non-Jewish partner	1	2	3
the wedding ceremony is in a church	1	2	3
Christian clergy co-officiates	1	2	3
A rabbi should officiate only if the prospective bride and groom are both Jewish (either by birth or conversion)	1	2	3
Other (Please explain)	_ 1	2	3

51. Some people have told us that they relate to being Jewish in non-traditional ways. The statements below represent some people's means of identifying as a Jew. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each one by circling one number in each row.

STALES VALUE MARKET A. S. S. STATE M. S. S	Agree	Disagree
Primarily because I am a Jew, education is especially important to me	1	2
Jews are less hasty to use force as means of solving problems	1	2
Primarily because I am a Jew, I feel embarrassed when I don't buy at a discount	1	2
Jews have a harder time than Non-Jews in separating from their parents when they grow up	1	2
Primarily because I am a Jew, I am naturally good at expressing emotions	1	2
Primarily because I am a Jew, I am strongly in favor of nuclear disarmament	1	2
Most non-Jews have negative feelings about Jews	1	2
Primarily because I am a Jew, I have stronger family ties than non-Jews have	1	2

52. We are interested in your idea of what it takes to be a good Jew. Please tell us, for each item below, how essential it is to being a good Jew.

A good Jew	Essential	Desirable, but not essential	Makes no difference		
supports all humanitarian causes	1	2	3		
believes in God	1	2	3		
knows the fundamentals of Judaism	1	2	3		
supports Israel	1	2	3		
attends weekly worship services	1	2	3		
gains the respect of Christian neighbors		2	3		
belongs to a synagogue or temple	" 1	2	3		
marries within the Jewish faith	1	2	3		
contributes to Jewish philanthropies	1	2	3		

53. We would like to get your opinions about some important current issues. Please indicate the extent of your agreement or disagreement with the statements below.

(PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER IN EACH ROW)	Strongly Agree		     Neutral		Strongly disagree
Parents of children in religious day schools should receive tuition tax credits	1	2	3	4	5
Orthodoxy represents the mainstream of Judaism	1	2	3	4	5
Israel should offer the Arabs territorial compromise in the West Bank (Judea and Samaria) in return for credible guarantees of peace	1	2	3	4	5
Persons convicted of murder should be subject to the death penalty	1	2	3	4	5
A Jew can lead a more authentic Jewish life in Israel than in America	1	2	3	4	5
The United States government should make nuclear disarmament a primary goal of foreign policy	1	2	3	4	5
Israel's commitment to democratic values has eroded in recent years	1	2	3	4	5
Reform Jews should defer to Orthodox authority	1	2	3	4	5
Israel is the center of contemporary Jewish life		2	3	4	5
A Jew who marries a non-Jew who does not convert to Judaism is jeopardizing the future of Judaism	1	2	3	4	5

	(PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER)	None	ek, but less th inth, but less t months, but les	5
55.	Please give us your own an former] occupation. If you usual/former occupation.  JOB TITLE OR POSITION  NATURE OF WORK DONE  TYPE OF BUSINESS OR INDUST	are retired or		
56.	Are you (and, if you are marr is your spouse) self-employe	ied,	Y0U 1 2	YOUR SPOUSE  1 2
57.	In what year were you born?	(year)	78	
58.	What is your sex?	Male	1 Female	2
59.	If you would like to be coninterview, PLEASE WRITE IN Y	OUR HOME TELEPH	articipation in ONE AREA CODE A	a follow-up personal
60.	Is there anything else you we this survey? Any comments tionnaire or in a separate I	you wish to mal	ke, either on t	the back of this ques-

be greatly appreciated.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THIS RESEARCH EFFORT AND FOR YOUR TIME TO COMPLETE THIS SURVEY. PLEASE ENCLOSE THE COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE IN THE POSTAGE PAID ENVELOPE AND RETURN IT TO THE RESEARCH OFFICE.

#### RELIGION

# Despite Prohibition, Estimated 40% Will Wed Jews to Non-Jews

# Area Reform Rabbis Open to Mixed Marriages

By JOHN DART, Times Religion Writer

PALM SPRINGS—About 40% of the Reform rabbis in Los Angeles and Orange counties will officiate at weddings of a Jew and a non-Jew under some conditions despite their own denomination's guidelines opposing so-called mixed-marriage ceremonies.

That estimate, by Rabbi Lennard R. Thal, a regional Reform executive, is higher than generally supposed. Thal estimated that between 30 to 40 rabbis out of 85 affiliated with the liberal wing of Judaism perform such services.

Rabbis who perform such weddings rarely talk about the issue openly.

For one thing, they are going against Judaism's legal tradition forbidding intermarriage. That law is strictly observed by Orthodox and Conservative rabbis, and widely supported by most Jewish community leaders, who fear that intermarriage is partly responsible for American Jewry's eroding numbers and decline in religious observance.

It is estimated that one Jew in three marries outside the faith, although studies vary widely.

Most Reform rabbis who officiate at mixed marriages believe that refusing to do so will do nothing to stem their proliferation. They believe they are taking a constructive step toward preserving Jewish identity within families with one Jewish spouse.

Some of these rabbis, who say they do not worry about criticism from their peers, are reluctant to be identified for another reason: "The demand for mixed-marriage ceremonies is so great that I would be overrun with requests," said a well-known Los Angeles rabbi.

Thal, however, contends that while while "the phone might go off the hook" for popular rabbis, "there is no shortage of people relative to the need."

Thal is director of the Pacific Southwest Council, the Los Angeles-based association of 64 synagogues aligned with Reform Judaism's Union of American Hebrew Congregations. He was attending the Palm Springs meeting of the Pacific Assn. of Reform Rabbis.

Rabbis who refuse to officiate at mixed marriages say it is a matter of personal and religious integrity. "I can't look a non-Jew in the eye and say this wedding is sanctioned by the Jewish people and have him break the glass at the end of the bis, on the other hand, seem more tradition-bound, Glaser said.

Two rabbis who do perform mixed marriage ceremonies—Leonard Beerman of Leo Baeck Temple, Los Angeles, and Henri Front, Temple Beth David, Westminster—said they will not co-officiate at so-called ecumenical weddings with a priest or minister. Both said they require that the couple agree to study Judaism, have a Jewish home and raise the children as Jews.

Beerman said he has always been

to break with tradition?

A possible factor is that most Reform synagogues have been lenient on the issue—unlike major temples in some other cities.

The late Rabbi Edgar F. Magnin occasionally performed mixed marriages, said his longtime associate at Wilshire Boulevard Temple, Rabbi Alfred Wolf.

"As long as the Jewish partner had a firm commitment to Judaism, the couple intended to have a Jewish home and the non-Jewish partner had no conflicting faith commitment," Magnin would disregard the Reform guidelines, last re-stated in 1973, said Wolf, who is now retired.

These days, in Los Angeles County, Thal said, "to the best of my knowledge, the majority of rabbis of congregations with 400 families or more will officiate under a variety of circumstances." Put another way, he said, "There are two or three senior rabbis of large congregations in Los Angeles who do not officiate at mixed marriages."

One of those apparently is Rabbi Daniel Polish of Hollywood's Temple Israel. He was among 24 rabbis who recently signed a nationwide protest statement against a privately published argument for mixed-marriage weddings.

The statement, mailed last week to almost 1,000 U.S. and Canadian Reform rabbis, responded to criticism by Prof. Eugene Mihaly of Reform's Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati of the basis on which mixed-marriage ceremonies are discouraged.

At the same time, the protest statement suggested that the refusal to officiate at mixed weddings may harm a rabbi's career.

"What is intimidating is the fact that some congregations are screening out pulpit candidates who do not officiate at mixed marriages," the signers said.

Reform officials interviewed here, however, said that is not usually the case.

"It's not an illegitimate area of questioning," Thal said, "but in the 3½ years I've been in my position there has not been one congregation that has made a decision based on that."

One rabbi, who did not wish to be identified, said he was recently tempted to change his stance against mixed-marriage ceremonies in order to beat out a rival candidate whom he thought condoned the practice. The other rabbi got the pulpit, but it turned out that he also opposed such marriages.

"He convinced the selection committee that it was not the most important thing by which to judge a rabbi," the losing rabbi said.

Rabbi A. Stanley Dreyfus of New York, the national placement director for Reform Judaism, said, "We encourage synagogues not to make it a prime factor and we prepare panels of candidates without regard to whether they do or they don't" (approve of mixed marriages).

Dreyfus, who said he resisted pleas for mixed marriages for 14 years at a Brooklyn synagogue without losing many members, nevertheless acknowledged the difficulty each rabbi faces:

"It's hard to turn people down, hard to be turned down, especially since the parents at a time like that feel that somehow they have failed. When the rabbi says no, that confirms this view of themselves."

## 'They felt the people they had turned down, they had sort of lost. These rabbis were going to take another tack now.'

ceremony; it's hypocritical," Rabbi Larry Goldmark of La Mirada said. "I'm not a rent-a-rabbi,"

Surprisingly, Thal said, those who do officiate in the Los Angeles area tend to be older rabbis, some of whom once consistently declined requests.

Rabbi Joseph B. Glaser, executive vice-president of Reform Judaism's Central Conference of American Rabbis, based in New York, said the same is true in Northern California.

"I was very much surprised when I began to hear who was doing it in California, because many of them were very traditional in other ways," Glaser said.

After talking to some of these rabbis, Glaser said, he found that "it was not that they had been worn down by the constant pressure but that they felt the people they had turned down, they had sort of lost. These rabbis were going to take another tack now."

The younger generation of rab-

willing to sanction such marriages. "If anything, I've been more liberal in recent years," he said.

Front said he once opposed mixed marriage weddings. However, about 15 years ago, he took his turn conducting Reform's Introduction to Judaism classes, mostly for people who were about to be married.

"After a year's experience with hundreds of these people, I realized my former position was in error. We live in an age of romantic love—people are going to get married regardless of who marries them," Front said. "I am not so interested in halakha (Jewish law) as I am in the future generations of Jews in this world."

Why is Southern California a place where so many have agreed

Intr-relis.

# **MEMORANDUM**

From Rabbi Bernard M. Zlotowitz

Date 2/13/89

To

Rabbi Alex Schindler

Copies

Subject

Maimonides' attitude toward converts is found in his  $\underline{\text{Yad}}$   $\underline{\text{Ha-chazaqa}}$ , which reads as follows:

"To love the convert, who comes and enters under the wings of The Divine Presence, is fulfilling two positive commandments. First, because he is essentially viewed as part of the social compact, and secondly, because he is a convert and the Torah says and you shall love the convert.

One is under command to love the convert as one is under command to love oneself, as it is written and you shall love the Lord your God. The Holy One Blessed Be He Mimself loves converts, as it is written and (He) loves a convert."

"The Book of Knowledge", Hilchot Dayot, 6:4





#### BELIN HARRIS HELMICK TESDELL LAMSON McCORMICK

A PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION . ATTORNEYS AT LAW

2000 Financial Center • Des Moines, Iowa 50309 Telephone: (515) 243-7100 • Telecopier: (515) 282-7615 David W. Belin Charles E. Harris Robert H. Helmick E. S. Tesdell, Jr. Jeffrey E. Lamson Mark McCormick David L. Claypool Steven E. Zumbach Thomas L. Flynn Jon L. Staudt Sue Luettjohann Seitz

Jeffrey A. Krausman Robert E. Josten Jeremy C. Sharpe Roger T. Stetson Charles D. Hunter John T. Seitz Gerard D. Neugent Linda L. Kniep Quentin R. Boyken Donald G. Henry Dennis P. Ogden Robert D. Sharp Margaret C. Callahan William P. Hoye Timothy P. Willcockson

Of Counsel Lawrence E. Pope Bonnie J. Campbell

November 20, 1989

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler, President Union of American Hebrew Congregations 838 Fifth Avenue New York NY 10021

Re: Center for Jewish Outreach to the Intermarried - Rabbi Sam Silver

#### Dear Alex:

Now that the Biennial is over, I am replying to your October 24 letter concerning Rabbi Sam Silver, where you say that "I have just had word from Sam Silver that you have invited him to a meeting in 1990 at which he will speak on his reasons for undertaking to officiate at mixed marriages. The meeting is news to me. Can you provide some details? I would appreciate hearing from you in this connection."

As you know, Egon Mayer and I have been working together to develop the Center for Jewish Outreach to the Intermarried (CJOI) which exclusively devotes its efforts to confronting the challenges of intermarriage and seeks to bring together all denominations of Judaism in this effort. Our principal aim is to serve as a "think tank" for "open debate and discussion about all issues pertaining to intermarriage, and to serve as a catalyst for existing community organizations, lay leaders and professionals who seek to help intermarried families meet their needs within the Jewish community."

The first major public activity of CJOI was the planning of a Memorial Conference on Intermarriage, Conversion and Outreach in memory of Paul Cowan, which was held in New York on October 23 and 24. Rabbi Silver wrote me on August 9, referring to the Conference in New York, complaining that there had been no discussion about rabbinic officiation, and complaining that he had written to me about this and that I have "ignored" him.

On October 12, I responded to Rabbi Silver and told him that "I am aware of the fact that the question of rabbinic officiation is of major concern to many people" and that "sometime in 1990 there will be a colloquium where this issue will be discussed by people who sincerely believe that it is not in the interest of Jewish survival for rabbis to officiate, as well as those who, like yourself, believe that it is in the interest of Jewish survival for rabbis to officiate." Attached are copies of Rabbi Silver's August 9 letter to me and my October 12 reply.

At no time did I issue him any invitation to speak at any meeting, and, as a matter of fact, I did not even issue him any invitation to attend such a meeting because at this particular time no specific meeting has been set. It is a matter which will be brought up before the Board of CJOI.

Rabbi Alexander Schindler November 20, 1989 Page 2

One of the reasons that I refer to this as a "colloquium" is to help insure that any discussion of officiation at intermarriage would be undertaken in an academic-like setting where a full and frank exchange of ideas could take place. Although I cannot necessarily bind the Board of CJOI, it is the present intent of both Egon Mayer and me that CJOI itself would not take any formal position whether rabbis should or should not officiate. Rather, we would hope to provide a forum where this very important and very sensitive issue can be discussed, with subsequent publication of papers on the subject.

By the way, in my welcoming address at the October 23-24 Conference, I called for a major commitment on the part of the Federations to work through the Reform, Conservative and Orthodox Movements to provide for \$6,000,000 of annual support for programs of Outreach to the Intermarried. On November 17 at a meeting of the General Assembly of the Federations in Cincinnati, I once again called for major Federation funding efforts in this area.

I trust I have full responded to your October 24 letter, and if you have any other questions or suggestions, I would appreciate your calling or writing me.

Best regards.

Sincerely yours,

David W. Belin

DWB:cs

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# American Museum of Naturai History

RCA

aby males

Lyen Whenan

May 23, 1988

O by park

Direct Cinema Limited P.O. Box 69799 Los Angeles, CA 90069 attn.: Mitchell Block

Dear Mitchell:

We are very pleased to confirm that NO APPLAUSE, JUST THROW MONEY, CANNIBAL TOURS and INTERMARRIAGE: WHEN LOVE MEETS TRADITION have had the honor of being selected for the 1988 Margaret Mead Film Festival. The Festival dates this year are September 26-29.

Please be sure that prints reach the Museum before Wednesday, September 14, addressed to my attention.

Please return a signed copy of this letter to confirm the films' participation.

We often have requests from media representatives to view the films during the summer, so if you can, please send video cassette copies sometime in July.

High quality black and white still photos are very important for promotion and should be sent immediately.

Call if you have additional questions. My direct line is (212) 769-5172. You can reach Jonathan Stack or Nathaniel Johnson at (212) 769-5305: We hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

Malcolm Arth, Chairman Margaret Mead Film Festival

Congratulations!

NW 5 1988

Mead Festival Programmers

Malcolm Arth Nathaniel Johnson Jonathan Stack Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler Jung 7, 1988

Lydia Kukoff

Yvonne Fink

You will note I am sharing this memo with Lydia and I am also sending to her a copy of your July 5 memo in regard to the TODAY SHOW program on intermarriage. Outreach is, after all, her area of concern.

You should know that NBC was in touch with the Union and had contact with Ellyn Geller, Nina Mizrahi and Lydia. The angle they were seeking for the program was distressing to all of our people and from your description they did, indeed, disregard any input from the Union. Lydia can fill you in one some of the other people who are deeply involved in Outreach and working with couples and families whose comments were also ignored.

In other words, we did what we could - they didn't listen - so what yould you have us do?

# MEMORANDUM

From Yvonne B. Fink

Date July 5, 1988

То

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler

Copies

Subject NBC T.V.'s Today Show

For your information, in case you do not already know, on Friday July 1, 1988 there was a segment on the intermarriage of Jews on NBC's Today Show with Jane Pauley. The focus was the intermarriage of Michael Dukakis and his wife Kitty. There were also couples discussing their experience with intermarriage (i.e. difficulties with raising children in terms of religion, etc.)

It was stated that Rabbis of the Reform movement are the only ones that will officiate at an intermarriage (much to the objections of the Conservative and Orthodox movements). It was also stated that there is a high incidence of intermarriage among Jews, the highest being 40% among Reform Jews. Programs for the intermarried, sponsored by the Conservative Movement and the Jewish Federation, were discussed as well.

It seems to me that there is an opportunity and certainly a need to publicize the programs of the Reform movement.

Where is our public relations?

Thank You,

Yvonne B. Fink



TO MA. DAVID DOLIN

## Temple 5 Of Palm Beach County

2475 West Atlantic Avenue, Delray Beach, Florida 33448 Telephone: 407-276-6161

Rabbi Samuel M. Silver, D.D.

Cantor Elaine Shapiro

TO ABL

President Helyn M. Berger

9-18-90

DEAR DAVID,

The NY Times says today that you are startled that so many people favor a rabbinic participation in interfaith marriages.

You would have been less startled ifyou had paid attention to the letters I've been writing you for a dozen years.

Not only have you ignored me, but so have Rabbi Schindler and Al Vorspan. For years I've been pleading with them to let give the rationale for my procedures at a Biennial. They have persistently blocked me, offering the alibis that such discussions have taken place.

They have not taken place. My own approach to the situation has never been presented to a Biennial. Actually, in the hundreds of such events I have not really performed an intermarriage, but have given a Jewish ceremony to a mixed couple. The amazing phenomenon, ignored by your committee and the UAHC is that non-Jewish partners are eager to have a Jewish ceremony.

I kwaxaxx have also written and once confronted that great authority, Prof. Egon Mayer and pointed out that there's a flaw in his elaborate statistics. I have asked him to ask a question which would indicate whether the decision on the part of an intermarried couple to go Jewish is not affected if a rabbi does the officiating.

Furthermore, the great Schindler Cutreach idea tackles the problem from the wrong end. The crucial point in dekembers and the decision making by a mixed couple is not after they are married (which is what Outreach touches upon) but when they ask a rabbi to officiate. Those who have said no have lost many of our people. Those of who say yes to

me Jewish fold.

The point of view but some years go signed a statement childing others and myself for doing exactly what should be done; to say yes to the copples who ask for a rabbi. (c. Rahbi Schindler has not only barred me from presentir

thing: I don't encourage intermarriages, I cautio

TO MA. DAVID BOLIN

### Temple Sinai Of Palm Beach County

2475 West Atlantic Avenue, Delray Beach, Florida 33448 Telephone: 407-276-6161

Rabbi Samuel M. Silver, D.D.

Cantor Elaine Shapiro Helyn M. Berger

9-18-90

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more thing: I don't encourage intermarriages, I cautio with about the VISKs Huff Nove Year. Yours,

Outread

July 5, 1989 2 Tammuz 5749

Må. Jackie Harris 5 Windermere Way Yiewsley Middlesex UB7 8LX England

Dear Ms. Harris:

As Rabbi Schindler is out-of-the-country and not expected back at his desk for a few weeks, I am taking the liberty of responding to your letter of June 22.

I don't know if you are writing to Rabbi Schindler because you are acquainted with him or Because you have read of our Outreach Program. However, in either event, I can tell you it is not our policy to provide names of rabbis who will perform interfaith marriages or synagogues which will permit such weddings to take place within their walls. To the best of my knowledge, there are no Liberal/Progressive rabbisin Great Britain who will perform interfaith marriages. However, I do believe it would be wise for you to discuss your personal situation with such a rabbi. While I do not have a name for the rabbi in Middlesex, I suggest you contact the Middlesex New Synagogue and arrange for such ammeeting. They are located at 39 Bessborough Road, Harrow, Middlesex HA1 3BS (01-864-0133.

Let me also note that it would not help for you to see Rabbi Schindler as he personally does not perform interfaith marriages and would undoubtedly urge you to have a civil ceremony. But by all means seek to contact the rabbi in Middlesex for counsel.

With every good wish, I am

Sincerely,

Edith J. Miller Assistant to the President

5, windermere way Viewsley middlesex. VB7 8CX 32ml. Inc 1989. Dear Path Schindler I hope that you don't mind me writing to you let my frame and I have a problem on which we hope that you might be able to give us some help and advice 21 am an orthodox Jewess and have been brought up in an orthodox Jawish household. My fignce, Andreas, is Greek Onthador. of smit in transmar zith tA does not wish to convert to rodaism, havever we would like to be married in a Synagosue and Andrew would be milling to number a course of instruction and be circumcised in

order for this to take place. we have talked about marrying in a registry office, in England, which as you will appreciate is the only come of action open to us hore. However the more we talked the more we realised that a civil ceremony is not what either of us wants. of prillies of booms on to be married in a synagorane it is possible and it you bished it to see us then we will arrange for any help or calvice that you might be able to after on this matter and apologise, are again, for troubling you. we look forward to hearing from you in the near former. Jacqueline Hamis BABBI SHINDIE DR. WIGHER CENT CAH CUAR CODIZE UN NOT CONTENSUTED 1, FBP) DUL THOME VOT THEOPIS or angral or xxw HIC CESTER. DAVID CHOWITE





RABBI ALEXANDER M. SCHINDLER • UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS
PRESIDENT 838 FIFTH AVENUE NEW YORK, NY 10021-7064 (212)249-0100

April 21, 1992 30 Nisan 5753

Julian Wiener, M.D. 3858 Redbud Road Jackson, MS 39211

Dear Julian:

Thank you so much for your letter. I am deeply grateful for the helping hand which you extended to us. Therefore, forgive me for not responding fully to your commentary concerning rabbinic officiation at intermarriages. That would take us too long and is best left to a personal conversation which I fervently hope we might have the opportunity to hold in the not too distant future.

Suffice it to say, for the moment, that there is no categorical answer to the question about officiation. I, myself do not officiate at intermarriages. Just the same, I invariably will attend the marriage ceremony itself and participate in some other manner. I can tell you, quite objectively, that this has never evoked any sense of rejection. All of the parties were more than understanding of my position and were deeply grateful that I demonstrated my acceptance of them by being present at their wedding ceremony and participating in some manner other than in speaking the words of the Jewish marriage formula which, is really not applicable to intermarriage situations.

But as I indicated earlier, my brief paragraph is really not sufficient for the need and I do hope we will have a chance to meet with one another in the not too distant future.

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

# Julian Wiener, M.D.

3858 REDBUD ROAD JACKSON. MS 39211 13 apr 1993



Rabbie Alegander Schudler VAHC 838 Fifth Avenue 764 York, N.Y 1002 F-7064.

Though you for your second letter which outlined - some of the problems of Reform Judaism. It, too, am bleased with our asouth within over Reform Luovement yet am Constantly disturbed by the sate of religious intermessions. It is sofreshing to hote that the VAHC is taking steel to altroct the how Jewish Souse, but as a plugicien I long ago hoted that it is more but as a plugicien I long ago hoted that it is more effective to frewent deissee rather than treat it. If only know he form Rebbis would cooperate by senforming mixed more kedorne Rebbis would cooperate by Senforming mixed mineral would it not indicate to the could seconding the Reform Jews seconding a problem and would seconding the Reform Jews seconding as a Communicate who helds succlimical suctions of soldier than friendly servetion?

his time have gerome Poblic would ferform interhis risge. Now there are love ones, so the Jewile shouse in turned off and the how-Jewish shouse scele rejected. To huy thinking there is a grevious error and is being a reviously accorded you must realize that there are known Christian briniters relioare willing to must the tought, their bouling their soith to the needs of the cought. Phase let he know your thoughts and why the Robbinish schools of start this.





RABBI ALEXANDER M. SCHINDLER • UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS

PRESIDENT 838 FIFTH AVENUE NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021 (212) 249-0100

Output of

April 25, 1991 11 Iyar 5751

Mr. Louis Schwalb 1134 Loxford Terrace Silver Spring, MD 20901

Dear Mr. Schwalb:

Thank you so much for your kind comments concerning my article in <a href="Reform Judaism">Reform Judaism</a>. I am grateful to you for taking the time to write and share your thoughts.

In regard to the UAHC Outreach Program, you should know that the Union does not have a resolution on rabbinic officiation at interfaith marriages. This is a matter which comes out of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the rabbinic arm of Reform Judaism. The UAHC is an organization which provides service to our member congregations in regard to their own programs and services. Rabbinic officiation is a rabbinic matter, not one about which we must take a stand as an organization.

In this connection, however, you ought to know that we have found that the manner in which a rabbi says yea or nay to officiating at an interfaith marriage makes a tremendous difference in the couple's approach to joining with the Jewish community after the wedding. While we really do not, as a movement, approve of interfaith marriages, once a couple has determined to be joined in marriage, we certainly want to do our utmost to draw them closer to us so that they and their children will be a part of the Jewish community.

Again, my thanks and my warm good wishes.

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

Rabb, Alexade M Schradler

UAHC

838 Fafth are

New York, My 10021

Dear Robbi,

I enjoyed your orticle on Reform Judaism 2001,

which is certainly in line with earlier excellent

One item I am corrects about we me poshing

The Outrooch program for the intermerried, sorders

The Outrooch program for the intermerried, sorders

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Personally 1 think it is a drasta mistake to continue the present policy
Sincered
Louis Schoon 16



Where

March 19, 1991 4 Nisan 5751

Mr. Sylvan Holstine 1755 Shawnee Road Lima, OH 45805

Dear Mr. Holstine:

I was deeply touched by your plaintive letter. Of course I share your sentiments fully. Even though we are not happy about intermarriage, may even oppose it, we do not have to reject the intermarried! On the contrary, we ought to reach out to them, involve them in synagogue life in the hope that the non-Jewish partner will eventually turn to Judaism, or at least make certain that the children of such marriages will in fact be Jews and share the destiny of the Jewish people.

Some years ago, in 1979, I initiated a program which is now called "Outreach", the purpose of which is to serve these very ends. I am asking the director of our program to send you material which might be of help to you.

Please forgive the brevity of my response. Unfortunately, I am on the road almost constantly. I have been in Israel twice during the month and I just returned from the West Coast and have to be off again tomorrow. Still, I hope that the materials which you should be receiving in due order will be of some help to you and your congregation.

With warm good wishes, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

Rase Oslo The Carlton House
1755 Shawnee Road • Lima, Ohio 45805 • Telephone (419) 229-7761 3/13/91 Kabbi a. m. Schindler Cin. oh new york 7. J. John Lam writing this letter, I will never Know! Dlear Rabbi :-I havely read Jewish magazines, but when receipt of the "Reform Judaism" for Spring ! 91 issue I was attracted by your article on its truture. Because of one local problem, I was especially attracted by your article on its future, to your state ment, quote " In the realm of outreach to the intermarried and their dildren", If I read correctly, you go on to state there should be the "attitude of realism Turther on you state, quote "for within the free-choice living constituing that america it is only by invitation, not covering that we can build fewish life."

Then in the entire "on Tours Don't " Then in the article "on Temple Doctor", a state meat is included " constructively dealing with intermarried is our situation in Line. We find that the number of people that seek to in the Tours. Conflex and their families;" people that seek to join on Temple are intermarried, have children at Hundry School and the attitude between our Robbi and these couples is very cold in nature, due evidently to his long time belief (he is 72 yearsold)

The Carlton House

The Shawnee Road • Lima, Ohio 45805 • Telephone (419) 229-7761

Whether one or the other of these complex has ever been converted, seems to be the problem, and my question To your article is that you have not actually spelled this out. I predict as you do, this will become more and more a problem and the guestion is hon do you train the buture Rabbis at the school about this? must one of the Complex be converted or does it

matter and if the comple joins a Temple, has children in

funday School does it make a must difference that they be

accepted, whether one or the other is not converted and does

not desire to be a complex of the other is not converted and does not desire to be, I would like this spelled out. I have been Honorary President of Temple Beth Israel Shaare Jedek ever since om nen Temple was brilt in 49 and as explained above, our Rubbi of " years cannot accept the problem, which exertes not only a relationship acit to service attendance, but a serious condition in the Anday School as some of these students, due to intermarriage cause trouble in the school for lack of attitude and interest. I fully amderstand that most Rabbis will not marry

I fully amderstand that most kabbis the suit recognize in the other is converted, but to not recognize purple the other is converted, but to not recognize purpletive members with this condition are not accept welcomed has coursed priction, should be not accept welcomed has coursed priction, should be not accept welcomed has coursed priction, should be not accept where he have trouble longth as it is in a these people? We have trouble longth married conflet small community having enough married conflet makes to keep a Temple group and a full time Rabbi members to keep a Temple group and a full time Rabbi

# The Carlton House The Carlton House Topic April 1755 Shawnee Road in Lima Ohio 45805 Telephone (419) 229 7761

Verhaps at my age (89) & shouldn't be worring about Lima's Juture, Out & helped will our Temple, has part of a merger with another Squagogue in the City ( Conservative and orothodox) which has worked out exceptionally well, due to om Rabbis Lam sorry for the length of this letter, but on future cannot be with a full time Robbi as he could not afford todays salary, Besides exterience has shown me that a city of on size is only a stepping stone to a Rubbis flitule and I cannot blume them. In om history here, since 1903, our Rabbi turnover until the present has been many, also law concerned that HUC has not given the attention and Consideration to the small community and the buture of Reform Judaism. I have always been convinced that the Small city is the basis of Reform Judaism, not only for non, but for the peture. a reply at your leisure would be appreciated. Respect fully Lybran Holstine 1755 Shawnee Rd #701 Lina Oh, 45805

P.S. I trust this letter will be confidential and not in anyway come back to Linea and our Rabbi

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\* CAR-RT-SORT\*\*CR50 20424584 0264 MR&MRS SYLVAN HOLSTEIN HOLS TIWE 1755 SHAWNEE RD #701 LIMA OH 45805



RABBI ALEXANDER M. SCHINDLER • UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS

838 FIFTH AVENUE NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021 (212) 249-0100

November 30, 1989 2 Kislev 5750

TO: Members, UAHC Executive Committee

The enclosed report by Egon Mayer touches upon one of the most controversial issues facing the American Jewish community. It is the first study of its kind and should give us all pause for thought. I refer particularly to the comment in the Foreward which notes that "there is little evidence indicating that rabbinic officiation does in fact presage subsequent conversion or other involvement in Jewish communal life."

I think you will find the entire report to be of interest.

Warm regards.

and



# HEBREW UNION COLLEGE – JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION Cincinnati • New York • Los Angeles • Jerusalem

3101 CLIFTON AVENUE • CINCINNATI, OHIO 45220 (513) 221-1873

February 24, 1977

Dr. Walter Jacob Rodef Shalom Temple Fifth and Morewood Avenues Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15213

Dear Walter:

I am hesitant to express my opinion regarding the action of the Responsa Committee at its meeting on January 6th with reference to "participation at marriages together with non-Jewish clergy," since I was not present at the discussion. Nevertheless, I have to say that I feel strongly that the committee statement is a mistake and involves a basic orientation towards the function of the committee and the writing of Reform Responsa with which I disagree.

The fact that "there is no Halachic precedent in the traditional literature on the issue in question," is really not of any particular relevance in terms of writing Reform Responsa. After all, is it not our task to provide guidance for problems as they arise and to deal with contemporary issues? Of what possible relevancy can Reform as a meaningful religious orientation have for the contemporary Jew if we restrict ourselves only to areas which have been dealt with a millennium or so ago? By taking this stance, the Responsa Committee undermines the authenticity of the Reform approach and makes of it an empty gesture.

When the Talmudic sages were confronted by a new situation they found authority for their innovations by turning to a broad imperative such as, "You shall do that which is just and right in the eyes of God," or, "Ask your fathers and they shall tell you, your elders and they shall speak it to you." Please recall the Talmudic statement, "Jerubaal in his generation was like Moses in his generation. . . to teach you that even the least worthy, once he has been appointed leader of the community, is like the mightiest of the mighty. Scripture says, 'And you shall come to the Priests, the Levites, and to the Judge that shall be in your day.' Can you imagine that a man shall go to a judge who does not live in his own days? This shows that you must go to (and rely on the authority of) the judge in your own days. . . 'Say not that the former days were better than these (that the former authorities were greater than your own contemporaries.'" (Rosh Hashanah 25b.) Because some

obscure Halachist in the 9th or 11th centuries dealt with a problem is certainly no reason to confine ourselves to those same problems. To adopt this position is to relegate our efforts as Reform Jews to total irrelevancy. The assumptions implicit in this position are ridiculous.

You know as well as I the traditional position on homosexuality, for example. A Reform Responsum written with integrity must reject the traditional position and develop one in the light of contemporary knowledge and insight. Does the fact that traditional literature deals with the problem justify a Responsum when all that we can do is utterly reject tradition? Or there is the whole realm of Talmudic law which deals with the relationship to the non-Jew which any civilized human being must utterly reject. Shall we write Responsa on these subjects when we know that we must reject the traditional attitudes and yet refrain from facing the myriad of problems with which contemporary life confronts us? It is completely beyond my understanding how a Responsa Committee can enunciate the position as is stated in the document which you sent to me. I certainly do not subscribe to it and have every intention of writing a Responsum on all problems which confront us as Reform Jews living in an open, free, pluralistic society. I certainly do not consider the Responsa that I do write as binding on anyone except those who wish to turn to them for guidance. The Responsa Committee of the C.C.A.R. cannot and must not shirk this responsibility.

I have been away from my desk for a month in our various Schools and so could not respond any earlier to the draft of the Responsum on Marriage on the Sabbath which you sent me some time ago. I certainly have no objection to a group of committed Reform rabbis reaching the conclusion that marriages are not to be performed on the Sabbath. My intention in writing my Responsum was really to indicate the lack of thought with which resolutions to the Conference are presented. Nevertheless, I strongly object to using the shibboleth of K'lal Yisrael as the authority for the position. Were Reform to have resorted to this nebulous concept (and I really don't know who this K'lal Yisrael is), not a single innovation would ever have been introduced. What makes this position even more ridiculous is that it is presented in all seriousness by a group of men who have rejected what the traditionalist considers to be most essential: we perform marriages without a religious get and thus, halachically, are directly responsible in producing what the Halachist considers mamzerim; we do not observe the dietary laws; we do not observe the laws of nidah and mikvaot; we do not even insist on circumcision for the conversion of an adult, etc., etc., etc. And yet we have the hutzpah to use K'lal Yisrael as a basis for an incidental minutia of marriage on the Sabbath. How can we expect to be taken seriously if we resort to such procedures?

Similarly, I am embarrassed by point 4 of the report on marriage on the Sabbath. Do we expect to be taken seriously when we cite as the basis for our decision: "economic considerations are not absent

Dr. Walter Jacob -3-February 24, 1977 from the modern marriage." Point 2, as well, which would "even discourage weddings from being held on Saturday night as they involve preparation on the Sabbath," is grasping at straws to justify post-facto what we have no inclination to do a priori. It certainly has no validity or cogency in the light of what is happening in our temples today. I was recently a "scholar-in-residence" at a large temple. After the Sabbath morning services, three simultaneous Bar Mitzvahs with bands blaring, liquor flowing, and people dancing were taking place in three of the vestry rooms of the temple. We have to at least make a minimal attempt at honesty with ourselves if we want to be taken seriously. By all means, let us write a Responsum on Marriage on the Sabbath and if logic and integrity lead us to a negative position, be it so, but let us do it with some respect for ourselves. If I sound indignant and if my language is not diplomatic, please forgive it. But Reform Judaism is my life and I am too deeply committed to the proposition that we have something significant to say to our contemporary Jewish community to concern myself with niceties. With warm greetings and best wishes, I am, Cordially, Eugene Mihaly EMter cc: Rabbi Joseph Glaser Rabbi Arthur Lelyveld Rabbi Herman Schaalman

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November 21, 1994 18 Kislev 5755

Norbert Fruehau, Director Barbara Hoenig Consultant Planning and Resource Department Council of Jewish Federations 730 Broadway New York, NY 10003-9596

Dear Barbara and Norbert:

Thank you for the videotape of the satellite broadcast on Services to the Intermarried. I am grateful for your thoughtfulness.

It was good to be involved in this program, for I, too, developed new insights from other participants. Thank you for inviting me to be part of the panel.

With every good wish, I am

Sincerely,



# council of Jewish Federations

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November 15, 1994

Rabbi Alexander Schindler, President Union of American Hebrew Congregations 838 Fifth Avenue New York, NY 10021

Dear Alex,

We want to thank you for participating in the satellite broadcast on Services to the Intermarried. Your insights and comments added immeasurably to the dialogue and discussion. The comments from the field have all been very positive, and we know that this is just the beginning of discussions at the community level.

We are pleased to enclose a videotape of the broadcast. Again, on behalf of CJF, we appreciate your giving us your time and wisdom.

Cordially,

BH/ds

Enc.

Norbert Fruehauf, Director Planning and Resource Development

Barbara Hoenig, Consultant

Planning and Resource Development

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February 11, 1993 20 Shevat 5753

Rabbi Walter Jacob Rodef Shalom Congregation 4905 Fifth Avenue Pittsburgh, PA 15213-2919

Dear Walter:

Thank you for setting the tone for the panel discussion on the role of the non-Jew in the synagogue. You were splendid and it was quite an impressive panel. I felt the program made for a very fine executive committee meeting and gave us all a great deal of food for thought as well as many new insights.

I hope our congregations will begin their own discussions on this critical issue. It can be a wonderful learning experience. While you and I aren't in total agreement, we really are not that far apart and I would venture to guess the same is true concerning grass roots opinions. It is certainly healthy to address these matters and with a bottom line of menschlichkeit and openness our movement will be well served! Whatever a congregation determines is their best path, I would hope they would make that decision known. There should be no surprises.

Again, thanks for being with us and for your wonderful participation.

With fond regards, I am

Sincerely,





RABBI ALEXANDER M. SCHINDLER • UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS
PRESIDENT 838 FIFTH AVENUE NEW YORK, NY 10021-7064 (212)249-0100

February 11, 1993 20 Shevat 5753

Ms Gail Donner 1820 Cardinal Lake Drive Cherry Hill, NJ 08003

Dear Gail:

I am deeply grateful to you for taking the time to share with the members of the UAHC Executive Committee the extensive study and discussion undertaken by Congregation M'kor Shalom on the role of the Non-Jew in the synagogue. It is the kind of study that I believe all of our congregations would do well to follow and I am grateful to you for sharing with us the experience of K'kor Shalom. You gave all of us a great deal to think about and to bring back to our home congregations.

With kindest greetings and every good wish, I am Sincerely.





## RABBI ALEXANDER M. SCHINDLER • UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS PRESIDENT 838 FIFTH AVENUE NEW YORK, NY 10021-7064 (212)249-0100

February 11, 1993 20 Shevat 5753

Vincent Vitali. Esq. P.O. Box 1123 New York, NY 10040

Dear Vincent:

Thank you for taking time from your very busy schedule to share with the members of the UAHC Executive Committee your view of the role of the non-Jew in the synagogue. It was good to hear of your personal journey and I am delighted we had an opportunity to hear from you. You gave us all much to think about.

With warm good wishes. I am

Sincerely,





## RABBI ALEXANDER M. SCHINDLER • UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS PRESIDENT 838 FIFTH AVENUE NEW YORK, NY 10021-7064 (212)249-0100

February 11, 1993 20 Shevat 5753

Rabbi Stephen A. Hart North Shore Congregation Israel 1185 Sheridan Road Glencoe, IL 60022

### Dear Stephen:

I am deeply grateful to you for taking the time to be with us last Monday to discuss with the UAHC Executive Committee the role of the non-Jew in the synagogue. Your presentation was meaningful and gave all of us much to think about. It was good having you in our midst.

With repeated thanks and every good wish, I am Sincerely,

February 11, 1993 20 Shevat 5753

Mr. Ken Rutz 671 Sunset Road Teaneck, NJ 07666

Dear Ken:

It was truly good of you to take the time to participate in the panel presentation to the UAHC Executive Committee on the role of the non-Jew in the synagogue. Your words were very meaningful and gave our leadership much to think about. Thank you for sharing your experience with us.

I was delighted on a more personal level to meet you after all the Schindler and Sigel families have ties which go many, many years, and into the second generation for my daughter Debbie and your sister-in-law Judy were colleagues at the Rodef Sholom Day School. Please do give my warm regards to Mimi and Lou.

With repeated thanks and every good wish, I am

Sincerely,

February 11, 1993 20 Shevat 5753

Ms. Karen Sholom 76 Minuteman Circle Orangeburg, NY 10962

Dear Karen:

Thank you so much for your moving presentation to the Union's Executive Committee. Your forthright comments gave us much to think about and helped all of us in thinking through our own positions on the role of the non-Jew in the synagogue.

I am so pleased that your path eventually brought you into the fold. The continuity of the Jewish community is assured when our ranks are joined by caring and committed men and women such as you.

It was good of you to take the time to be with us and I am deeply grateful for your meaningful message.

With every good wish, I am

Sincerely,

Ms. Gail Donner 1820 Cardinal Lake Drive Cherry Hill, NJ 08003

Rabbi Stephen Hart North Shore Congregation Israel 1185 Sheridan Rd. Glencoe, IL 60022

Ms. Karen Shalom 76 Minuteman Circle Orangeburg, NY 10962

Mr. Ken Rutz 671 Sunset Road Teaneck, NJ 07666

Mr. Vincent Vitale P.O. Box 1123 New York, NY 10040



for

### HEBREW UNION COLLEGE-JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION

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3101 CLIFTON AVE. • CINCINNATI, OHIO 45220-2488 (513) 221-1875

January 3, 1986

### Personal

Rabbi Alexander Schindler Union of American Hebrew Congregations 838 Fifth Avenue New York, New York 10021

Dear Alex:

You have by now undoubtedly received the mailing from Simeon Maslin which includes "A Statement of Concern" and the "Response to Eugene Mihaly." This is the second salvo in the saga "Get Mihaly!"

The original statement drafted by Simeon Maslin, which you may have seen, was considerably more vituperative, replete with <u>ad hominem</u> hostility. This final statement has, undoubtedly due to the influence of some of the signatories, been considerably toned down.

Ben Wacholder had originally sent me a draft of his "Response to Eugene Mihaly" and asked for my reaction with the assurance that it "will be given due consideration." (Wacholder's final statement, with insignificant changes, is the same as the draft which he sent me.) I did respond to him orally and subsequently sent him a transcript of what I had stated to him. I am enclosing that transcript, which you might find of interest. Since there are a number of personal remarks in the statement which I am deeply embarrassed to publicize, please consider at least that part of the transcript (the last two pages) as personal and confidential information, which I am sending to you because of your involvement and interest in this matter. It is painful to make public shortcomings of one's colleagues. We all have them, however -- scholars or not. Perhaps similar experiences led Rabbi Eleazar to state (Avot II.14) "...their bite is the bite of a fox, their sting the sting of a scorpion, their hiss the hiss of a serpent...."

I urge that you read the essay by Philip Sigal entitled "Halakhic Reflections on the Pittsburgh Platform" in the booklet just sent out by Walter Jacob, The Pittsburgh Platform in Retrospect. It is a sad

Page 2 January 3, 1986

e.1 . ...

commentary indeed on the current mood in Reform Judaism that it takes a Conservative rabbi, one who was among the most learned and able, to tell us what Reform is all about. Had I written that same essay, some of my colleagues would have undoubtedly put me under the ban (which they are trying to do any way). You might also read with interest the discussion of the Philadelphia Conference of 1869 on the meaning of kedat Moshe weYisrael and Birkhat 'Erusin. The proceedings are found in Temkin's The New World of Reform.

It may also interest you to know that I wrote my "Responsum on Marriage on the Sabbath" at the specific request of the then-president of the CCAR, a request which he made of me while he was chairing the session when this matter was discussed, a session at which Simeon Maslin was present. He was an active participant in the discussion, since he raised the entire issue and initially called for sanctions on the part of the CCAR. I wrote the responsum considerably prior to the time that the CCAR Committee on Responsa even considered the question. In fact, the responsum of the CCAR committee utilized my responsum and my analysis of the sources in writing their responsum. When the draft of the CCAR committee responsum on marriage on the Sabbath was mailed to me, I responded at length (see the enclosed letter to Walter Jacob of February 24, 1977). It may also be of interest that it was at that time that I resigned from the CCAR Committee on Responsa, since they had adopted a procedure to which I could not subscribe.

In that responsum I cite the sources exhaustively and treat them with utmost objectivity. I distributed the responsum to a limited number of the people who were directly involved and interested. Even those who did not agree with my final conclusion generally agreed with my citation of sources and my treatment of them. Bernard Bamberger, <a href="mailto:zikhrono\_livrakha">zikhrono\_livrakha</a>, though for a variety of reasons he questioned my final conclusion, wrote me at the time: "Your analysis of the traditional sources appears to me to be entirely correct."

I find it bitterly jocular that one who has been arguing for the importance of confronting the historic Jewish experience as recorded in our texts and giving it a vote in our decisions; one who has been arguing for the freedom of the individual rabbi, which I see as a heart principle in Reform; one who has insisted that the rabbi's freedom of conscience must not be interfered with and that their stance on mixed marriage not be used as a criterion by congreations (I have actually inserted myself in a number of situations, as some of the signatories of the original statement well know, to protect this rabbinic right)—that such a one should be the target of all this dishonest and ignorant attack and of personal hostility and acrimony.

Page 3 January 3, 1986

....

I assure you with whatever integrity I have as a scholar that all the relevant sources in Responsa on Jewish Marriage are cited faithfully and exhaustively. The position advocated in the responses of Maslin and Wacholder undermine, attempt to destroy, and make a joke of our efforts as Reform Jews and of our entire enterprise. I am genuinely concerned about the future of Reform Judaism in America, if that point of view is permitted to prevail. For the sake of the living Torah; for the sake of a creative, viable Judaism for ourselves and for our children, that point of view must be combatted with all energy.

With warmest greetings for the New Year, I am

As ever,

Eugene Mihaly

EM:pg Enclosures

P. S. I am also enclosing a copy of a letter which I received from Simeon Maslin.

Limeon J. Maslin, D. Min, D. D.

Reform Congregation
KENESETH ISRAEL
York Road and Township Line
ELKINS PARK, PENNSYLVANIA 19117

December 27, 1985

Dr. Eugene Mihaly Hebrew Union College 3101 Clifton Avenue Cincinnati, Ohio, 45220

Dear Gene:

0. \* 1 ...

I thought it only proper to send you copies of this mailing which will be sent to the membership of the CCAR within a few days.

I cannot tell you how saddened I was by the publication of your Responsa on Jewish Marriage. It was, quite simply, not worthy of you. You know better. Why you, with all that you have to offer, have chosen to be rosh le-shualim, I simply cannot understand. I cannot tell you how it hurts me when respected scholars hold up your Responsa to me (as an alumnus of HUC-JIR) and proceed to make fun of the "scholarship" of one of my teachers.

I will tell you, though, for the sake of an old friendship and an even older respect, that two of our colleagues, as upset by the absurdity of Responsa as I was, refused to sign the enclosed Statement out of respect for a former teacher. Together we commiserated about the debasement of scholarship. Others of us, though, felt that we could not allow your booklet to stand uncontested as a statement of Reform Judaism. Whether one does or does not officiate at mixed marriages, Responsa stands outside the bounds of responsible Jewish scholarship.

As you heard from Jack Stern, we would have aborted these statements had  $\underbrace{Responsa}_{}$  not been circulated to lay leaders. I can assure you, however, that the enclosed statements are being sent only to members of the CCAR .

I hope that I may one day again have the opportunity to take pleasure in the fruits of your scholarship. There is so much good that you could be doing.

Shalom,

Simpon 1 Maslin

SJM:mb encl.

#### Minutes

### Research Task Force Design Subcommittee

The meeting of the Research Task Force Subcommittee On Design was convened by Chairman, Paul Gans, on September 3 at the House of Living Judaism, New York. Those present were: Constance Kreshtool, Norman Mirsky, Steven Schwager, Alan Iselin, Robert Katz, Simeon Maslin, Mark Winer and Sanford Seltzer and special guest, Eve Weinberg. As the first item of business, Paul Gans asked that the Subcommittee review the cover letter and the return postal card that would accompany the Biennial delegate questionnaire. It was also recommended that the three signatories of the letter - Alexander Schindler, Alfred Gottschalk, Jack Stern - review the copy before their names were added to it.

Eve Weinberg of the Policy Research Corporation of Chicago, who had been asked to serve as a special consultant to the Subcommittee, was then introduced. She distributed the newly revised questionnaire which had been modified under her direction. In introducing her, Paul Gans reminded the Committee members that we were already running behind schedule and that it was necessary to approve the questionnaire at this meeting.

Eve Weinberg then explained her revisions, noting that they were based largely on the 4th draft prepared by Mark Winer as well as some of the suggested inclusions of Bob Katz, Bruce Phillips and Norman Mirsky. She asked that everyone complete the questionnaire in order to get a better feel of it.

Eve Weinberg called the Committee's attention to the series of additional questions at the back of the questionnaire which would be divided into six segments and apportioned accordingly in the delegates' questionnaires. Shim Maslin asked what the purpose of these questions was. Mark Winer replied that they represented a set of inquiries regarding both informal Jewish beliefs and theological beliefs and as such represented the first attempt to measure such attitudes. Norman Mirsky added that the theological questions were based upon a model of Christian beliefs in the Journal For the Scientific Study of Religion as well as ideas drawn from the new Union prayerbook.

It was then determined that the questionnaire would be reviewed on a page by page basis. This was done and additional modifications were made. Upon the completion of the questionnaire review, Eve Weinberg phoned the changes into her Chicago office so that they could immediately be programmed onto the computer. It was agreed that she would handle the printing of the questionnaire in Chicago and would notify Sandy Seltzer as to how quickly the finished product could be mailed to New York. Sandy would then coordinate distribution, etc.

Mark Winer proposed that the Subcommittee consider a revision in the projected study design. He raised the possibility of developing a consortium of Protestants, Catholics and Jewish groups who would undertake a joint national survey of religious belief and practice in the United States. Norman Mirsky

opposed the idea stating that such an undertaking would discourage fundraising on the part of Jewish donors and was a much too grandiose concept basically external to the needs and concerns of Reform Jews. Sandy Seltzer, pointing to the unpredictability of religious alignments in contemporary America and emphasizing the financial weakness of such a project, also registered his opposition. The Committee then voted to reject the proposal. Dinner was served.

Steve Schwager discussed procedures which would be utilized by him and his staff at Cornell in processing the questionnaires. He noted that it would be necessary to focus on no more than 20 items for the Biennial breakfasts. A more comprehensive review of the questionnaire would follow the Biennial. The Biennial breakfasts themselves were then discussed. It was noted that there would be six rooms at the Century Plaza Hotel in Los Angeles with a total maximum accommodation of 200 persons. The breakfasts are scheduled for 7:30 A.M. There will be nearly two hours time available for discussion, etc. The Subcommittee recommended that the questionnaire return postal card have a deadline of October 14 for the return of the questionnaires and eligibility for an invitation to the Biennial breakfasts. It was suggested that in the course of the Biennial breakfasts, key findings be shared with those in attendance and that the delegates be informed that they would be receiving a periodic newsletter highlighting the activities of the Research Task Force. In serving as research associates, they would also be asked to help the Task Force locate potential donors.

Norman Mirsky stated that it was imperative that we have a well written preamble accompanying the questionnaire. He noted that it was important how preliminary findings were shared and how we dealt with the whole question of Jewish values and delegates' attitudes towards them. Norman agreed to draft a preamble to be presented to the entire Task Force for its consideration when it met on October 10. The Subcommittee also agreed that it was necessary to have a future meeting without a definitive agenda. The meeting would be devoted to dealing philosophically with many of the issues that had been addressed in drafting the questionnaire. It was agreed that such a meeting would convene January 14-15, 1986, in New York City. The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 P.M.

3101 CLIFTON AVENUE . CINCINNATI, OHIO 45220-2488 . PHONE (513) 221-1875

DATE December 12, 1985

TO	Dr. Ben Zion Wacholder	_
	Eugene Mihaly	

On December 3, 1985, you sent me a document entitled "Draft of Response to Eugene Mihaly." You also appended a note which reads, "Enclosed please find a preliminary draft which will ultimately be a Statement on your Responsa." You state further that, "I would like your reaction which will be given due consideration." We met at my initiative in your study on December 12, 1985, at 11:30 a.m. to discuss your document. What follows is a written form of what I communicated to you during that meeting.

I began by expressing my appreciation for your courtesy in sharing with me the draft of your proposed answer to my Responsa. I also stated that I recognize that you are an adult scholar and that you have every right to write whatever you please. Out of my concern, however, for your honor and reputation as a scholar, I feel impelled to share what follows with you and to impress upon you that you are letting yourself be used for less than scholarly reasons.

As to the details of your Statement, I responded to it point by point as follows:

1) My chapter on <u>kedat Moshe weYisrael</u> addresses itself to something very specific, namely, whether from traditional halakhic and from Reform Jewish perspectives, the phrase <u>kedat Moshe weYisrael</u>...<u>as part of the marriage formula which the groom addresses to the bride</u> is the "essential and traditional heart of the Jewish marriage ceremony," as the Statement asserts. I emphasize that I was addressing myself to a simple question: whether the phrase

as an oral formula to be recited by the groom is the essential element of the Jewish marriage ceremony. I did not discuss whether the ceremony should be within the spirit of kedat Moshe weYisrael or whether a Jewish marriage, in the view of the talmudic Sages, takes place "according to the faith or laws of Moses and Israel," etc., etc., to which you devote your discussion and which is irrelevant to my point. I was discussing only whether the oral formula to be recited by the groom is essential. Note also that this has nothing to do with mixed marriage or anything related to it. It is a simple question of the significance of this formula as an oral declaration. In response to this, I state that since the formula as an oral formula for the groom is not mentioned in any source before the Tosaphists and subsequently is not included in any Code, and even Moses Isserles only cites the custom as "there are those who say," therefore, the statement that this formula as an oral declaration by the groom constitutes "the essential and traditional heart of the Jewish marriage ceremony" must be rejected. Do you disagree with this, Ben? Can anyone disagree with it?

You quote page 18 of my Responsa as follows: "According to Dr. Mihaly, the phrase was introduced into the wedding ceremony 'as an attempt to assert rabbinic authority and control.'" What I actually say is: "It is also likely [emphasis added] that this phrase was introduced as an attempt to assert...." You omit the phrase "It is also likely." This is a very important qualification, which should certainly be noted. You surely know that the Tosaphot mentions the groom's recitation of the formula kedat Moshe weYisrael as a comment on the talmudic phrase

| Agra | Agr

Would this not indicate the possibility that the oral recitation was indeed introduced to assert rabbinic authority? Would you deny that this is a possibility? Would your vast knowledge of rabbinics permit the possibility that on occasion the Rabbis did introduce matters to assert authority? What is it that you are objecting to? Does such a possibility disturb you?

2) I never question the fact that the concept of kedat Moshe weYisrael is implicit in a Jewish marriage ceremony and that the ceremony takes place within that context. I was merely speaking of the oral recitation of the formula by the groom. As a matter of fact, I clearly state in my Responsa "that the presence of a rabbi as the officiant, however, clearly implies that the marriage is a religious one and that it is in accordance with the requirements of the Jewish faith..." (page 24). I have devoted an entire essay to this subject, an essay which you might read with benefit, entitled, "The Jewish View of Marriage," which I wrote 34 years ago and which has been reprinted in a number of anthologies, incidentally, some of them published by Orthodox rabbis.

Your entire discussion, therefore, that "All Jewish marriages in the view of talmudic Sages take place 'according to the faith (or laws) of Moses and Israel'" and the other citations which you go on to give are truly besides the point. The entire page and a half which you devote to this issue are irrelevant. The matter is not at issue nor is it disputed.

Crucial issues which I do discuss and to which you do not respond are the operative meaning of <u>kedat Moshe weYisrael</u> and who decides what the requirements of <u>dat Moshe weYisrael</u> are in a specific time/place. I certainly maintain that the requirements of <u>dat Moshe weYisrael</u> have undergone a series of changes through the ages. Would you deny this, Ben? What is the value of your historical and scientific learning if you are not prepared to grant this? It is as plain as day

to every beginner. It is the basis of our whole course of study at the Hebrew Union College. It is the fundamental essential and rationale of Reform Judaism.

The traditional halakhic sources have themselves defined <u>kedat Moshe</u>

<u>weYisrael</u> differently in different ages. Certainly Reform Judaism has defined <u>kedat Moshe weYisrael</u> differently from the traditional halakhic sources.

Do I have to tell you that Reform is on record as considering a child of a non-Jewish mother as a Jew, without the child going through a formal conversion? You were one of the resource people for this. You gave encouragement to the adoption of the paternity position. In doing so, you well know that you disregarded the way <a href="Mediate Moshe weYisrael">kedat Moshe weYisrael</a> was defined for 1600 years. Please write a response to yourself in the same spirit that you are writing to me.

Reform Judaism is on record that we accept a woman proselyte without the rite of mikvah.

Reform is on record that it does not require two halakhically qualified witnesses to a wedding.

Reform is on record that it will accept the divorce of a secular court and Reform rabbis will officiate at marriages of previously married women without their obtaining a traditional get.

Reform is on record that we accept adult proselytes without the rite of circumcision.

Reform is on record that it does not require halitzah.

Reform is on record that it sanctions the marriage of a priest to a divorcee.

Are you disputing the above, Ben? You never address yourself to any of this.

If you did dispute the fact that the oral formula <u>kedat Moshe weYisrael</u> is earlier than the Tosaphists, then you have every right to write a critique. If you believe that <u>kedat Moshe weYisrael</u> has retained the identical definition throughout the ages, then you have a right to respond. If you believe that Reform has not claimed for itself the right to define <u>dat Moshe weYisrael</u> in the light of its view of reality, then you have every right to dispute my conclusions. You do none of this. You skip the major points of my entire <u>Responsa</u>.

Reform has claimed the right for itself, as the authorities in Judaism have in each age, to define <u>kedat Moshe weYisrael</u> in light of its view of the demands of God in a given time and place and in terms of its perception of reality. If Reform gives up that right, its entire history is a sham and all its rabbis are comedians. Is that your position, Ben?

kiddushin is to be understood as a rabbinic metaphor. How do you interpret the Gemara's explanation of the Mishnah's use of nikneit and mekaddesh? The Talmud attributes the use of mekaddesh to the fact that through kiddushin "the man prohibits her to all others like an object which has been dedicated for sacred use (kehekdesh). The very expression "like" clearly indicates that the Rabbis are using a simile, which is a form of metaphor. Furthermore, Tosaphot, ad loc., clearly defines what kiddushin means. How can this be disputed? I further demonstrate that in the entire talmudic literature every attempt to extend the metaphor is rejected (see my note 17, page 36).

Note also that I qualify my statement in the same footnote by questioning "whether the <u>Gemara's</u> explanation of the Mishnah's use of <u>mekaddesh</u> and <u>nikneit</u> is what the authors or editors of the Mishnah had in mind or not." I clearly

emphasize that "Of relevance for our discussion is that the normative tradition from the Amoraim through the Tosaphists (and beyond), understood kiddushin as a metaphor." I also note the literature in the same footnote from Epstein to Abraham Weiss to Halivni, which give other explanations for the Mishnah's use of nikneit and mekaddesh.

I also clearly indicate that <u>kiddushin</u> results in an essential change in the woman's status. "Through <u>kiddushin</u>, the man prohibits her to all others like an object which has been dedicated for sacred use" (page 34).

Do you realize, Ben, that to say that an expression is metaphoric is not to denigrate it? The use of metaphor, understanding one thing in terms of another, is as natural as breathing. Communication is almost impossible without it. How can you possibly say, as you do, that "legal literature does not speak in metaphor, a device appropriate to poetry..."? Do you appreciate, Ben, that a thousand halakhic expressions are aspects of metaphor? The very word halakha is metaphoric.

and a thousand more. How can you possibly say that halakhic literature does not resort to metaphor when practically every line resorts to tropes and figurative language? Surely you know all this, Ben!

4) Your concluding point that "the term teshuvah ('responsum') refers to a legal opinion which views sympathetically the rabbinic tradition" and, therefore, my booklet "should not be termed 'responsa'" is a particularly hostile statement and reveals the motive and the spirit behind your entire response. I have been under the impression that teshuvah means response. Are you suggesting that only the Orthodox can respond to questions, and that they have a monopoly on the word? Are you suggesting that Reform insofar as it deviates from tradition stands outside of Judaism and may not even use a Hebrew word? Did you object when through the years Freehof has written numerous responsa? Do you object that the CCAR has a committee on responsa? Did you object when the CCAR recently published a collection of responsa?

More recently, you distributed to a number of colleagues at our various campuses a scurrilous, <u>ad hominem</u>, underhanded, devious attack on me written by Simeon Maslin, without the courtesy of a copy to me, under the guise of securing their counsel. You again subsequently called me on Wednesday, October 2, at 2:40 p.m., and said, <u>inter alia</u>, the following to me (what follows is a direct quote, which I wrote down as soon as you talked to me): "I have sinned against you.

Please forgive me. I deeply apologize. I did what I did unthinkingly. I know that I have many flaws in my character. I am competitive and I fight, but I did not think that I am cruel. Apparently I have that streak in my character. I have done something cruel. I am deeply sorry. I apologize. Can you please forget it?"

Now you take it upon yourself to respond once again. I do hope that, in this instance as well, you will not have deep regrets and embarrass both of us with your contrition and apology, for in a general way I find that you misquote me. You misinterpret my intent. You address yourself to points which I never made and which are irrelevant to my discussion. You attribute notions to me which I do not hold and then proceed to argue against them. Knowing much better, you intentionally misrepresent traditional sources. Ben, I would ask again, why? What prompts you to do this?

I certainly have no objection at all to--in fact I would welcome--a scholarly discussion on the merits of what I have actually said. I am deeply grieved to say that your so-called response to me does not do this.

Report of the Subcommittee On Mixed Marriage to the Task Force On Reform Jewish Outreach Don

This subcommittee report is specifically directed to the single issue of rabbinic officiation at interfaith marriages. The question of rabbis performing interfaith marriages is one of the most divisive issues in Reform Judaism today. Emotion and invective have been in evidence in discussing this issue. There are reports that rabbis have been made to feel insecure and unwelcome and that children and parents are leaving the synagogue, children leaving Judaism, pulpits being withheld from rabbis, all because of this most provocative subject.

At the 1978 UAHC Board Meeting in Houston, Texas, when Rabbi Alexander Schindler proposed his programs and thoughts on outreach, conversion and mixed marriage, he did not at that time address the question of rabbis performing interfaith marriages. That was immediately raised from the floor and a debate ensued. The Chairman of the Board of UAHC, Matthew Ross, assured the meeting that the entire issue of rabbis officiating at interfaith marriages would be included on the agenda of an outreach task force consisting of both laypersons and rabbis and would be one of the areas designated for study.

During the early meetings of the Task Force, the question of rabbis performing interfaith marriages was brought up and debated. It was obvious that for many Task Force members this issue was considered to be a particularly important agenda item. It was a question fraught with controversy. Task Force Chairman, David Belin, requested from those raising the issue that the question of rabbinic officiation be postponed until after the 1981 Boston Biennial and that priority be given to other issues facing the Task Force.

At the Boston Biennial the Outreach resolutions were reported on and passed. The Biennial was also assured that the question of rabbinic officiation at interfaith marriages would continue to be studied by the Task Force and reported on at the next Biennial in Houton in 1983.

In 1909, the CCAR took its first official stand on the subject when it declared interfaith marriage as contrary to the "traditions of the Jewish religion." That position was reiterated in 1947 and served as the basis for the 1973 statement of the CCAR, the last time the subject was evaluated by the American Reform rabbinate. Equally noteworthy is the historic position of the Reform laity in both recognizing and respecting the integrity of individual rabbinic decisions in this regard. In 1971, the CCAR decided to discuss the issue of rabbinic officiation at interfaith marriage at its meeting to be held in Atlanta in 1973. A committee was appointed to study the matter and present its findings at the 1973 convention. After two years of hard, diligent work and debate, the committee presented its report with both majority and minority opinions. The debate at the 1973 CCAR conference was long and intense. The following resolution which took a stronger stance in discouraging rabbis from performing interfaith marriages was passed by a sizable majority.

"The CCAR, recalling its stand adopted in 1909 that mixed marriage is contrary to the Jewish tradition and should be discouraged now declares its opposition to participation by its members in any ceremony which solemnizes a mixed marriage.

The CCAR recognizes that historically its members have held and continue to hold divergent interpretations of Jewish tradition.

In order to keep open every channel to Judaism and K'lal Israel for those who have already entered into a mixed marriage, the CCAR calls upon its members:

- 1) To assist fully in educating children of such mixed marriages as Jews,
- 2) To provide the opportunity for conversion of the non-Jewish spouse, and
- 3) To encourage a creative and consistent cultivation of involvement in the Jewish community and the synagogue."

At the present time, it is estimated that a substantial minority of reform rabbis officiate at interfaith marriages. Their decision is generally governed by a variety of religious and personal criteria of which the following is but a partial list. There are instances when individual rabbis have other criteria and cases when there are no criteria for officiating.

- a) Willingness of the non-Jew to study Judaism.
- b) A commitment by the non-Jew to allow his/her spouse to maintain a Jewish home and to raise their children as Jews.
- c) That the couple enter into a period of pre-marital counseling with the rabbi.
- d) The Jewish member of the couple or his/her parent must be a member of the congregation.
- e) That the ceremony take place in the rabbi's study or some place other than the sanctuary.
- f) A revision of the ceremony so that it is not a traditional Jewish ceremony and the words "....under the laws of Moses and of Israel...." are omitted.
- g) That a rabbi(s) be the sole officiant(s).
- h) Referral by a colleague who does not perform interfaith marriages.

In the decade since 1973, the controversy over rabbinic officiation at interfaith marriage has continued. Arguments both pro and con, some echoing sentiments expressed during the 1973 CCAR debate, have been offered by rabbis and laypersons alike. A summary of some of these positions follows.

### Arguments Advanced In Favor of Rabbinic Officiation

- Rabbinic officiation at interfaith marriage enhances the possibility that children will be raised as Jews and the non-Jewish spouse will be more likely to consider the possibility of conversion at some later date.
- 2. When a rabbi refuses to officiate at an interfaith marriage the couple may be alienated from the synagogue. The person of another faith, or of no professed faith, who requests that a rabbi officiate at his/her marriage has already made a first, positive decision toward Judaism. If outreach is truly a goal of the Reform movement, rabbis must be sensitive to the fact that their rejection may be taken personally, quite often at the expense of a future Jewish commitment by the couple.
- A refusal to officiate cannot be reconciled with Reform Judaism's emphasis upon interfaith dialogue and the prophetic message of universal brotherhood.
- Rabbis can create wedding ceremonies appropriate to the occasion rather than utilizing the traditional Jewish ritual.
- 5. It is time to stop being concerned at the reactions of Orthodox and Conservative Judaism to the practices of Reform. Over the years, Reform Judaism has made numerous decisions which contravene Jewish law. In our pluralistic society, a significant percentage of Jews now marry persons born outside our faith. These marriages are increasing regardless of the rabbinic stance. We cannot afford to reject such a large proportion of our young people and their parents.

- 6. American Reform Judaism is being unduly influenced by pressures emanating from Israel and other parts of the world. It is time to be more forthright and more attune to our priorities.
- 7. Both the 1973 CCAR resolution and the statements found in the Rabbis Manual have exerted powerful pressures upon rabbis to refrain from officiating at interfaith marriages lest in doing so they jeopardize their futures as members of that body.
- 8. Outreach begins before a marriage takes place. An outreach program which is intent upon reaching out to couples in an interfaith marriage but which disapproves of rabbinic officiation at interfaith marriages is a contradiction in terms.
- 9. Rabbis should be permitted to officiate at interfaith marriages in the sanctuary of the congregation. Such an act would increase the chances of the non-Jewish partner's conversion to Judaism.

- 7 -

Arguments Advanced In Oppostion to Rabbinic Officiation

- 1. Premarital promises regarding the religious upbringing of children are prone to change subsequent to the birth of a child. Often commitments to educate children as Jews or to convert oneself are not voluntary but concessions to pressure brought to bear by the Jewish partner and the Jewish partner's family.
- A growing number of interfaith married couples have affiliated with synagogues and are raising their children as Jews despite the fact that they were not married by a rabbi.
- 3. The preservation of one's particular Jewish identity is both consistent and necessary if the integrity of other cultures, ethnic groups and faith communities is to be defended.
- 4. The rabbi is the symbolic representative of Judaism and of the continuity of the Jewish tradition. To tailor the ritual to fit the religious needs of the couple is to subvert the basic assumptions under which both Judaism and the State have granted the rabbi the prerogative to serve as an officiant in the first place. The rabbi's participation in the ceremony is construed by the Jewish partner and the Jewish family as a sign that the wedding is a Jewish wedding thereby assuaging the family's discomfiture at the reality of an interfaith marriage.
- 5. It is not a question of Reform versus Orthodox interpretaions of Judaism. It is a question of Jewish survival and the sanction of behavior which violates the purpose and meaning of Jewish marriage and rabbinic responsibility.
- Opposition to rabbinic officiation antedates the establishment of Israel and the existence of liberal communities in other parts of the world.

- 7. The Central Conference of American Rabbis has always permitted the free exchange of positions and points of view. The 1973 resolution clearly recognizes that members may hold divergent views regarding officiating at interfaith marriages.
- 8. The Outreach program stands on its own merits. There is no inconsistency whatsoever in a program designed to deal with the religious needs of couples after their marriage and the affirmation that a Jewish marriage is one involving men and women who are committed to Judaism as a personal way of life.
- 9. To solemnize a wedding between a Jew and a non-Jew in a synagogue sancturary is to transform a sacred moment in the life cycle of the Jewish people into an act of hypocricy.

The issue has been set before you. There are no easy answers. And yet we have accomplished a great deal in our long hours of study and debate. Most of us, rabbis and laypersons alike, started this discussion four years ago with strong personal opinions. Our anger against those on the opposite side has been replaced with understanding. We went through a process of change. We all learned to listen thoughtfully to what others were saying. As a result, our prejudice, ignorance and anger disappeared and we joined together in a consensus.

Regardless of their positions, everyone would agree that couples contemplating an interfaith marriage and the parents of couples involved in these marriages should have ample opportunity to meet with a rabbi and fully discuss all aspects of the marriage. This should be standard procedure whether a rabbi officiates or not. Certainly, a refusal over the telephone by a rabbi's secretary is not in the best interest of anyone.

The Subcommittee, therefore, affirms the right of every rabbi to act in accordance with his/her religious conscience in the matter of officiating at interfaith marriages free from any external pressure.

It is the consensus of the Subcommittee that the Reform movement as a whole must enter into a process, as we did, of a most thoughtful consideration of this issue. We must all, rabbis and laypersons alike, express ourselves, listen to others carefully, learn, and become informed.

We, therefore, urge that the entire Reform movement enter into the following program:

a) The issue of rabbinic officiation at interfaith marriages is but one aspect of a far more complex subject. A consideration of all aspects of interfaith marriage, and not just the question of rabbinic officiation, is necessary in light of the current trends in the North American Jewish community. However, the Task Force does not have either the time or the resources to undertake such a study. It recommends that the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion jointly undertake an extensive evaluation of the ramifications of interfaith marriage in the latter part of the twentieth century in North America, utilizing appropriate resources and calling upon experts in various disciplines to help in assembling and interpreting information in this area. The data is to be gathered and presented within a time period not to exceed two years.

- b) That a program of "Forums for Listening and Learning" on the entire subject of interfaith marriage be created on a national, district, regional and congregational level so that all of us can join together and listen openly and without prejudice to what others have to say on this subject so we can better understand other points of view.
- c) The CCAR and its members should continue to study this issue.
- d) Educational programs and aids should be created to help in the understanding of this issue for both laity and rabbis.
- e) All the campuses of HUC-JIR should address this issue in their formal curriculum so that our rabbis will have a better understanding when they begin their work.

As Reform Jews we have the right and the obligation to make choices. However, we must make sure that our choices are educated ones based on understanding and our commitment to the survival of Judaism and the Jewish people. Hauppauge Road

(516) 499-0915

March 11, 1985

coll him pro

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Rabbi Alexander Schindler 838 Fifth Avenue New York, NY 10021

Dear Alex:

I enclose the most recent draft of my article on rabbinic officiation at mixed marriages for Reform Judaism. For your convenience I have circled your quotes.

If I misinterpreted you or if you would like to make any changes, please call my secretary, Joan Tassa between 8:30 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., by Friday, March 15 at the latest. If we do not hear from you by then, I will presume your approval of the quotations.

As you will recall, Reform Judaism's editor Aron Himt-Manheimer and I will proceed with publication of this article only if it serves to strengthen the Reform Movement and the rabbinate. We hope that our effort will raise the level of discussion about this sensitive issue. If you have any suggestions to improve the article, please call me as soon as possible.

Thank you again for your participation and cooperation in composing the article. We anticipate that its publication will encourage the mature sharing of viewpoints on this complex issue.

Sincerely

Rabbi Mark L. Winer, Ph.D.

1st Immediate Past President: Stephen Weisberg

2nd Immediate Past President

Hy Needleman

3rd Immediate Past President: MLW: klp encs. Leon Meinstein

Member of Union of American Hebrew Congregations

The Controversy Over Rabbinic Officiation at Interfaith Weddings

Article submitted for publication in  $\underline{\text{Reform}}$   $\underline{\text{Judaism}}$ 

Rabbi Mark L. Winer, Ph.D.

A new pamphlet affirming rabbinic refusal to officiate at interfaith weddings has intensified the debate on this already controversial subject. Some have criticized the timing of its publication. David Belin of Des Moines, Iowa, who chairs the Commission on Reform Jewish Outreach, feels that its release should have been deferred. "The most divisive issue on the agenda of the Reform Movement is whether or not rabbis ought to officiate at interfaith weddings. Almost every time I speak about Outreach, the first question from the floor concerns rabbinic officiation. The rabbis and the lay leaders of the UAHC had held off a full discussion of the issue until our tripartite study will be completed. Frankly, I wish the study would have been finished sooner. I'm afraid that the new booklet opens up the whole issue for debate. It raises the heat under this boiling cauldron."

Asked why he convened the rabbis' meeting which produced the pamphlet, Simeon Maslin, of Congregation Keneseth Israel in Philadelphia, defended its release. "I thought it was scandalous that so many congregations were declining to interview rabbis who would not officiate at mixed marriages. These rabbis are in full compliance with the stated position of the CCAR and the Jewish tradition, and yet they are being denied consideration for pulpits."

Entitled "Reform Rabbis and Mixed Marriage," the pamphlet seeks to explain the consistent opposition to rabbinic solemnization of interfaith weddings. The Central Conference of American Rabbis held in 1909 that intermarriage is "contrary to the traditions of the Jewish religion." The same position was restated in 1947 and amplified in 1973. This most recent resolution, passed by a substantial majority at the CCAR Convention in Atlanta twelve years ago "declares its opposition to participation by its members in any ceremony which solemnizes a mixed marriage."

Most rabbis justify their refusal to officiate at interfaith weddings on the Jewish conception of marriage as a covenant between two Jews. Rabbi Haskell Bernat of Temple Israel in Miami explains the rabbi's role. "Contrary to what is often thought, the rabbi neither confers God's blessings on the bride and groom nor does the rabbi 'marry' the couple. As a 'M'sader Kidushin' the rabbi serves as a witness on behalf of the Jewish People. The rabbi <u>is</u> the Jewish People at the ceremony and enters into the covenant with the bride and groom."

Some rabbis and many lay people believe that the normative rabbinic stance is out of touch with modern realities. Alfred Miller of Montreal is among those who urge rabbinic officiation at mixed marriage ceremonies. "It is impossible to stress too strongly how bitter the Jew feels when the rabbi refuses to marry him. This rejection leaves a scar from which he rarely recovers. He feels he is being rejected by the Jewish

People. If a religious marriage is refused, it does not stop the couple from getting married - it only turns them away."

According to Mel Merrians of Larchmont, New York, rabbis should solemnize mixed marriages only if "the young people have come to an agreement that they are gong to have a Jewish home and that their children will be raised Jewish. Also, the non-Jewish participant should take a course about Judaism so that he will be informed and sometime in the future make up his own mind whether or not he can live as a Jew." Merrians criticized those rabbis who co-officiate with Christian clergy. "I don't think you can be married within two religious traditions."

Among the minority of Reform rabbis who sometimes officiates at a wedding between a Jew and a non-Jew, most insist on commitment to maintain a Jewish home, join a temple, and rear their children as Jews. Some like Harry Danziger of Memphis "require that they study the same program as those studying for conversion." As a result of their participation, the rabbis believe that their officiation at interfaith weddings brings the couples closer to the synagogue and to Judaism. Kenneth Segal of Montreal reports, "I see more of them than I see of the Jewish-Jewish parties after marriage."

Almost no one involved in the issue of rabbinic solemnization at mixed marriage ceremonies does not express a great deal of ambivalence on the subject, regardless of his or her position. Rabbi Segal finds no issue more troubling than this one. "Despite the general feeling that I am doing the right thing, the problem is that I am doing so

many of them. When at least two-thirds to three quarters of my marriages are mixed marriages, I've got to wonder what it says to those who are looking at me and observing this in terms of the integrity of Reform Judaism. What does it say to the Confirmation child or Bar Mitzvah about carrying on Judaism? I remember David Einhorn's classic line about mixed marriage as the nail in the coffin of Judaism and it taunts me. The more I am doing it, the less I know."

Although she stresses that the Commission on Reform Jewish Outreach "does not have a view on whether or not rabbis should officiate,"
Outreach Director Lydia Kukoff of Los Angeles personally believes "that a rabbi should not officiate at a marriage between a Jew and a non-Jew. Yet, in my dealing with the couples themselves, a rabbi's agreeing to officiate at their marriage has really been an important factor, something that does influence them." Paul Gans of East Rockaway, New York.typifies the ambivalence which characterizes so many in confronting the issue of rabbinic officiation at interfaith weddings.

"There has to be some middle ground to accommodate both the rabbi's commitments and the couple's feelings."

Many Reform Jews applaud the general practice of rabbis, even if their own rabbis did not officiate at their weddings or those of their children. Joan Quaderer of East Northport, N.Y. recalled, "At first I hoped that he would, but I understood why. I was glad that he had the integrity to say 'no.' I am glad that I found one to marry me, but

I want my sons to marry Jewish girls and to be married by a rabbi who makes it very difficult for them to marry anyone but a Jewish girl. I want my sons to stay Jewish and I want my grandchildren to be Jewish."

Alan I'selin of Albany feels that "the demand for officiation at mixed marriages is just another symptom of our wanting to mold our faith to meet our own comfortable Twenty First Century desires. People become affiliated because they pay their dues. They never have to set foot in the synagogue, pray, or have a shabat dinner, but they're entitled to have a rabbi perform a ceremony."

UAHC President Alexander Schindler supports the normative rabbinic stance against officiation because of the threat he believes intermarriage poses to the future of Judaism. "It represents a potential drain on the numeric strength of the Jewish people and on its inner commitment. Whether I like it or not, my officiation would be seen as a seal of approval and would therefore become encouraging of intermarriage. If I participate I give license to those who say 'Well, the rabbis are officiating, why in heaven's name is there anything wrong with my intermarrying?"

"Let me personalize this. I told my children that if they marry somebody outside of the Jewish faith and there is no prior conversion, I cannot officiate If I violate that with the first daughter, then I have no more arguments with any of the other children."

Several of those interviewed suggested that the rabbis' refusal to officiate is often misunderstood as rejection. "It's very hard as "the temper of the times." Unlike rabbinic students in earlier generations, most students now come from Reform homes. But they feel closer to traditional Judaism in many respects. "On the issue of rabbinic officiation at interfaith weddings, they prefer to hold to the mandates of the CCAR arrived at in an earlier day."

Congregations which consider for rabbinic posts only those who will officiate, find it severely narrows their field of choice. Some support the imposition of this kind of "litmus test" in the selection of rabbis. Paul Uhlmann of Kansas City feels that the rabbis' particular position on the issue should be a part of his or her curriculum vitae. Rabbi Kenneth Segal of Montreal compares a congregation's rabbinic choice to the selection of a husband or wife. "If the congregation feels that to them mixed marriage is important, that's their right."

But UAHC Chairman of the Board Chuck Rothschild condemned the "litmus test." Whether or not the rabbi officiates at mixed marriages "should not be an important criterion in determining a rabbi's suitability for a particular congregation." Although he supports rabbinic officiation at interfaith weddings in some circumstances, Mel Merrians of Larchmont, New York, believes that the rabbi's position on the issue "should not be a part of the interview process. Congregations should make up their minds based upon his or her religious principles and philosophy." CCAR Executive Vice President Joseph Glaser feels that "it's stupid for the congregation to knock out of consideration any rabbi who will not perform mixed marriages, because they knock out over half of the members of the Conference.

when a member who has given his being to the synagogue suddenly finds his child in a mixed marriage," comments Carl Feldman of Providence.

But Connie Kreshtool of Wilmington, Delaware, President of the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods, believes that too many parents make rabbis into the scapegoats for their childrens' mixed marriages. "They often place most of their anger, frustration, and disappointment onto the rabbi rather than looking to themselves for the reasons why."

Obviously, the stance of most rabbis in declining to officiate must be communicated more adequately, emphasized Gunther Plaut of Toronto, the President of the Central Conference of American Rabbis.

Many might not like the position, but at least they could understand it. "The standard is not, do you love the rabbi? But do you respect the Judaism he proposes?" Haskell Bernat of Miami declines to officiate at interfaith weddings in part because he believes that his converts have a special claim on him as the guardian of the boundaries of the Jewish People. He imagines that if he would officiate, they might confront him, "How dare you give to those unwilling to make a similar commitment, the same benefits and privileges?"

Recent Jewish community studies indicate that approximately one in three Jews currently entering marriage has a partner who was not born Jewish.

Despite the rise in the frequency of Jewish intermarriages, fewer rabbis appear willing to solemnize mixed marriage ceremonies than might have done so fifteen years ago. The trend is particularly notable among rabbinic students. Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion President Alfred Gottschalk sees the tendency away from officiation

They cut down their odds on finding the kind of rabbi they ought to have as leader, teacher, pastor, and all the things that a good rabbi is supposed to be. Yes, it's unfair to the rabbis but it's also extremely unfair to the congregation."

In addition to reinforcing its fundamental stance of opposition to rabbinic officiation at mixed marriages, the 1973 CCAR resolution laid the foundation for the Reform Movement's outreach efforts.

"In order to keep open every channel to Judaism and Klal Yisrael for those who have already entered into mixed marriage, the CCAR calls upon its members:

- to assist fully in educating children of such mixed marriages as Jews;
- to provide the opportunity for conversion of the non-Jewish spouse; and
- to encourage a creative and consistent cultivation of involvement in the Jewish community and the synagogue."

During the last decade, outreach has become one of the most active facets of Reform Judaism. Numerous local temples have initiated programs to encourage the affiliation of Jewish intermarriages. Introduction to Judaism courses have been widely offered by local Reform rabbinic groups and by UAHC regional outreach committees. The Commission on Reform Judaism Outreach coordinates all of these efforts. Rabbi Sanford Seltzer of Boston estimates that each year several thousand people convert to Judaism under various Reform auspices.

Many thousands of others not born to Judaism are married to Jews affiliated with Reform temples. Although they may not convert formally

to Judaism, they no longer follow their former faiths. They rear their children as Jews, observe Jewish holidays at home, and sometimes even become active in their temples. These "de facto Jews" have become numerous in some temples, especially in more isolated and smaller Jewish communities. Outreach programs acknowledge their inclinations toward Jewishness and try to reinforce their efforts to rear their children as Jews and to identify personally with the Jewish People. The CCAR's 1983 resolution on patrilineal descent legitimizes the Jewishness of the children of intermarriages in which the mother is not Jewish. Orthodox and Conservative rabbis have condemned the patrilineal descent resolution and some Reform rabbis outside of the United States do not follow its letter, although they fulfill its spirit.

The connection in the 1973 resolution between the refusal by rabbis to officiate at interfaith weddings and vigorous outreach efforts, is widely misunderstood. Paul Uhlmann of Kansas City exclaims, "You can't kick them out before they're married and welcome them in after." But UAHC President Schindler does not find the two strategies incongruous.

"Outreach is predicated on the assumption that we can maintain our opposition to intermarriage without at the same time rejecting the intermarried. The rabbi who does not officiate (and I follow this rule meticulously) should spend an inordinate amount of time and energy striving to convince the couple that there is no rejection involved. I invariably will spend ten times as much time with the couple to whom I have to say "no" than with the couple to whom I say "yes" - in

counseling them, in working with them. If at all possible I come to that wedding ceremony itself to demonstrate symbolically my embracing them even though I could not myself officiate at that marriage."

Lydia Kukoff views refusal to officiate and outreach as opposite sides of the same coin. The combination of what appears to be incompatible strategies reflects a distinction in Jewish Law. At the point of officiation, rabbinic refusal is based on the principle of "L'chatchila" or "at the outset." Once an interfaith marriage has occurred, "we are taking a stance of 'B'diavad' or 'once it has happened,'" Kukoff explains. "I absolutely do not accept the notion that a rabbi who does not officiate at interfaith marriages cannot have an outreach program."

One of the rabbis who combines refusal to officiate with vigorous outreach is Leslie Gutterman of Providence. Before the wedding, he often works with an interfaith couple to "help them articulate their own commitments and enable them to write their own service to be officiated at by a judge. These couples usually come away feeling that I have helped to facilitate a meaningful beginning to their married life. They know I wish them God's blessings and that what we have done is honest and written with an integrity that the couple can convey to family and friends whose support and encouragement will be important in nurturing their marriage."

In order to bring more knowledge to bear on this complex topic, the newly forced Research Task Force for the Future of Reform Judaism has been commissioned to design a research project which will investigate every facet of Jewish intermarriage. Within the context of evolving American Jewish identity, its many manifestations will be examined. These include conversion, unaffiliated mixed marriages, and rabbinic officiation at interfaith weddings. After a year of design, approximately four years will be required to complete the project.

The controversy over rabbinic refusal to solemnize mixed marriage ceremonies will not be easily resolved. Intermarriage impacts most American Jewish families, so debate over officiation can often become highly personal and emotional. The interfaith wedding is precisely that moment when two common wishes become incompatible. Most of us American Jews want both full integration in American society and preservation of Jewish distinctiveness. Nothing so sharply brings these two desires into conflict as intermarriage.



# Research Task Force on Interfaith Marriage

UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS—CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN RABBIS
—HEBREW UNION COLLEGE-JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION

1330 BEACON STREET, SUITE 355, BROOKLINE, MASSACHUSETTS 02146 (617) 277-1655



#### MEMORANDUM

TO: All Members Research Task Force

FROM: Rabbi Sanford Seltzer

DATE: September 19, 1985

Enclosed please find a copy of the Biennial Delegates' questionnaire in anticipation of our October 10 meeting as well as the minutes of the September 3 meeting of the Design Subcommittee.

STEVEN S. JACOBS

201 S. 18TH STREET \* 1519
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19103

(215) 546-8293

January 2, 1986

Celler to the busings letter to be see in the book of the book of

Rabbi Alexander Schindler Union of American Hebrew Congregations 838 Fifth Avenue New York, New York 10021

Dear Alex.

In my mind, you are virtually the only Jewish religious leader of any note on the American scene who has the courage and foresight to push for changes (in accordance with Jewish tradition) which are necessary to keep our Jewish community competitive in this free-wheeling American society of ours.

Let me therefore submit a letter entitled GENTILE
FIANCÉ OF JEW TELLS WHY HER CONSCIENCE DEMANDS SHE CONVERT TO
JUDAISM AND RAISE FUTURE CHILDREN AS JEWS. It is signed by a
real convert to Orthodox Judaism named Donna, but entirely
ghostwritten by me. It is designed to be read primarily by Jews
in their teens and twenties (and up) and their parents. Secondarily
it is to be read by non-Jews who are engaged or married to Jews.
And it also is meant to be read by Jews involved with the Christian
missionaries.

Why is this letter different from any other piece of literature ever written on the subject? Because it explains that the Greek Testament stories (which Christians call the New Testament) is the primary theological source or anti-Semitism as we know it today. And it puts the stress on the conscience of the reader.

I should like to get this letter into the hands of every young marriage-age Jew in the country, including those under the guidance of the Reform movement. It does not have to be sponsored by the Reform movement as such; but I must have your complete cooperation....

I wait for your early reply, and send my best personal regards.

Sincerely,

GENTILE FIANCE OF JEW TELLS WHY HER CONSCIENCE DEMANDS SHE CONVERT TO JUDAISM AND RAISE FUTURE CHILDREN AS JEWS

Dear Mom and Dad,

I know you were very disappointed when I told you that I accepted Barry's proposal of marriage. Even though you like him and think he would make someone else a good husband, I understand why you prefer me to marry a Christian instead of a Jew like Barry. It is only natural. You both are Christians and raised Tommy and me as Christians.

Therefore, I realize you also were disappointed when I told you of my decision to convert to Judaism and to raise any children Barry and I might have in the Jewish faith. Please understand that Barry did not demand that I convert. I made the decision of my own free will after much thought and prayer.

Perhaps you will understand my decision better if I set down some of my reasons for deciding to convert to Judaism and to establish a Jewish family with Barry.

Suppose I decided to marry someone other than Barry, someone who was neither Christian nor Jewish but whose religion contained statements and doctrines in its holy book that you both are damned or cursed because you remain Christians. Suppose I joined a faith which taught in this holy book that my grandparents, including Grandad Bob who died last year, are children of the Devil and not of God even though they are the nicest grandparents anyone could have. Suppose I agreed to raise my children in a faith which proclaimed Christians deserve to be burned and even murdered for refusing to accept certain claims made by the founder of that faith. Suppose it taught that Christians are hostile or enemies of <u>all</u> mankind.

Suppose the doctrines and teachings which I just outlined above were part of a faith of someone I planned to marry. Would you be pleased? And what about my own conscience. Could I in good conscience agree to be part of such a faith, or allow my children, either passively or actively, to be raised in such a faith?

Just as I could never in good conscience insult you by permitting my children to be raised in a faith which contains teachings that you are cursed or damned, that my grandparents are children of the Devil and not of God, that Christians deserve to be burned and murdered and are hostile to all mankind, so I could not in good conscience insult Barry or his family or allow my children to become or identify as Christians because these are precisely the teachings of Jesus and others according to the New Testament. Even if I did not formally

convert to Judaism, I would never insult Barry or his family, or act contrary to my own conscience, by allowing my children to be raised in a faith which contains doctrines of this sort.

In case you don't believe these doctrines are part of Christianity, let me show you exactly where they appear in the New Testament. Mark 16:16 says anyone who does not believe in Jesus is "damned." Paul claims that Jews who reject Jesus in favor of their own Mosaic traditions are "cursed" (Galatians 3:10). Jesus himself reportedly claimed anyone who did not accept his leadership would be "thrown away like a (dead) branch and burned" (John 15:16), yes, even murdered (Luke 19:27). He also reportedly called Jews who would not accept him as their religious leader "children of the Devil" (John 8:44) and "not of God" (John 8:47). And I Thessalonians 2:15,16 asserts that Jews "killed Jesus, murdered the prophets, and are hostile (some translations read "enemies") to all mankind."

These diatribes are the source of hatred, persecution and murder of Jews for centuries. And they are untrue. Take for example the assertion in I Thessalonians 2:15,16, which I mentioned above, that Jews killed Jesus, murdered the prophets, and are hostile to all mankind. The Jews could not have killed Jesus because their Roman overlords in that era forbade them to practice capital punishment, crucifiction being a Roman punishment in any event. According to the Bible (which I was raised to call the Old Testament), the only Jews ever to kill prophets were apostate Jews who lived at least 400 years earlier and had abandoned Judaism for the idol worship of the pagans (I Kings 18:13; 19:1,10; 21:26; II Chronicles 24:18, 21-22; Nehemiah 9:18,26). And never were Jews anywhere hostile to or enemies of all mankind:

My decision to become Jewish and raise my children as Jews also results from my realization that I share the same basic views and beliefs found in Judaism. In that sense, I already was a Jew but without knowing it.

Some of the basic Jewish views and beliefs which I share are found in the Bible (Old Testament). They include the belief that life is sacred and good works, the noblest spiritual achievment. "It has been told you, O mankind, what is good and what God wants of you -- only to do justly, love mercy, and walk with humility before God" (Micah 6:7.8). The belief that every human being, Gentile and Jewish, is equal in the sight of God. "Think you, O Israelite, that you are better to Me (God) than the Ethiopians? (Not so!) I brought Israel from Egypt. Yes, and also the Phillistines from Crete and the Arameans from Kor" (Amos 9:7). And Gentile converts are to be treated with equality and respect. "The convert (ger) who dwells among you shall be treated like the person born a Jew; you must love him (or her) like yourself" (Leviticus 19:34).

Mother and Dad, the Jewish People are not a race or single ethnic group as most people mistakenly believe. The Bible itself says Jews were a "mixed multitude" almost from the start (Exodus 12:38). There are black Jews from Ethiopia and the United States, dark-skinned Dravidian Jews from India, white Jews from Europe, and even some Jews who are Japanese and from other parts of the Orient. It is estimated that some 14,000 people, mostly from Christian family backgrounds, convert to Judism every year and the numbers are increasing. Many do so because they plan to marry or are married to a Jew. Many others do it without marriage in mind. So I am not alone or unique in this respect.

I hope the thoughts which I have expressed above help you to understand and appreciate better why I have chosen this path, to get married in a Jewish religious ceremony, to become a Jew myself, and to raise any children in the Jewish faith.

I love you both.

Your daughter,

Donna

Note: Donna is a convert to Judaism and married to a Jew by birth. This letter is being sent to you in hopes it will be both interesting and useful. If you have any questions or comments, please send them to Simon Jacobs, 2037 Chestnut Street #15892, Philadelphia, PA 19103.

# **MEMORANDUM**

From

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler

To

David W. Belin; Lydia Kukoff

Startard Marra

Copies

Subject



26 Tevet 5746 Date January 7, 1986

Steven Jacobs sent me the attached. It is self-explanatory.

What do you think?

Warm good wishes.

I think this is ferrible it if I will be happy to elaborate if you need me to.





## Commission on Reform Jewish Outreach

UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS - CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN RABBIS

## William & Lottie Daniel Department of Outreach

SERVING REFORM JUDAISM IN NORTH AMERICA

838 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10021-7064 (212) 249-0100

May 16, 1993 25 Iyar 5753

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

To:

Rabbi Alexander Schindler

Dru Greenwood

Re:

Glaser's "The Gathering Crisis of Intermarriage"

Has this already gone out to the CCAR and therefore you are considering a public response? Or is it awaiting a further commentary from you before being sent out? Is it possible to prevent its being distributed at all? Despite the changes Joe has made in his introductory memo, I continue to see this as a potentially very divisive piece for the same reasons I mentioned before. There are plenty of rabbis who feel truly overwhelmed and beleaguered by the changing demographics of our congregations. This will make them feel even more so, with Outreach lobbies and clietele on the march. Us and them, with "us" being the lonely voice in the wilderness.

I'm enclosing a copy of my previous memo to you with portions marked that I feel still apply.

Just a note about the two attachments, Walter's piece and yours. Basically I have no quarrel with Walter's remarks, although I might read Jewish history and its application differently. straightforward thesis which invites evaluation on its merits without stirring up anxiety. While your remarks certainly hit squarely on the main points that need to be made, they are in such a form--inexact transcript of a semi-formal response to Walter's speech and other Board commentaries -- that they seem almost offhand and therefore don't serve the general argument as well as they might. In addition it does sound as if you are saying there should be no distinctions between Jews and non-Jews in ritual practice for Charperson bar/bat mitzvah and it's an easy step, which you don't prevent Harris Gilbert here, to extend that to all ritual practice. (Didn't Joe also cut Co-Chairperson off your remarks? I thought there was more on this later in your Vice Chairpersons presentation.) What about preparing an edited version for Ekzabeth Linkoninclusion if this document actually goes out?

I don't know what you've heard about the Outreach Executive Committee meeting. Mel and Danny were both there, as were Walter

and Joe. The majority of the discussion, as I suspected, centered around the new process guide for the role of the non-Jew. might be interested to know that Joe turned down a suggestion of Danny's that the CCAR draft "the" policy on ritual participation. Joe said that he wants to involve laity in these decisions. I also had a private meeting with Joe last week to discuss wordfor-word his concerns with the new process guide. We made out fine on the word-for-word. But during the course of the conversation, he accused me of "social working" this issue rather than taking the stand of a "leader", so I noted that you had taken the stand of a leader and that Joe didn't seem to like that either. I also mentioned that if I asked five different rabbis about where exactly they would draw the line in ritual practice, I would get five different answers. He didn't care for that, but conceded it was I told him that my position is that it is the right and responsibility of the congregations individually with their rabbis to address this issue, learning from our tradition using available resources and that they are doing so with our help. That's what Reform Judaism is about. We parted friends and he is adding me as an associate member of the CCAR (by virtue of position). figure. In any case, I think the softening, if it can be called that, of the end of his memo with regard to Outreach may be due in part to these ongoing discussions. I intend to keep them up. I'll also be staying at the CCAR convention for most of its duration, even though I'm only scheduled for a pre-convention workshop on ... the role of the non-Jew.

# Commission on Reform Jewish Outreach

UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS - CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN RABBIS

## William & Lottie Daniel Department of Outreach

SERVING REFORM JUDAISM IN NORTH AMERICA

838 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10021-7064 (212) 249-0100

## PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

April 21, 1993 30 Nisan 5753

To:

Rabbi Alexander Schindler

From:

Dru Greenwood you Hope this is helpful.

Joe's piece on the role of the non-Jew made my heart sink. thoroughly agree with your last comment about a potential war between the rabbinate and the laity. I also wonder how, in all candor, he can ask you if his piece is "accurate, fair and nonconfrontative." Maybe he operates at such high decibels that he can no longer hear himself. His language is loaded and militant in its imagery. He makes Outreach sound like Frankenstein, "taking on > " a life of its own." It's sad that he feels so embattled.

In any case, here are a few thoughts on substance:

The reason that we are working so hard on the issues of policy setting on the role of non-Jews in the synagogue is that we are concerned about the integrity of Reform Judaism in the future. Outreach and the integrity of Judaism and Jewish life are not dichotomous -- they are mutually interdependent. should take great pride in the fact that we have stepped forward proactively to meet the challenges that inevitably have come to us, not shied away from them.

The fact is that for historical reasons, many Reform congregations have policy and/or practice that is very far from the sample ("sample" not "model") constitution and may not conform to Reform responsa either. (Your quote from Leo Baeck is a great example of why this is so.) Engaging such congregations in the process of thinking about the purpose of a synagogue and the requirements and meaning of membership, governance and ritual participation, and in studying the tradition including Reform responsa, is a healthy, affirming process that meets the mandate of Reform tradition for informed choice. It is my experience that congregations (lay leaders and rabbis) take Reform responsa and the sample constitution very seriously in their deliberations, but that they do not consider them binding.

Chairperson Harns Gilbert Co-Chairperson Rabbi Leslie Gutterman

Vice Champersons
Elizabeth Linkort Pamela Waechter

Director Dru Greenwood Strong Outreach committees do not necessarily "loosen the V rules" (second paragraph. The Conservative movement is just V now recognizing (often kicking and screaming) the fact that



there are intermarried couples in their congregations. Jerry Epstein told me last fall with a straight face that there were no interfaith couples who belong to Conservative synagogues and he seemed quite hostile to almost everything I said. I met him at the Brandeis Think Tank on the Unaffiliated.) In fact, when Reform congregations undertake the process of reexamining policy, they more often than not end up tightening the rules. Feedback that I've received indicates that they feel empowered and supported in doing this through the Outreach materials and programs, which again include responsa and the sample constitution.

- Outreach has been a major priority, not only of the Union, but of the Reform movement as a whole, since 1978. The Commission is a joint Commission and the College has been fully represented and active in forming the Outreach program as well. Joe's listing of "clientele" (bottom page 1) certainly does seem like he's describing everyone in our congregations (including many rabbis and cantors as well). I guess the congregant balance as he describes it has tipped. And when you get to "friends and families of mixed couples", the clery balance has probably tipped too. Maybe that's why there's some identification with "the clientele." Too bad that Joe sets it up as "us" and "them". My question is: what "crucial changes appear to have to be made"? Reform congregations have always been open and have stressed universality. Older constitutions and by-laws often reflect this. Newer ones address current needs for boundaries. This seems to me to be firmly and in a healthy way following Reform tradition. Yes, it's painful and difficult sometimes and rabbis often are the point-people who carry the multiple projections of the issues. Issues that matter profoundly are hardly ever simple. But, I agree with you, we can't allow ourselves to be put in an embattled position. That's a no-win situation.
- What is the "critical mass in Reform Jewish life? ...born and Jews, or that clientele resulting converted intermarriage?" When we are talking about tachlis temple programming, again this is an unhelpful and damaging dichotomy. If Outreach is seen, as I have been painting it wherever I go, as essentially about inviting Jewish choices, the vast majority of the programs we do address fundamentals of what it means to be a Jew and inspire and encourage people to make active Jewish choices for themselves. The Commission is focusing now on integrated programming that strengthens the Jewish pride, commitment and life choices of all, both Jew and not-yet Jew--learners minyanim, workshops that talk about spirituality, holiday workshops, life cycle discussions. Intro classes are taken by temple adult confirmation classes as well as those considering conversion to Judaism and In many instances the needs for Jewish interfaith couples. learning presented by interfaith couples and by Jews are identical. How many Jews don't know why or how to be Jewish? This is why I have been working so hard to integrate our work

with youth, education, Sisterhood and Brotherhood, etc. Obviously, we need some programs that are directed to particular issues of interfaith couples, but they are time-limited and aim to bring couples into the Jewish life of the congregation. The Task Force on the Unaffiliated, which the CCAR elected not to join as joint sponsor, is under the umbrella of Outreach precisely because of the similarity of mission, the basic questions raised (Why be Jewish? How can I do it?) and the similarity of the process of enabling and supporting Jewish choices.

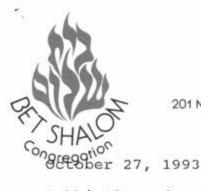
- 5. I do not understand Joe's increasing discomfort "with the outreach focus on converts, relating them more closely to the non converts than to the born Jews." Converts are Jews and many people continue to be concerned about what they perceive to be Outreach's singling out of Jews-by-choice, particularly those who have been Jews for some time and are well integrated. That of course is not the intent; rather it is to welcome, teach and support those considering conversion and those who are new Jews-by-choice during the period of transition. The big secret about converts seems to be that they were once not Jews. (It's rarely mentioned that Ruth was first intermarried with Naomi's son.) Outreach is deeply involved in the often messy business of easing the transition.
- "Anything that a rabbi or a congregation might deny this clientele is seen as a rejection or an insult, or both..." / This is a vast overgeneralization that it does not serve us well to overemphasize. Leaving aside the question of sensitivity on the part of the rabbi or congregation, even assuming the best, yes there are individuals who react in this However, there are many non-Jews and their Jewish family members who understand very well the concerns of the Jewish community for continuity and integrity and who are or can be allies in protecting it. (The members of the panel for the Exec Committee are good examples.) We need to listen for and encourage those voices, acknowledge the pain when it is there, and seriously explain our reasons for the decisions. It's hard work, but it can be done. (I've already expressed my feeling about focusing on encouraging inmarriage in my memo re Bayme, so won't go into it here. Suffice it to say, nothing about Outreach lends itself to simplistic statements.)
- 7. About the UAHC Executive Committee meeting, Joe can be refered to your opening comments on p. 146. It was not just a mind stretching exercise. I think it was Don Day who expressed the sense of the committee that this was a topic that they had not realized the significance of before, and that members should bring the mandate back to their congregations and regions to engage the issue. (The discussion seems to me to degenerate further into vitriol here and for the next few pages.) Joe seems not to have heard your two points of agreement: that we must welcome and that we must set boundaries. (The operative word is "and", not "but", which Shelly used in his remarks, by

the way.) This is a repeat of my point #1. Why does it seem so hard to get?

8. Officiation and final page. First, the "Outreach establishment" (whatever that is) does not have a vested v interest in officiation. There is pressure on rabbis to officiate because two thirds of all marriages involving a Jew (more among Reform Jews) are intermarriages. Rabbis care about the individuals and families involved (would you want it any other way?). And they care about the future of Judaism. Again, many lay people understand the issues and agree with a decision not to officiate. Many rabbis have found ways to help laity understand their decision when it is not to officiate. Rabbis and laity share common ground in caring deeply about the future Jewishness of the family. Yes, the rabbi is often the point-person or scapegoat for the fears, feelings of guilt, etc. that individuals and families experience. That does come with the territory unfortunately. If I am part of the "Outreach establishment", I do all I can to ease this situation. I've had similar experiences in congregations to the one Joe describes. I will also be meeting with the New York students who are about to be ordained to help them formulate ways of speaking with laity about their officiation policy. Maybe we all need to think together about how this sore spot can be alleviated.

Another thought: My sense is that fewer new rabbis now start out by deciding that they will officiate, so that it's possible that the pool of rabbis who officiate is shrinking. The greatest conflict seems to arise when there is a change in rabbi in a congregation and the previous practice (by them misinai) is also shifted or challenged. This is another built-in structural reasons for the pressure.

Finally, do you know that both Joe and Walter are planning to be at the Outreach Executive Committee meeting on May 3? As I mentioned to you, they are already concerned about the Kansas City piece. I anticipate that will be somewhat of a non-issue, since I think the Exec Committee will agree with them and not wish to further distribute the B'nai Jehudah document. On the other hand, that discussion could be only a warm-up for the discussion of the new supplementary process resource that I put together and sent out. (You should have a copy.) The main issue there, aside from the thing itself, will most likely be the material that Maggie Wenig put together with the committee from Beth Am, the People's Temple. I included it because I think it's very well based in the tradition, albeit a different strand from that favored in Reform responsa. The arguments are carefully drawn and have integrity. I also feel that it will be helpful to some congregations and rabbis. However, it is pretty far to the left and quite radically As you may know, Maggie has an ongoing non-authoritarian. "engagement" with Joe et al. He and Walter will probably disagree vigorously with its inclusion. Just wanted you to know. I've alerted Danny, Mel (who called me with comments on the draft), Harris and Les.



Norman M. Cohen, Rabbi

201 Ninth Avenue North • Hopkins, MN 55343 • (612) 933-8525 • Fax (612) 933-3238

Rabbi Alexander Schindler UAHC 838 Fifth Avenue New York, NY 10021

Dear Rabbi Schindler,

I want you to know how much I enjoyed your biennial sermon address during Shabbat morning services this year. As always, I am grateful that you speak for the length of time that you do. It doesn't hurt for my congregants attending the convention to realize that my sermons aren't all that long!

Our congregation has been going through a heart-wrenching, but very beneficial, process this year of examining the role of the non-Jewish spouse in the synagogue. I listened intently to all of your observations, and I wanted to respond by sending you copies of the materials we've been working with this year.

First of all, I opened the discussion with my Rosh Hashanah morning sermon, entitled "What Does It Mean to Say a Bracha?". Last year at the regional UAHC biennial in Pewaukee, Wisconsin, I presented one of three papers on this topic. I'm enclosing all three papers for you to look at.

I'm also sending you the materials we presented to the congregation as take-home packets following Rosh Hashanah morning services. People were urged to read and study before our first of three congregational town hall forums. At the first forum we had three speakers (much like the regional biennial program the year before). Then we broke into small groups of 10 to 12 people each. There were ever 100 people in attendance at that first town hall forum, and we are a congregation of fewer than 400 families, which gives you an indication of the importance with which many people regard this topic.

Finally, I would like to let you know that we have already, in the 12 years of our congregation's existence, developed some appropriate "new rituals" in which we involve the non-Jewish spouses. When a non-Jewish spouse is supportive of the Jewish upbringing of the children, we try to involve them in a number of ways in the Bar and Bat Mitzvah ceremonies.

While the non-Jewish parent does not actually pass the Torah down, they stand with the Jewish spouse, and I say very clearly, "The Torah is passed from your grandparents to your mother who, with the loving support of your father, passes it on to you".

This accomplishes a number of things. First of all, it includes the non-Jewish spouse in this critical moment. They are not left to the pews or to a non-central symbolic position. It also states clearly our recognition of their importance in the passing of that Torah. (As you might have read in my paper, I don't see the Torah as being something that a non-Jew can pass down. The way I understand it, the Old Testament, which Christians accept as part of their Bible, is not the same as Torah, and that is why I resist the idea of a non-Jew passing the Torah down in this particular ceremony.)

Also, as part of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ritual, when the Jewish parent is invited to do the Torah blessing, the non-Jewish parent stands with him/her and recites the following words, which come from <u>Gates of Prayer</u> and conclude with the Shehechiyanu which, I think, is quite appropriate since it is not an "asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav" blessing.

My prayer, standing at the Torah, is that you, my son/daughter, will always be worthy of this inheritance as a Jew. Know that you have my support. Take its teaching into your heart, and in turn pass it on to your children and those who come after you. May you be a faithful Jew, searching for wisdom and truth, working for justice and peace.

And, of course, when the Jewish parent addresses the child with a drasha, the non-Jewish parent is invited to also speak to the moment, basing comments on the portion.

The night preceding the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony, the entire family is invited to lead the congregation in the blessings over the candles and the kiddush. The non-Jewish parent usually reads the paragraph leading up to the blessing.

I know that you are interested in encouraging the development of new appropriate rituals to deal with this very "important issue", and I hope this might be something that other congregations could feel free to use and/or adapt.

I must tell you that the major issue in our congregation is the emotional reaction we are seeing from many different segments of our membership. The non-Jewish spouses are the ones who are least upset by this whole process. Many of them want the congregation to be clear about what the limits are. However, their spouses are the ones who are very often perturbed and irritated, often saying that we are making them feel unwelcome and pushing them away when, in point of fact, we are providing many opportunities that I suspect remind them of the lack of opportunities and the very strong emotional responses many of them may have experienced at the time they were dating, engaged and married.

We also get a very strong emotional reaction from the born Jews married to born Jews, who are uncomfortable with the increasing number of non-Jews playing a role within our communities. I suspect that many of these members are more disturbed by the fact that this isn't the synagogue "they grew up in". My goal is to get them to see the presence of non-Jewish spouses in our synagogue in a positive way, indicating that we are not losing the children of

mixed marriages to the Christian or secular world. Rather, we should be encouraged by the growing number of non-Jewish spouses, not only willing, but enthusiastic about raising their children as Jews.

And, finally, people who have become Jews by choice are most appreciative of the distinctions made, so that there is an understanding that what they did by "converting to Judaism" counts for something.

I hope this has been helpful. I certainly was moved by your sermon and wanted to share these things with you.

שלום Shalom,

Rabbi Norman M. Cohen

Troin





RABBI ALEXANDER M. SCHINDLER • UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS

BRESIDENT 838 FIFTH AVENUE NEW YORK, NY 10021-7064 (212)249-0100

November 3, 1993 19 Heshvan 5754

Rabbi Norman M. Cohen Bet Shalom Congregation 201 Ninth Avenue North Hopkins, MN 55343

Dear Norman:

Thank you so much for your letter of October 27th. Your report is most encouraging and I like the manner in which you resolved this vexing problem within your congregation.

Your solution is precisely what I had in mind when I spoke at the Biennial. I am glad you understood me well. Judging by the response of some of our colleagues at the Rabbis Breakfast, I am not so sure they did.

I really don't know why everyone is so frightened of this subject. The manner in which you and your congregation approached the resolution is really admirable and I especially like the creative manner in which you allowed the participation of the non-Jewish partner in the ceremony of passing the Torah as well as in participating in the Aliyah.

I am going to share your letter with several of our colleagues and the people around us here at the Union in the hope that your meaningful experience will be of worth to others as well.

Cordially,

Alexander M. Schindler



RABBI ALEXANDER M. SCHINDLER PRESIDENT UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS
838 FIFTH AVENUE NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021 (212) 249-0100

July manage

May 16, 1989 11 Iyar 5749

Mr. B.J. Tanenbaum, Jr. U.D.S., Inc. 111 N. Main Street Dumas, AR 71639

Dear B.J.:

I thank you for your confidential letter of May 8, 1989. I much appreciate your having shared your thoughts with me.

This is a matter which I think would be best discussed face to face. We will seek an opportunity when the two of us my chat quietly and share our thoughts and concerns on the subject.

With heartfelt appreciation for your continuing care and concern, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler



# Union of American Hebrew Congregations

PATRON OF HEBREW UNION COLLEGE - JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION 838 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021 (212) 249-0100 CABLES: UNIONUAHC

May 8, 1989

# Tall world with white

## CONFIDENTIAL

Rabbi Alexander Schindler U.A.H.C. 838 Fifth Avenue New York, N.Y., 10021

Dear Alex:

As you may note, I am writing this letter to you and have shared its contents with no one except my wife, Pat. I have done this, not because I would restrict you from letting someone else read it, but instead, I am giving you my opinion. I am not trying to embarrass you or our Movement, to which you know I am totally devoted.

I do, however, have a very significant concern. This concern is essentially the problem of mixed marriages. This is not a new problem and, of course, I am by no means the first one to addresss it, nor will I be the last. It has now been 10 years since our Movement began its Outreach Program under your great tutorage and leadership. This program pioneered inovative action and reactions within not only our Reform Movement, but indeed, impacted Judaism throughout the World.

In ten years we have made significant progress because of the insightfulness of our Lay Leadership who have been involved on the Outreach Commission, as well as the continued work of our dedicated professional leaders. This marvelous impact has extended into the Union of American Hebrew Congregations Regions and to the Congregations themselves. I am positive that this program will continue to grow each year. It has the ability to modify and change with the times and has already joined other cornerstones of our Movement to create a new foundation to build Progressive Judaism into the next century.

The one thing that has not changed, however, in these 10 years, is the CCAR resolution on performing mixed marriages.

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From my perspective, the CCAR, itself, has even become more resolute in their position that their Atlanta resolution, which stems from the early 1970's, and the subsequent Outreach program of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations have nothing to do with each other. How ridiculous is this position! It is amusing to me to see learned scholars, our very spiritual leaders, engross themselves in an argument that they will surely lose in the long run. Their logic makes no sense.

Frankly, I have never even discussed with you what your personal feeling is about Rabbis performing mixed marriages. really do not think that is an issue here. The pragmatic point is that mixed marriages exist, they are going to continue to exist in North America and throughout the World. They are a reality of our modern times and our acceptance by society as a whole, and indeed our integration into it. We are no longer a ghetto society. Our children are exposed to other precious human beings whose life they wish to share for other reasons than religious affiliation. The children, the products of those unions, are now being welcomed into our Movement and the non-Jewish spouses are, in most cases, and certainly officially, being encouraged to consider conversion. And yet, the official policy of the CCAR continues to state that, essentially they deplore, condemn, and encourage against the performance of mixed marriages by their Rabbis. Naturally, they do not emphatically say that it cannot be done and there is a significant minority of Rabbis who do perform mixed marriages. I thank God for these Rabbis, or else, in my opinion, the dire predictions of previous sociologists working on forecasts for a Jewish population in 1990 and beyond would indeed prove to be correct. The doom-sayers would have prevailed.

Let me consolidate my thoughts---

I do not feel that we have the right to tell any Rabbi that they must perform a mixed marriage. However, I do feel that it is consistent with the Outreach Program that certain compatability standards for a mixed marriage could be augmented and supported by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations that would not discourage this practice by our Rabbis, but instead sanction it under prevailing conditions. Let's be realists.

I do not propose that Rabbis marry everybody regardless of conditions, regardless of Jewish study, regardless of many other

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factors. I do not propose that we encourage mixed marriages, but rather establish Union of American Hebrew Congregations guidelines that at least sanction them. But, I do propose that we become realistic rather than idealistic. That we become pragmatic, rather than problematic. That we work with the CCAR and HUC-JIR toward adapting our Movement for Progressive Judaism (the U.A.H.C.) so that it can grow; so that it can prosper; so that it can offer God's beckoning light to our posterity.

Some of our children, and almost all of our children's children's children, will be the product of these mixed marriages. Within 2 or 3 generations almost no family will go untouched. It is time that we wholeheartedly recruit these people to our Movement and that our Rabbis do not place impediments in our path. Not every mixed marriage will work. Nothing works in any society or any concept perfectly. In the major leagues a batting average of .300 is considered excellent. On the gambling tables of Atlantic City or Las Vegas, 55% would be a very winning average. In business, it is said that you need to right 2 out of 3 times to be a winner. Why should our Rabbis expect 100% success?

I know that mistakes will be made, but not nearly as many mistakes would be made, as are now being made, by turning the Jewish partner of the mixed marriage, their children, and in many times their families, away from our faith for the rest of their lives. This problem, along with serving and recruiting the unaffiliated are absolutely necessary for the long range survival and viability of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and Progressive Judaism throughout the World.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this with you in the future as I feel that at this particular point in history, only you can answer the call of our People. We cannot deafen our ears to their cry.

Most sincerely,

J. Tanenbaum, Jr.

Vice-Chairman

Union of American Hebrew Congregations

by Na'ama Batya Lewin Does outreach threaten the fabric of

Different movements
adopt alternate approaches
to intermarriage

n 1979 "outreach" seemed to be the solution to the problems of intermarriage. It was the only way, some claimed, to ensure religious continuity in the assimilating American Jewish community.

Eleven years ago the Reform Movement began encouraging aggressive programs directed to the non-Jewish partner in an intermarriage, and the Conservative Movement followed in 1985. (The Orthodox Movement maintained

its stance of not sanctioning interfaith relationships.)

The rate of intermarriage keeps growing. Today 52 percent of American Jews intermarry. Some of the intermarried families affiliate without practicing religion and have no interest in becoming involved or observant.

Most interfaith couples do face religious issues when they start having a family and must resolve the religion of their children. Families might choose to observe a single religion at home. Others create a "dual identity" environment that incorporates both the Jewish and Gentile faith. Some couples provide alternately for Jewish and non-Jewish children.

Often these families ask to be accepted by the community as they are, without the conversion of the non-Jewish

According to a Washington Jewish Week survey, an average of 15.4 percent of those who regularly attend Reform congregations in the metropolitan Washington area are non-Jews. All area Reform congregations provide family memberabips for intermarried couples, under which the non-Jewish stips for intermarned couples, under which the non-Jewish spouse joins the synagogue.

Ninetv-three percent allow the non-Jewish spouse to seek representation on synagogue communices, and 40 percent allow to the synagogue communication. non-Jews to be synagogue of ficers. Forty-three percent of Washington Conservative congregations suggest that the Jewish spouse of an intermarrewist spouse of an intermar-ried couple join under a single membership, while 57 percent have arranged special family memberships. An average of 7 percent of non-Jewish spouses attend weekly Shabbat services.

Synagogues, Jewish com-munity centers and social service agencies are trying to make intermarried couples feel more comfortable with Juda ism. They believe that if inter faith families have a positive Jewish experience, they may choose to build a Jewish home or send their children to He

Competition among the outreach programs has become fierce. Which organization is more accepting toward these couples? Which is more flex-ible? Who is more successful in bringing families into the Jew-ish fold?

Conversion to Judaism seems no longer to be the focus of outreach. In synagogues, rabbis who find they have a growing number of non-Jews attending services regu-larly refrain from portraving interfaith relationships as a mis-fortune so as to avoid offend-ing interfaith families. In some ases, interfaith groups have yen become strong forces in dissuading non-Jewish spouses

from converting.
A recent study published by the American Jewish Commit-tee showed that even as the number of outreach programs abound, the rate of conversion has dropped. About 100,000 Jews continue to intermarry



every year. And three-fourths of the families do not refamilies do not raise their children as Jews.

Now many people are asking whether outreach has reached too far out.

"It is a delusion to believe that with outreach and intermarriage you can enlarge the Jewish community," insists Steven Bayme, director of the Jewish Communal Affairs De-partment for the American Jewish Committee.

Outreach, Bayme continues,

is a way to "teach families how is a way to "teach families how to raise the kids Jewishly, how to preserve Judaism. But," he adds, "Judaism is a minority religion in America. The mi-nority faith cannot be pre-served if it is not the only reli-gion in the home."

Rabbinic leadership in both movements now have serious doubts about the success of outreach programs. The past president of the Reform Cen-tral Conference of American

Rabbis (CCAR), Walter Jacob, warned members in a paper presented to the top echefon of the movement — which was circulated privately outside Reform circles and provided to the WIW — that non-Jewish sponses of interfaith couples should not be allowed to be-come members of Reform congregations And Rabbi Avis Miller, chairman of the Com-mittee for Kirav and Giyar for the Rabbinical Assembly of Conservative Judaism, recently

published a paper suggesting that Conservative rabbis should no longer welcome intermar-ried couples into the congrega-tion "without qualification." Miller reminded her readers that "the idea" of outreach "is to encourage not just entrance but long-term participation in an ongoing Jewish com-munity." munity.

#### In practice

Within synagogues "out-reach" typically means accept-ing interfaith couples as eli-gible participants in religious life. Rather than treating Jews who intermarry as betrayers of the faith, synagogue congrega-tions pull these couples into the community and teach them about Judaism.

contrast, secular outreach programs are more like therapeutic "rap" sessions. Intermarried couples meet to discuss issues that come up in daily life. In Washington, the Jewish Community Center of Greater Washington and the Jewish Social Service Washington Agency have been able to at-tract a large number of inter-married couples because of a welcoming response to interfaith relationships. These institutions reach couples that synagogues might never see.

There are no prerequisites for joining the interfaith pro-gram at the Jowish Com-munity Center of Greater Washington Lisa Shapero, who runs the program found ed just over a year ago, does not ask anything of couples who come to her classes. She couples ses. She

who come to her classes. She doesn't question their home-life or religious intentions. Her program is run like a class in basic Judaism.

"We show people what it is like to be a Jew," says Shapero. The 28-year-old does not attempt to "persuade" participants to convert "We try to be welcoming and not judgmental. If we don't reach

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out to people who may be po-tential Jews, then where can they turn?"

Erika Engelmann, who has been running interfaith workshops from the Jewish Social Service Agency of Greater Washington for almost 23 years, is expert in making interfaith couples feel comfortable. She explains that she teaches the couple how to relate better. late better.

"I open the doors for dia-logue," Engelmann says.
"Couples come to me to discuss issues — their own reli-gion and heritage. I encour-age them to talk about their feelings. I help the couple with communication and the with communication and the skills of listening." En-gelmann suggests that indi-viduals usually battle over re-ligious issues the same way they argue over buying a new couch.

When couples come for ad-ce, Engelmann will not sugvice, Engelmann will not sug-gest that they join a synagogue or send children to Hebrew school. She will not advise family members to light Chanukah candles rather than decorating a Christmas tree.

#### Convert addition

The Reform movement claims to have grown by 15 percent in the past decade, largely because intermarried couples are counted as new couples are counted as new members. Last year Rabbi Al-exander Schindler, president of the Union of American He-brew Coupley. of the Union of American He-brew Congregations (UAHC), suggested that the move-ment's outreach program be-come more aggressive Schin-dler proposed that Judaism convert "non-church-going Christians" as well as non-Jewish spouses of interfaith couples

couples.

In 1979 Schindler first suggested that Reform Judaism should welcome interfaith couples into congregations in hope that "the non-Jew would find Judaism a wonderful religion, decide to convert and bring up their child Jewish," explains Robin Farquhar, the Washington region outreach coordinator for the UAHC.

Since that time, intermar-

Since that time, intermar-ried couples have been al-lowed to join Reform congregations as family members. The UAHC has hired regional outreach directors Farquhar is one of 14 such personnel from across the United States and Canada. "All we do is make it clear that we welcome intermarriage," she

But a few months Jacob, outgoing president of the CCAR, told his colleagues in a paper presented to UAHC Executive Board. UAHC Executive Board. "It is wrong to have a non-Jew leading us in prayer. If we leading us in prayer. If we take prayer and these words seriously, then we cannot have a Gentile mouth what they clearly do not believe." The rabbi explained that there should be boundaries between Jew and non-Jew in the synagogue. "Outreach," he added "can never become Overreach."

Jacob argued that a non-Jacob argued that a non-

Jew should not be a member of a synagogue. "The synagogue is not a golf club or a spa which we may share with others," he said. "The synagogue seeks to further very specific Jewish ideals and goals through a community which accepts them ... If individuals want to become members, they should become Jews. Our doors are always open."

Rabbi Joseph Glaser

Rabbi Joseph Glaser, CCAR's executive vice presi-dent who sent copies of Jacob's paper to Reform rabbis across the country, at-tached a cover letter stating. "I believe it is time to examthe whole phenomenon ely Outreach, which is an essential program in times like these, nevertheless has taken on a life of its own."

The Conservative move-ment, which does not allow the non-Jewish spouse to be a member and forbids its clergy member and forbids its clergy from performing an inter-marriage, has also been re-considering its outreach pro-grams. Rabbi Miller of Wash-ington's Adas Israel Congre-gation said in a recently pub-lished American Jewish Com-mittee paper that Judaism's "first line of defense" must be "to emphasize the mitzyah be "to emphasize the mitzvah of endogamy." The message that Jews should marry other Jews must be transmitted "with firmness but without

"with firmness but without rancor."

"The goal of outreach is conversion," insists Rabbi Robert Abrainson, director of education for the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism. "Efforts only to make people feel comfortable do lose sight with where we are coming from."

In 1985 the Conservative movement developed a three-tiered response to intermarriage. When prevention falls, the movement encourages the non-Jewish spouse of an intermarried couple to convert. If the spouse has no interest in conversion to Judaism, the Conservative comconvert. If the spouse has no interest in conversion to Judaism, the Conservative community provides an outreach program with the hope that the non-Jewish partner will eventually choose to convert. The non-Jewish spouse cannot become a synagogue member, join groups like a sisterhood, or perform ritual acts like aliyot to the Torahreading. But everyone is wel-

sisterhood, or perform ritual acts like aliyot to the Torahreading. But everyone is well-reading. But everyone is well-reading. But everyone is well-reading. But everyone is well-reading. But everyone is well-reading and adult education programs. Some Conservative congregations address synagogue mail to the entire family.

Miller acknowledges that total acceptance of non-Jewish spouses would be "very successful" in the short term, but she argues that it would "dilute our community with one-generation Jews who, like cut flowers, may bloom brightly for a while but do not have enough Jewish nourishment to last beyond their own lifetime, to pass on to the next generation." Calling for outreach that does not "sacrifice our standards," Miller suggests that the process be renamed kiruy — the Hebrew word for bringing someone close, used in the Orthodox movement to bringing someone close, used in the Orthodox movement to describe efforts to increa observance among non-

religious Jews.
The Orthodox community has no structured program for reaching out to interfaith

couples. "Anyone who is not Jewish who wishes to explore the option of becoming Jewish or studying about Judaism is warmly welcome," says Rabbi Joel Tessler of Beth Sholom Congregation in Potomac "But Jewish law in no shape or form sanctions intermarriage," he adds "Intermarriage is seen as that which can destroy the Jewish community." couples. "Anyone who is not community.

The number of interfaith relationships is comparatively low in Orthodox circles. Some surveys report that six per-cent of Orthodox Jews marry non-lews. "As a result, out-reach is not as immediate a problem for Orthodox rabbis as for others. Instead, Ortho-dox rabbis reach out to Jews who want to learn more about Judaism. That is the

pressure point."

Even so, the Rabbinical Council of America (RCA), an Orthodox rabbinical organiza-tion, recently started an out-reach program. Its Commission reach program. Its Commission on Intermarriage is described by the RCA as a kiruv program designed to discourage interfaith relationships. The RCA, says Rabbi Max Schreier, decided it could help prevent intermarriage if it scheduled Judaism workshops on college campuses. on college campuses.
"The highest rates of inter-

marriage come from college campuses," says Schreier. "We decided that was where "We decided that was where we could make a difference." The RCA's program is de-signed to "show students the relevance of Jewish ideas. The result should be," he says, "that they should choose not to intermarry."

#### Educational approaches

All Conservative and Re-All Conservative and Re-form synagogues accept chil-dren of interfaith couples in their Hebrew schools on the principle that the children of interfaith families should not be rejected because of the parents' relationship. Seventy percent of Washington Con-servative congregations ask servative congregations ask that a student with a Jewish father undergo conversion be-fore he or she reaches bar or

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bat mitzvah age. Some area Reform congregations
which accept patrilineal descent only ask that a child
not attend another school
that teaches a non-Jewish relicion.

that teaches a non-Jewish religion.

Does the presence of these children affect the content of the Hebrew school curriculum? Can teachers comfortably tell their students that Christmas is not a Jewish holiday if a significant number actually celebrate it with the approval of both parents? Will intermarried parents remove their children from synagogue Hebrew schools if Judaism is advocated too ardently?

One local rabbi, who asked

cated too ardently?

One local rabbi, who asked not to be named, pointed out that clergy are not only afraid of offending these families and losing them from the Jewish community but also fear losing membership and tuition funds. "It comes down to money," the rabbi bluntly said.

Many Jewish leaders believe that intermarriage results from inadequate appreciation of Judaism in the home. Therefore, they question whether the Jewish community should spend time and money for interfaith programs that do not influence the home environment. The JCC allocates about \$60,000

annually for an interfaith

annually for an interfaith program.

Executive director Lester Kapian says that including JCC special holiday outreach programs, the figure reaches almost \$100,000 a year JSSA sets aside about \$5,000 for its program. Critics believe that the Washington Jewish community could better spend these funds on programs such as outreach to the non-affiliated Jew, Jewish education, or assistance to Russian Jewish immigrants.

Phyllis Margolius, president of UJAF, insists that the expenditure is minimal in comparison to what is spent on other Jewish programs. Funding for outreach to interfaith couples must be considered, she says, in a broader context.

"The reality is there are a lot of people in the com-

sidered, she says, in a broader context.

"The reality is there are a lot of people in the community — some of whom are in all-Jewish households and others in interfaith households — who have a desire to be Jewish and pass on their Judaism." Margolius insists, "We need to open doors rather than close them. And when someone reaches out, we want to have a hand there."

"It's most important to maintain Jewish identity even among Jews who have a non-Jewish parent," says Rabbi Arthur Blecher of Congregation Beth Chai — a Humanist synagogue in Fairfax, Va. — who is one of a few Washington-area rabbis who

co-officiates at interfaith mar-

co-officiates at interfaith marriages. "If you tell them they are not Jewish, they will be lost. If you tell them they are Jewish, they may want to learn something more."

Traditional rabbis, says Blecher, mislead the Jewish community. They say that if parents have a Jewish home and keep kosher, their children won't intermarry.

"That," he says, "isn't true. By saying that, rabbis make the whole situation worse. When a couple's child does intermarry, the parents will feel that they have failed."

Blecher was ordained as a

will feel that they have failed."

Blecher was ordained as a Conservative rabbi in 1975 at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York. But he now feels that intermarried couples need not be urged to send children to Hebrew school or raise them Jewish. Before Blecher agrees to marry an interfaith couple, he schedules to meet with the parties a few times.

"I only want to make sure they are an appropriate couple. That they love each other and take the commitment seriously. I don't have any preconditions," he adds. "I don't have a hidden agenda."

Reform, Conservative and Orthodox movements, says Blecher, "are not adapting well to the decline in the importance of religion in society. Quoting Torah just isn't going to cut it in this generation."