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Outreach [New Jersey/Hudson Valley], 1979-1989.

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

August 17, 1989
16 AV 5749

*Outreach
info*

Mrs. Norman Levine
Old Liberty Road
RD 3 Box 489
Monticello, NY 12701

Dear Mrs. Levine:

As Rabbi Schindler is out-of-the-city, I take the liberty of responding to your letter of August 14. Since you have read of the UAHC's Outreach program in REFORM JUDAISM, I need not relate the kind of work it has been undertaking during the past ten years. I do, however, enclose a copy of the Outreach brochure for the UAHC New Jersey-West Hudson Valley Council, of which Temple Sholom of Montecello is a member.

Rabbi Polonsky of Temple Sholom is involved in our Outreach work and teaches Introduction to Judaism classes. I don't know if you have ever discussed your personal situation with him but I would suggest that you seek his guidance.

In addition, a member of Temple Sholom, also a member of the UAHC Board of Trustees, Selma Green, serves on the NJ-WHV Outreach Committee sub-committee on Programs for Parents of Intermarried Couples. You might wish to seek out Selma and arrange to have a chat with her. It might be helpful to you to participate in one of the programs instituted for parents who share your problems and concerns.

Since you have these two fine resources available in your own home town, I believe a personal meeting with Rabbi Polonsky as well as Mrs. Green could be most beneficial. Such face-to-face meetings are usually superior to telephone conversations or correspondence. And, I am certain you will find them both to be caring people who will be desirous of being of help to you.

With every good wish, I am

Sincerely,

Edith J. Miller
Assistant to the President

Encl. bcc: L.P. & S.G.

~~MISS~~ MRS. NORMAN LEVINE
OLD LIBERTY ROAD
RD 3 BOX 489
MONTICELLO, NEW YORK 12701

August 14, 1989

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

Dear Rabbi Schindler,

The fall 1989 issue of Reform Judaism addressed an issue which concerned me personally, and I am having a great deal of aggravation. I am wondering if you can offer me some advice I can live with. I am a relatively new widow, so I have no one I can really talk this over with. Myron married a

girl who is not Jewish. She was not ⁽²⁾and
is not interested in converting to Judaism,
but at the time they got married, she
agreed to bring the children up Jewish.
No real attempt has ever been made
and I've never commented. This
year, my eldest grandchild is old
enough for Talmud Torah, and I
asked if she would be going.

Don't ask what happened after that.
My daughter-in-law got angry at
me and has vowed never to speak
to me again. Indeed, she ignores me
totally, even when other people are
present. My son is caught in the
middle. I guess he can't get her to treat

(3)

~~Mrs. Mrs.~~ MRS. NORMAN LEVINE
OLD LIBERTY ROAD
RD 3 BOX 489
MONTICELLO, NEW YORK 12701

me with any kind of respect or
courtesy. She is extremely immature,
I realize. I never forced any decisions.
I simply asked if she was going to honor
the agreement made at their marriage.
I know now I must not say anything
about anything, regardless of what
happens. I must keep my disappointment
and anger private. Is there any way I
can win the children over? I have
exposed them to the holidays, and I
suppose I have to be satisfied with
that. I would dearly love to see my
grandchildren go to Talmud Torah, but
I guess I have to keep quiet and hope my

or the children grow up & choose at themselves. (4)
son insists on it. Is there anything
you can say to me to help me with this
situation? They live next door to me,
which makes the matter even worse.
I am very depressed.

Thank you for any help
you can offer.

Sincerely,
Sandra Levine





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

*Outreach
M. Schindler*

August 8, 1989
7 Av 5749

Mr. Henry Taub
111 De Vries Ct.
Tenaflly, NJ 07670

Dear Henry:

It was good seeing you. During our discussion, the question of Outreach in Tenaflly came up. Here is the report:

You are correct in your perception that the members of Temple Sinai in Tenaflly often have not been made aware of important offerings of Outreach programming, often in their very own community. I fully anticipate that your congregation's new Rabbi, Bruce Block, will correct this situation. For over 10 years, Rabbi Block has been an advocate, innovator and leader in our national and regional Outreach program. He helped design our national "Introduction to Judaism" curriculum, and has taught scores of potential Jews by Choice in our New Jersey area during the past few years. He piloted our "Times and Seasons" program for unaffiliated mixed married couples, and continues to be one of our most respected and popular instructors. His personal commitment and involvement in Outreach issues will help return Temple Sinai to its rightful position of leadership in the Reform Jewish community.

I did want to let you know that an enormous amount of successful Outreach activity is currently going on in Bergen County, organized out of our Paramus UAHC regional office. As you will see from the enclosed brochures, over the past two years the Northern New Jersey area has been especially receptive to our Outreach overtures. This has resulted in a significant increase in the number of individuals choosing to convert to Judaism, and the presence on our Temple membership rolls of large numbers of families where one parent is not Jewish.

Mr. Henry Taub
August 8, 1989

Page 2

The fruit of Reform Jewish Outreach - in your very community - are now beginning to bless our member synagogues as more and more graduates of our programs take their place as supportive Temple leaders and as informed, involved parents of another generation of Jews.

The potential for these programs is overwhelming, limited only to what our modest budget and limited staff are able to create as they publicize and administer new Outreach efforts. We therefore rely on lay leaders like yourself to make sure this positive message is heard.

Any efforts you make to ensure that the members of Temple Sinai can take advantage of the full range of our activities will be greatly appreciated. I know that Rabbi Block would be grateful for your support and interest. If you desire more information on our programs in your area, please call Kathy Kahn, our UAHC regional Outreach coordinator, or our UAHC New Jersey Regional Director, Rabbi Daniel Freeland at 201-599-0080.

All the best.

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

DRAFT

time
address

NY

Phone

OK to
process

1 August 1989
29 Tammuz 5749

Mr. Henry Taub
add
Tenafly, NJ 07670

Dear Henry, *It was good seeing you. During our discussion the question of Outreach in Tenafly came up. Here is the report.*

You are correct in your perception that the members of Temple Sinai in Tenafly often have not been made aware of important offerings of Outreach programming, often in their very own community. I fully anticipate that your congregation's new Rabbi, Bruce Block, will correct this situation. For over 10 years, Rabbi Block has been an advocate, innovator and leader in our national and regional Outreach program. He helped design our national "Introduction to Judaism" curriculum, and has taught scores of potential Jews by Choice in our New Jersey area during the past few years. He piloted our "Times and Seasons" program for unaffiliated mixed married couples, and continues to be one of our most respected and popular instructors. His personal commitment and involvement in Outreach issues will help return Temple Sinai to its rightful position of leadership in the Reform Jewish Community.

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*See Brochure
a program
at Sinai
8/26/90*

The potential for these programs is overwhelming, limited only to what our modest budget and limited staff are able to create as they publicize and administer new Outreach efforts. We therefore rely on lay leaders like yourself to make sure this positive message is heard.

Any efforts you might make to ensure that the members of Temple Sinai can take advantage of the full range of our activities will be greatly appreciated. I know that Rabbi Block would be grateful for your support and interest. If you desire more information on our programs in your area, please call Kathy Kahn, our UAHC regional Outreach coordinator, or our UAHC New Jersey Regional Director, Rabbi Daniel Frelander at 201-599-0080.

*All the very best
Carmel*

Dulman

138 Poe Rd.
Princeton, NJ 08540
February 12, 1982

Ms. L. Kukoff
c/o The Editors
UAHC Publications
Union of American Hebrew Congregations
838 Fifth Ave.
New York NY 10021

Dear Ms. Kukoff,

When I went to see the rabbi for the first time, he gave me a copy of your book, *Choosing Judaism*. As soon as I got home I sat down to read, and dissolved into tears over the first paragraphs. As I read on, I found myself thinking over and over, "There really are others like me!" Of course I had known there must be, but I had despaired of ever coming into contact with them. Through your book I have done so, and am enormously grateful for the comfort they -- and you -- have provided.

I got the impression from your book that the situation of myself and my husband is not common: only one or two of the couples quoted seem to be, ~~like~~, like us, both of non-Jewish origin. The crux came for us when we had a baby. I had known for years that Judaism was the only religion for me, but was too paralyzed by self-consciousness -- fear of rejection, alienation, ridicule -- to take any action beyond studying on my own. Nick was reasonably satisfied with his own personal ethics. However, the baby made it necessary for us to grapple with the problem of her eventual spiritual education, and, in the process, re-evaluate our own commitments and convictions. We both concluded that only Judaism could provide what we wanted, both for her and for us.

One thing neither of us looks forward to is breaking the news to our families. We read your chapter on that subject with special interest. (Both of us, by the way, disliked the Eric/Susan letter p.42ff., which seemed to us pompous and patronizing.) A related topic I wish you had had the time or space to go into is the effect of one's conversion on one's social circle. Suggestions about what and how to tell previous acquaintances (friends, co-workers, business contacts familiar with us as Gentiles) and examples of what sorts of reactions to expect would have been welcome!

Ever since I made the decision to become a functioning Jew, I feel like Dorothy when she stepped from the grey-toned world of Kansas into the Technicolor land of Oz. I am dazzled and delighted, and a dark place in my soul is suddenly filled with light. I recall the rabbinical allegory (which rabbi? will I ever remember?) of the King enthroned in a room compassed about by high walls and mazes and difficult passages. The walls and mazes are daunting, but are in fact illusory, and for him who dares to press forward they fall away, showing the path straight into the Presence of the King.

Your book provides encouragement for those who dare. As it was written for a limited market, it will probably never make you rich, but it will help make us rich. Thank you!

Yours truly,

Sally M. Moren
Sally M. Moren

NSF

December 13, 1979

Rabbi Charles A. Kroloff
756 East Broad Street
Westfield, New Jersey 07090

Dear Rabbi Kroloff:

Many thanks for sharing with me the items from The Jewish News in regard to the program at Temple Emanu-El. I am grateful to you for sharing this with me.

Aaron Hirt-Manheimer will be doing an overview story on the Outreach Program, one year later. I am confident that this article will have material he will want to include in that article. So much has happened in the past year and he is going to try to include as many congregational efforts as possible.

With thanks and fondest regards from house to house, I am

Sincerely yours,

Alexander M. Schindler

September 19, 1979

Mrs. Betty Scher
178 Canterbury
East Windsor, N.J. 08520

Dear Mrs. Scher:

It was gracious of you to write following my appearance on the Donahue Show. I am grateful to you for sharing your lovely story with me and regret you were unable to get your call through to the Donahue program.

With best wishes to you and yours for a sweet and fulfilling New Year, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler



Sept 12, 1979

Dear Rabbi Schindler,

First of all excuse the
stationary. I am watching
you on the Wheelhouse show
right now and some
people are embarrassing
you terribly but I won't.
I just want to tell you that
when my grandson had to
be circumcised it was
on a holiday, I lived

in a bad neighborhood
then, my friends didn't want
to visit me it was so bad.
I called the Rabbinical Assoc.
They gave me a name of
a Rabbi, I called him &
he walked 14 miles for the
briss & would not take
money for anything so
don't believe everything
you hear. (I had to donate
money in his name) not
because he wanted me to &
his brother walked with
him. I will never forget

7/11

him. I think I told the
whole world that story
I tried to call Donahue
but could not get
through. I thought
that this story would
make you feel better.
Not everyone thinks money
is the most important
thing.

Sincerely
Betty Scher
178 Canterbury
EW 08520

June 25, 1979

Monsignor John Oesterreicher
Institute of Judaeo-Christian Studies
Seton Hall University
South Orange, New Jersey 07079

Dear Monsignor Oesterreicher:

In recent correspondence with Rabbi Schindler, who is currently out-of-the-country, Rabbi Jerome Gurland of Cranston, Rhode Island, noted a conversation he had with you during the conference on ecumenical relations held at Our Lady of Providence Seminary. He indicated that mention was made of Rabbi Schindler's Outreach Proposal and that you mentioned you had not had an opportunity to read the full text of the proposal.

As Rabbi Schindler will not return to his office until late-July, I am taking the liberty of sharing with you a copy of his address to the UAHC Board of Trustees on December 2, 1979. I am also enclosing a copy of the March, 1979 edition of MOMENT which has an article on proselytizing, as well as a UAHC press release giving the response from Christian theologians to Rabbi Schindler's proposal. I believe these materials will be of interest to you.

With kindest greetings, I am

Sincerely,

Edith J. Miller
Assistant to the President

Encl.

Temple Sinai

SUBURBAN REFORM TEMPLE

30 HAGEN AVENUE • CRANSTON, R.I. 02920
(401) 942-8350

JEROME S. GURLAND
Rabbi

June 20, 1979

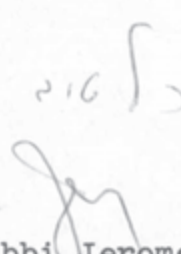
Rabbi Alexander Schindler
838 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10021

Dear Alex:

A brief response to your inquiry about Monsignor Oesterreicher. His address is:

Monsignor John Oesterreicher
Institute of Judaeo-Christian Studies
Seton Hall University
South Orange, New Jersey 07079

I have spoken with Father Flannery about the matter. I sense he agrees some contact between you and Oesterreicher will clarify the matter for him.

216 S

Rabbi Jerome S. Gurland

May 29, 1979

Rabbi Jerome S. Gurland
Temple Sinai
30 Hagen Street
Granston, R.I. 02920

Dear Jerry:

Thank you for your note of May 24 and the press clipping on the recent workshop on ecumenism. I appreciate your thoughtfulness.

Can you let me have an address for Rev. Msgr. Oestrreicher? I'd like to send him the full text of my remarks and Houston so he may have the opportunity to get the full picture of my proposals. Perhaps when he has read my remarks he will not find them to be so reprehensible after all.

With appreciation and warmest regards, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

RABBI JEROME S. GURLAND

TEMPLE SINAI
CRANSTON, RHODE ISLAND

May 24, 1979

Dear Alex: -

The enclosed should be of interest to you.

I attempted to clarify your position to the group and at lunch to Ostreicher. He admitted not having read the entire text. Since he speaks on the Jewish-Christian Dialogue he ought to be contacted. His response to your proposal is irresponsible. When a rabbi is not present, it can be damaging. He was receptive

to the idea of in-depth explanation and explanation
of the out-reach of the Reform Movement. May I
politely recommend something to be done.

Best wishes and good luck.

Sincerely
Jerry

<< Balfour Brickner



Clergy gather for workshop on ecumenism

RICHARD C. DUJARDIN
Journal-Bulletin Religion Writer

WARWICK — Today's Roman Catholics, the priest declared, can no longer look on ecumenism as something optional.

"With the Vatican council, it has become an integral part of our faith. But I'm afraid that many of us haven't learned that yet. We haven't been training it to our seminarians, and it still takes a low place on our agenda."

And so, with that complaint by the Rev. Edward Flannery, an expert in Jewish-Christian relations himself, more than two dozen Catholic, Protestant and Jewish clergy gathered at Our Lady of Providence Seminary earlier this week for an all-day conference on ecumenical relations.

Joining the conference were two prominent Catholic ecumenical experts, the Austrian-born Rev. Msgr. John M. Oesterreicher, founder and director of the Institute of Judeo-Christian Studies at Seton Hall University, and the Rev. John Hotchklin, director of the committee on ecumenical and interreligious affairs for the National Conference of Catholic Bishops.

"Jesus was a Jew," the white-haired Monsignor Oesterreicher reminded the gathering. "He spoke as a Jew and lived as a Jew. His humanity is his Jewishness. And when you understand that you are on your way to believing the incarnation of Christ as it exists."

That said, priest turned to the question of proselytism.

"Yes, Jesus told us to spread the gospel. But our missionizing has become tainted. And after Auschwitz and all the things that have been done to Jews, the forced baptisms and conversions, I am not at all sure that God wants us to missionize to the Jews."

By the same token, the priest rejected the proposal put forth a few months ago by one of America's top Reform Jewish leaders that Jews themselves should begin seeking recruits to Judaism from the ranks of the "unchurched."

The priest said he saw "contradictions" in the view advanced by Rabbi Alexander Schindler, president of the Union of American Hebrew Organizations. If Jews embarked on such a campaign, he said, there would be no reason why some Christian bodies wouldn't try to do the same with Jews.

"I would say the best approach is to see Christians and Jews as wayfarers and as fellow pilgrims on the way to God. One helps the other when one gets tired."

FATHER HOTCHKIN'S TALKS were, for the most part, an update on the Catholic Church's "dialogues" and efforts at union with Protestant, Episcopal and Orthodox groups.

He said the interfaith dialogues have been going on long enough to lead to a consensus on some issues that had divided Catholics and Protestants in the past.

This "convergence," he insisted, came not from "fudging," or "papering over" differences, or from mere compromise.

"Progress toward unity cannot be built on compromise. To do so would be to build on sand," the priest declared. "It

would lead to a church not of unity but of conformity."

Rather, he said, unity comes from both sides coming to a new understanding of their own theological traditions, through the developing character of the church.

"The Church is always developing. If our positions were fixed for all time, we would have reached an impasse long ago."

On practical matters, the priest reported that participants in the interfaith dialogues have reached general agreement aspects of the eucharist and on the ordained ministry, but still have to tackle the question of apostolic succession — which also bears on the Catholic Church's concept of its own ministry.

The Catholic Church sees apostolic succession as a crucial issue both to its doctrines of the eucharistic presence and the ordained ministry. The power of priests to change bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ comes, Catholics hold, from being ordained by bishops who are themselves in a direct unbroken line that goes back to the apostles themselves.

But, Father Hotchklin said, some Catholic theologians are coming to the view that apostolic succession is not dependent on an ordination ceremony. It is unclear, he said, whether the apostles ever ordained anyone. And some are suggesting that it is not ordination as such, but being part of a "continuity of faith" that provides the apostolic succession, he said.

If new definition were adopted, he said, it would be quite possible that bishops — and priests — in other non-Roman Catholic bodies would have what Catholics believe is essential for a valid ministry, thereby paving the way for a reconciliation. It is even possible that the recognition could extend to churches which don't have bishops, but "presbyter elders" with general oversight for the work of the church.

The priest's presentation did not sell everyone.

ANOTHER CATHOLIC PRIEST wondered aloud whether the participants in the dialogues may have lost touch with their own church, and have come to dialogue out of "non-existent Christian communities."

Others suggested that theological debate was all fine and good, but that it would be worthless if moves toward unity didn't reach down to the people in the pews.

The priest agreed. He said real unity will come from "living communities" of Christian believers at the parish-to-parish level, and not from letters handed down from chancery offices.

"We must never devalue the importance of having different Christians praying together. It may seem to us at times that such services don't accomplish very much. But I believe they do have a profound impact," the priest said.

"If we are united in His word, we are united in His presence just as surely as we are when we gather around the Eucharist."

And that being the case, he said, "there may already be more communion among our churches now than we even recognize."

June 14, 1979

Miss Marsha Benson
1727 Pioneer Avenue
Pittsburgh, Pa. 15226

Dear Miss Benson:

Thank you for your recent letter. I can appreciate your concerns and I thank you for sharing them with me.

With kindest greetings, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

MARSHA BENSON
1727 Pioneer Avenue, Pittsburgh, Pa. 15226

Nice hearing from her

Dear Rabbi Schindler June 9
as the Daughter of a ¹⁹⁷⁹ Great
United States Marine it
hurts me Deeply that my
Favorite Cousin Sandra M
Malloy is going to marry
a non jewish Husband &
will never never get
married outside my
jewish Religion & Love Each
over

(12)

all my nurses and cousins
married outside the Jewish
Religion. Their wives are
not perverts and this hurt me
so very much. Starvell

With Best Wishes,
Marsha Ann Benson
Daughter of a renowned
States Marine

I Love You Deary

M

June 14, 1979

Mr. Saul M. Mann
88 East 34th Street
Paterson, N.J. 07514

Dear Mr. Mann:

Thank you for your response to my recent letter and the materials I shared with you. While I agree with some of your points, it is obvious to me that we do not agree with one another. I hope we can disagree agreeably.

High on the agenda of my concerns is the need to enrich and enhance Jewish education in our schools and synagogues. This is an effort to which I am fully devoted. However, this effort need not be affected by an effort to reach the un-churched, one does not lead to diminution of the other.

With every good wish, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

June 7, 1979

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler
c/o Union of American Hebrew Congregations
838 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10021

Dear Rabbi Schindler:

Thank you for your response to my letter and your enclosures.

You mention the long and thorough article contained in the Encyclopedia Judaica on the subject of 'proselytes'. I have this set at home as well as the Jewish Encyclopedia, and I am already familiar with the subject on proselytes. There is no disputing the proselytizing activities during the period when our people lived in the Holy Land, and your citations seem to cover primarily that period. However, the Encyclopedia also makes quite some mention of the cessation of those activities for many past centuries in European lands.

No affirmative efforts were ever made to gain converts during those centuries for, the price in Jewish blood was a killing one.

I said that traditionally, Jews don't try to convert, having borne in mind the consequences of the many centuries of Jewish life in Europe. Even Ruth whom you mention, was importuned by her mother-in-law to go home to her people, and only after a session with her mother-in-law did she prevail upon her mother-in-law to accept her as a Jewess. To be realistic, I maintain that practising and non-practising Christians to this day resent any affirmative effort at conversions to Judaism. Yes, the comparative handful of good people connected with the inter-faith organizations might be tolerant and gracious, but the overwhelming masses of non-Jews could make us pay a price.

I still believe, as I mentioned in the letter to you, that there are millions of Jews unaffiliated with synagogues, and totally ignorant of our Torah, history and tradition. In that direction should lie efforts of conversion. There are millions of Jews today who are practically agnostic; there is the field for educational and conversion activities, not among people whose hostility will be incurred.

You mention your efforts among the 'unchurched'. They may not be members of Christian churches, but they would still regard themselves as Christian when a Jew tries to make a Jew of them.

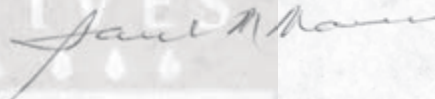
*Thanks for showing view.
One effort need not lead to discrimination of second effort.
Let's agree to disagree.*

Interfaith relations of 4,000 years ago in the Holy Land were not the relations of the past number of centuries, and of today. To use the social worker's mumbo-jumbo, why not 'reach out' to the unsynagogued Jews who embrace today a majority of the Jewish people. Incidentally, I have heard in reports on radio and television that among the Christians too, less than half of their population ever attend church during the year.

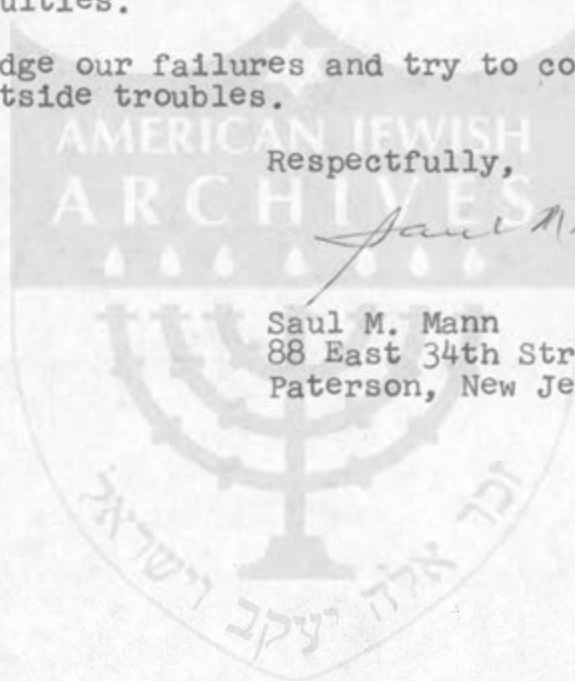
Your Reformed synagogue in this City cannot even muster a minyon on the Sabbath except when there is the circus of a Bar Mitzvah. The same holds almost true of the Conservative Temple in Paterson, and the Orthodox likewise have their extreme difficulties.

Let's acknowledge our failures and try to correct them before looking for outside troubles.

Respectfully,



Saul M. Mann
88 East 34th Street
Paterson, New Jersey 07514



May 30, 1979

Mr. Saul M. Mann
125 Ellison Street
Paterson, N.J. 07505

Dear Mr. Mann;

Thank you for your letter of May 24. I appreciate your having shared your concerns with me.

You are incorrect in stating that all Jewish tradition has been opposed to proselytising. As a matter of fact, for millenia we were indeed a proselytising religion. I enclose herewith an Adult Jewish Studies guide on the subject which may be of interest to you. In addition to questions and answers it contains a fine bibliography of books and materials in the subject at hand.

I enclose herewith a copy of my address to the UAHC Board of Trustees, December, 1978, for I believe a reading of the complete text will interest you.

With kindest greetings, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

Encl.

SAUL M. MANN
COUNSELOR AT LAW
125 ELLISON STREET
PATERSON, NEW JERSEY 07505

PHONE: 684-2600

May 24, 1979

Rabbi Alexander Schindler
c/o House of Living Judaism
838 Fifth Avenue @ 65th Street
New York, New York

Dear Rabbi Schindler:

Having read the report by Kenneth A. Briggs in last Sunday's Times with the leader: "Jews Say Christians Back Proselytising", I take the liberty of writing to and differing with you.

For millenia, all Jewish Tradition has been opposed to proselytising. According to Jewish Law and custom, when a gentile sought to be converted to the Jewish Faith, it was incumbent upon the Rabbi to dissuade the applicant and to first point out all the burdens, obligations, responsibilities and sacrifices in embracing and observing the practices and laws of Judaism. After much intelligent persistence, by the applicant, only then may this request first be even considered.

I don't understand why Christian clergy even consider proselytising non-Christians, or why now, Reformed Jewish clergy would consider proselytising Christians. Among both religious faiths, there is so much indifference, apathy and ignorance among their so-called members that the clergy could spend 24 hours a day, all their lives proselytising their own people for a return to their faith.

In my observations, many hundreds of thousands of members of your Reformed organizations know less about the Bible than many hundreds of thousands Protestant Sunday school boys. I would think that in all faiths, there is endless work to be done among their own kind.

Perhaps the admonition from Song of Songs 1:6 is apropos: "they made me the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept."

Very truly yours,


Saul M. Mann

smm:jb

March 15, 1979

Mrs. Selma Benjamin
45 A Sandra Circle
Westfield, NJ 07090

Dear Mrs. Benjamin:

Your letter of recent date has been brought to my attention. For your perusal I enclose herewith a copy of the complete text of my address to the UAHC Board in Houston, Texas. I believe a reading of this will be of interest to you.

I am deeply concerned with the enrichment and enhancement of Jewish commitment by our young people and my address deals with this desire that our programs of education be strengthened. The Outreach to the Unchurched was merely one section of an address which had a number of proposals.

With every good wish, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

45 A Sandra Circle,
Westfield, N.J . 07090

Reform Judaism

Dear Rabbi Schindler,

In an almost contradictory article at the top of the page in the issue of Reform Judaism, you promote the program to win converts to Judaism. Just below this article, you print one bemoaning the fact that one of our Jewish youth has become a cultist rejecting his Judaism.

Does not our responsibility, our first obligation lie in the direction to involve, strengthen and aid our Jewish youth so that they will not become alienated and fall into the inter-marriage syndrome? In my opinion, the money would be better spent to try to encourage our Jewish singles not only to attend synagogue but to be able to meet other Jewish singles.

I have a daughter who will be thirty years old this month, who attends synagogue regularly but who has little contact with Jewish men since she is a teacher and all the men are Gentile. What are we doing to encourage this segment to meet Jewish men? The singles groups are so ill geared to dignified relationships and so demeaning to a young woman who really wants to meet a Jewish man for serious purposes that my daughter is turned off by most of these groups. If the synagogues were to go all out in an effort to give these young "committed" Jews a place to find suitable companions then we would not have to face the unhappiness of inter-marriage.

We do not need to win converts. We need to keep the Jewish youth we have and not let them slip away.

Sincerely, Selma Benjamin

5

January 14, 1979

Dear Rabbi Schindler:

I was both pleased and relieved to read the copy of your address to the UAHC in Texas which you so kindly sent to me.

Pleasure because I now know that my Reform Judaism is going to actively seek out dissatisfied non-Jews who look "to find a better way" with the aid of a program called Task Force on Outreach. I know there must be many people out there who would be grateful indeed if someone took the time and trouble to inform them of the many appealing aspects of Reform Judaism, both spiritually and intellectually. After all, if you're selling a superior product, why not advertise?

The response of the members of Temple Emanu-El, Edison, New Jersey to the article I wrote on my conversion in the temple bulletin, while very positive, proved that there was a definite need for such an article. These "original" Jews were both amazed and mystified that any sane person would deliberately choose to become a Jew. I had expected this attitude from non-Jews, but from the Jews themselves? I am as puzzled of them as they are about me.

As for feeling relieved, I realize that I must be a typical convert. After reading your speech, I discovered that there are other converts who also feel alienated and haven't found the solution to this disturbing feeling. I thought being active in the various temple activities would help, but this feeling of being different somehow persists.

I have been a Jew for almost a year now and I am distressed about an attitude I have been encountering from some of the congregants of Temple Emanu-El. They seem to believe that the Reform movement is a weaker link in the Judaic chain. The Orthodox are somehow thought to be "real" Jews while the Reform Jews apologize for not being Jewish enough. I believe the survival of American Judaism depends to a large degree on the Reform movement, so you most certainly have my permission to reprint my article in your newspaper. Every little bit helps, I always say.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,

Marian Baruka

Mrs. Marian Baruka

877 Jaques Ave, Rahway, N.J. 07065

December 18, 1978

Mr. Alan Caruba
THE JEWISH FUTURE
Box 40
Maplewood, N.J. 07040

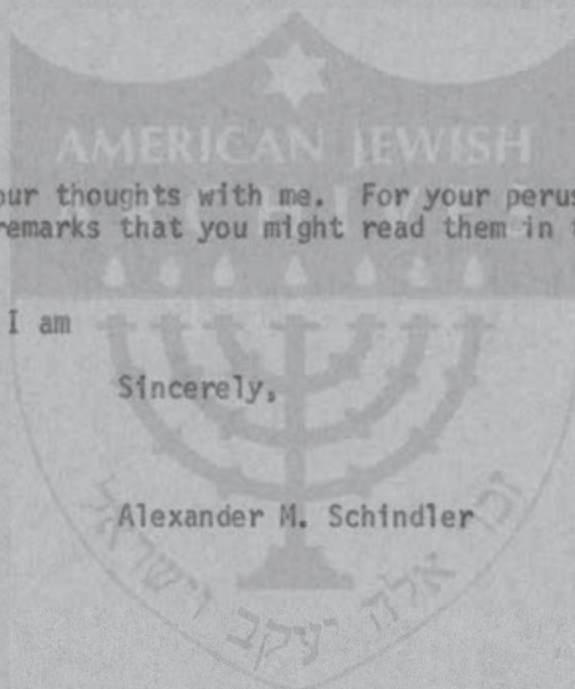
Dear Mr. Caruba:

Thank you for sharing your thoughts with me. For your perusal
I enclose a copy of my remarks that you might read them in their
context.

With kindest greetings, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler



The Jewish Future

By Alan Caruba

December 3, 1978

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

Dear Rabbi Schindler:

I read with considerable interest of your call for a specific conversion effort on behalf of Judaism because, THE JEWISH FUTURE, my weekly, syndicated column has as its central theme, Jewish evangelism.

I may well be the only Jewish columnist openly advocating this and I would be honored to participate in any organized effort you establish.

I am enclosing some of the columns as they appear in Jewish community newspapers here in New Jersey, in Florida, Kansas City and, starting in the coming year, Omaha, Nebraska, and in Alabama. My message is beginning to reach out and involve the American Jewish community and, I'm pleased to say, is touching an enormously responsive chord.

I would welcome hearing from you if I can be of any service. Best wishes!

Shalom,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Alan Caruba', is written over the 'Shalom,' text.

August 17, 1978-

Jewish Evangelism

BY ALAN CARUBA

We Jews have been much in the news these past weeks and months. Hardly a day goes by without reading about neo-Nazis, Soviet dissidents, U.S. diplomatic demands, and Arab threats. As Jews, of course, we read these items hungrily. After all, the life of a single Jew is important in a world where we total a little over 14 million.



We've become an active, assertive people. When neo-Nazis, who number perhaps a dozen, decide to march, we rally thousands to protest. When Arabs request fighter planes, we lobby to keep these weapons from them. Everywhere, it seems, we are responding. Except in one, essential area.

Because what do these headlines really say to us? If we must respond to the exiling or jailing of Jewish brothers and sisters in the Soviet Union, if we must strive to insure Israel has enough military strength, if we must call down the heavens on the neo-Nazis... does this not say that every single one of us is a hostage in a world of non-Jews? And why must that be? Is our mandate only to survive? I think not.

I read the headlines and am reminded how, in 115 C.E., 40,000 Jews were expelled from Cyprus; how, in 1033, 6,000 Jews were slain in Fez; how, in 1290, all of Britain's Jews were expelled or how, in Toledo, Spain, in 1355, 12,000 Jews were massacred.

Now, tell me, what is different about today's headlines? Tell me that this ancient history of our people isn't yesterday's news? Or tomorrow's?

Do you want to know what the achievement of Christendom and Islam truly is? It is their numbers! It is their endless quest for one, new soul and the destruction of all non-believers. Savage, barbaric, civilized or sublime... you may look at it from any direction, but you may not ignore the fact that Jews have virtually abandoned all efforts to propagate our faith. Is it not written, "This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise?"

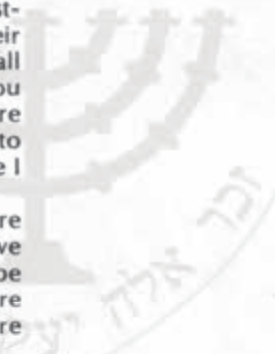
If we Jews can bring together thousands when we are threatened by a pitiful band of neo-Nazis, why can't we bring together thousands more who might wish to be numbered among us, to share our faith? And if still more thousands were to join them, who then would dare threaten us?

A recent Gallup poll revealed that, among unchurched Christians, 21% said that Jesus was just another religious leader and not G-d, nor the son of G-d. Among church-going Christians, an additional 6% concurred with this view. More than a quarter of those surveyed did not believe in the divinity of Jesus, a belief central to Christianity!

The earliest schism among the followers of Jesus was whether or not to preach Judaism to the Gentiles, a view to which Jesus was opposed. It was Paul who broke away from the Nazorite movement headed by Jesus' brother, James, who would not depart from the original intentions of Jesus, a Jew preaching to Jews. And it was Paul who invented Christianity out of an odd blend of Judaism and paganism. The modern-day Christians who do not believe in Jesus' divinity are closer theologically to us than to their nominal church membership.

But what do we have to offer against the \$41.6 million spent last year by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and its five affiliate organizations? *Nothing.* We build beautiful synagogues, buy Israeli bonds and give to the UJA, but we spend not one penny to propagate the faith. It is not enough to be keepers of the flame. We must let its light shine forth. I recommend we start a new movement: J.E.W. — Jewish Evangelism Worldwide. What do you think?

THE JEWISH
ARCHIVES



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THE JEWISH FUTURE

A Jewish Look At Our Numbers

BY ALAN CARUBA

Let's talk about the power of numbers. I have in mind some statistics about the world's religious. Current sources indicate that there are 185 million Hindus in the world today. There are approximately 537 million Moslems. And would you believe an estimated 951 million Christians overall?



Of Jews, there are 14.2 million in the entire world. I call that a remnant and, despite our extraordinary good fortune to have even that number, it makes me uneasy to consider how easy it would be to see the 2.6 million Russian Jews melt into the vastness of the greater population there or the 3 million Israelis suffer the fanaticism of desperate Arabs still bent on their destruction. There are some 300,000 Argentinian Jews living in a world that increasingly resembles Nazi Germany.

Which leaves, for the most part, we American Jews as the only viable hope should any catastrophe befall these others.

You can imagine, therefore, my consternation when I spoke recently with a rabbi conducting, along with several other rabbis, a course for prospective converts. I asked him if he inquired of those taking the course why they sought to become Jews and he replied *he did not want to know*. He went on to remind me that the Talmud urges rabbis to discourage converts, to make it difficult in effect.

Oh, I know that the rabbis want to test the conviction of those who come to them and I know what this particular rabbi was saying when he informed me he was not supplying "instant salvation," but I must frankly say that I have encountered, time and again, a certain smugness and, in some cases, almost an arrogance about the special joy that we Jews know and experience; a smugness that says, "It's ours and we really don't want to share it."

Have we learned nothing from the Holocaust? Have we not learned how cheap Jewish life is in this world? Can we learn nothing from 951 million Christians who would not hesitate for a moment to embrace a single Jewish convert: who actively continue to seek us as converts?

And why is it I repeatedly hear rabbis say that they have their hands full just educating those of us born to the faith as if it is unthinkable to contemplate more than 14 million Jews? Am I a fool to believe that 40 million or 400 million Jews in the world might make it a place where justice and compassion would truly reign supreme?

When I contemplate the innate decency of the Israelis in their dealings with Arab neighbors and citizens, I think that a better world can exist. Despite the Holocaust, I do not believe that Jews are in this world to be its eternal martyrs.

As we consider the vast numbers of other religions, powerful forces in this world who, in many respects, by their very numbers, shape our own destiny, we might well consider our need to grow. One new Jew is a victory to be celebrated. We were made slaves in Egypt when our numbers grew and Pharaoh feared us, nor are we strangers to the sword of those to whom the killing of Jews was almost a sacred act.

I have always had deep respect for rabbis, but they are human too and subject to the vast weight of our history and culture which militates against opening our doors to those who, spiritually, would stand at the foot of Mt. Sinai. G-d called us to Him as a people, not just as individuals. A multitude stood there at Mt. Sinai. A remnant remains.

THE JEWISH FUTURE

Universal Religion

BY ALAN CARUBA

In the extraordinary book, "A History of the Jewish People," edited by H.H. Ben-Sasson (Harvard Univ. Press), there is an early chapter entitled "The Decline, Rise and Destruction of the Kingdom of Israel."



It seems to me that this chapter heading applies in many ways to the entire history of Judaism which, throughout the long centuries, has appeared to be utterly destroyed, yet has risen time and again. If there is a resurrection, it is of the Jewish people who, by all normal standards of history, should have disappeared from the face of the earth long ago.

Indeed, the fine and popular historian, Max I. Dimont, wrote an entire book which he called "The Indestructible Jews" around this theme, seeking to determine if, indeed, there is some kind of manifest destiny for the faith. He concludes that if Judaism is to bring about universal bonds of brotherhood and to revitalize the wellsprings of civilization, then Jews must adhere to Judaism, rather than "yield to the temptation of creating a new civilization."

And so we gather to celebrate the New Year, to reaffirm our commitment to the faith, and to cleanse our souls in atonement so we may be free to pursue our lives in accordance with the laws of Judaism.

Christians viewing us during this period of renewal must wonder at our tenacity. Consider that our history has been one in which we Jews have regularly found ourselves out of favor with G-d. Not only was the Temple in Jerusalem twice destroyed but we were cast out of Israel to wander the nations of the world. Before that, we served a long period of slavery. In our own times we have seen a third of our number destroyed in a cataclysmic event out of which rose, as from the ashes, the nation of Israel, re-born.

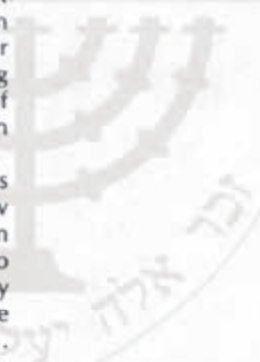
One of the most powerful arguments for Christianity is that we Jews failed G-d with such consistency that He saw fit to send a personal emissary, Jesus. All this might seem quite logical, given the careful reporting of the Torah as to the many times Jews failed to measure up. Indeed, we may be the only religion whose most revered leaders have committed crimes that include murder and adultery. But...our leaders were real men, allowed to have human frailties while, at the same time, selected for their strengths.

However, because Judaism is so human a faith, such failures as occurred were continually redeemed. Jews have always found their own salvation and have fought back from their own frailties and failures to renew the covenant. I regard these as particularly critical times of renewal and reaffirmation.

Jews as a whole and the nation of Israel in particular trouble the world powers. We trouble Christianity and Islam. The presence of Jews in the world, after so many efforts to crush us to nothingness, troubles their souls for, if the Messiah has come, if the Prophet has come...why then, do Jews yet exist to celebrate our 5,739th year?

Along with Dimont, I feel that *Judaism is a universal religion. It is the religion of the world citizen.* Judaic rules of personal conduct are no less true in Israel as they are in the Soviet Union; no less true in Damascus or Cairo as they are in India or China; no less true in South as in North America.

Arnold Toynbee, the great historian, in a lecture delivered to the 1959 World Jewish Congress said, "The future of Judaism is to convert the world. It is an extraordinary thing that twice before in history the Jews have allowed outsiders to run away with their religion and spread it over the world...does not the real future of Jews and Judaism lie in spreading Judaism, in its authentic form, over the whole world?" I say yes. What do you say?

NEW JEWISH
ARCHIVES



Mr. Caruba is the dedicated exponent of an unusual and often controversial theory of the historical background and ultimate destiny of Judaism. He states, "I am a Jewish radical."

The Jewish Future

By Alan Caruba

I was talking with a lovely lady not long ago who, when asked her faith, described herself simply as a Christian. As the conversation moved along, she related that her daughter has been engaged to a Jewish boy, but that the coldness and resistance of his family had blighted any possibility for their happiness. The engagement was broken off.

There is something ineffably tragic in that story, two young people, themselves willing to acknowledge their different faiths, but more concerned for what they had

in common, that what divided them. It is a story of love thwarted and, by that standard alone, it is tragic.

But I hear you saying, the boy had a responsibility to marry withing Judaism, to become the father of Jewish children. And I reply, who says he wouldn't have become the father of Jewish children? Who says his wife would not have become Jewish out of her own need and her love for her husband? Now, let me be understood; I believe that a Jewish man should, where possible, seek a Jewish mate, but finding himself drawn to a non-Jew, he should explore and put forth the opportunity for conversion as an element for their ultimate happiness together. I do not countenance conversion from Judaism.

The same, of course, applies to Jewish women. Curiously, I repeatedly find that Jewish men are highly regarded as husbands and, conversely, Jewish women too often have a very negative image to overcome. But my concern here is for the response that a family and friends might give to a non-Jewish fiancée or wife. My feeling is that we assume such marriage takes the Jewish male away from Judaism without giving substance to the possibility of bringing into our faith a convert.

A letter to one of the newspapers in which this column appears moved me deeply in this respect. The writer gave some steps to be taken to stop intermarriage. (1) The Jew's family should become extremely cold and unfriendly to the Gentile. (2) If that fails and a marriage ensues, the attitude should continue. (3) If

the couple seeks the help of the Jewish Family Service, it should be denied because one half of the couple was not born a Jew. (4) A Jewish executive should discontinue doing business with the man because he refused to support the Jewish Family Service after the denial of help. (5) A rabbi should tell the wife that all the marriage's problems are caused by the fact that she married a Jew. Appalling, isn't it?

Yet this actually happened to the writer of the letter and his marriage to a non-Jew has survived twelve years despite these "steps" taken against them and their love for each other. What is more, he related that "My wife is raising our two boys in a fine Jewish home, and has made many very dear friends of the Jewish faith. She has been active in many Jewish organizations, including president of her B'nai B'rith chapter." But that's not all. "If it were not for the compassion I learned from my Gentile wife, I would have lost contact with all Jewish surroundings. It seems to me that we Jews are better off keeping a poor Jew like myself and gaining a new one like my wife, rather than losing both."

Amen and amen! I applaud this man. I praise his wife. I give thanks to God for the gift of love He bestowed upon them. Of what value is Judaism if we cannot open our hearts to those who are drawn to the faith through the love of one of our people? No, we do not want to lose a single Jew, but neither do we want to inflict suffering upon one who, through his or her love, brings his beloved to the Covenant.

— BROWARD JEWISH JOURNAL —

November 10, 1978



Mr. Caruba is the dedicated exponent of an unusual and often controversial theory of the historical background and ultimate destiny of Judaism. He states, "I am a Jewish radical."

The Jewish Future

by Alan Caruba

Back in late 1972, the New York Times ran an article that was headlined "Jews' Family Ties Are Held Eroding" and late in 1973 it ran another story headlined "Jews Cite Rise In Inter-marriage." In mid-1974 another story said "Conversion Issue Disturbs A Rabbi." And so it has been, year after year, and sometimes I think, month after month.

This issue of intermarriage, family, conversion and all its ramifications simply has obsessed the American Jewish community for years!

Anyone looking at us objectively would have to con-

clude that the problem is of such proportions that surely the American Jewish community is soon to vanish entirely. This is utter and complete nonsense. If anything, we are experiencing a revitalization, a growing identification with our heritage and faith, and at the same time attracting an enormous outpouring of attention from non-Jews as the result of such events as the television series, "The Holocaust," and, of course, the events affecting Israel.

I would very much like to see us put these tired issues to rest and begin to think more positively about the real issues of growth. Not just survival, but growth.

A number of trends in American society have freed Judaism from its long-standing self-effacing stance in the presence of the vast Christian population. First, there was the emergence of the nation of Israel, but let it also be said that Israel has a long way to go before it achieves the solutions, not just of its security problems, but of the theocratic grip which stifles a more generous response to conservative and reform Judaism. Still, Israel is a momentous event.

The Civil Rights Movement worked not only for the Blacks, but for all minorities. As Americans discovered our astounding ethnicity in the form of our native Indians, our Spanish-speaking, our multitudinous nationalities, it became acceptable to be a minority and to be proud of it. Jews have absorbed this feeling along with the others.

Nowhere on the face of the earth is there a better

place to be a Jew than in the United States today! Nowhere do we experience greater, personal freedom in both a physical and spiritual sense. We may visit Jerusalem, but we return to New York, Fort Lauderdale, Kansas, Omaha, Los Angeles . . . home to the United States of America.

When the heart of European Judaism was destroyed in the Holocaust, only the vast earlier migration of millions of Jews permitted we American Jews to insure the seed of future generations and to aid at the critical moment of the birth of Israel. History, though — cruel history, may yet assign us that crucial task if the combined might of Arab nations succeeds and the implacable Soviets root out the Jewish spirit from among the millions yet imprisoned there.

I don't think American Jews have anything to apologize for. It is time to put aside the agonizing, the nay-saying, the chains that bind us to the belief that we must always be supplicants before greater powers.

Ours is the power, and the glory, and the Kingdom of God.

Ours is the mission and the mandate to establish that Kingdom here on earth.

There is no more fertile ground than that on which you stand.

America! America! America!

A New Year is upon us. Let us get on with our Father's work.

Copyright, Alan Caruba, 1978

— BROWARD JEWISH JOURNAL —

September 22, 1978

Wolves In Sheep's Clothing

BY ALAN CARUBA

Two incidents occurred recently that spark this column. I received a letter from "A Christian, praying for you" who told me that, after reading my column, she wanted to relate that "I know many Jewish-Christians, some of whom belong to my church. You make statements you know nothing about."



She neglected to sign her name or provide an address to which I could reply. At the same time, I received a copy of a book, "Evangelizing The American Jew," by David Max Eichhorn, published by Jonathan David Publishers, Middle Village, NY 11379. It is an historical review of conversion efforts from the Colonial period to the present. What emerges from the book is a record of virtual, total failure. I found that very interesting.

As to my letter-writer, if you are reading this, it is important that you understand I do not write these commentaries for Christians, but neither is it ever my intent, nor desire, to offend Christian readers. If the truth upsets you, so be it. And the truth is, there can never be a creature calling itself a Jewish-Christian. Be Jewish or be Christian, but you can't be both! That's like trying to get to Heaven while holding hands with the Devil. You can't have it both ways, no way.

Let's be honest. One of the great advantages of being Christian is to be free of the 613 specific statutes to be found in the Torah as obligations of being Jewish. Just take a look at the basic Ten Commandments. I confess that I wonder what a Christian *thinks* when he reads that he is forbidden to have other gods or to make graven images to depict the Divine One. First he has to contend with the "otherness" of Jesus as a deity and then he has to find a good reason for a statue of Jesus on the cross hanging over the altar in his church. Or maybe Christians just don't think about these things?

At least, though unsigned, my letter-writer tried to share her view of Christianity openly. Despite the historical record of failure, groups do continue to "mission to the Jews" and in more recent times some have sought to mask their true intentions by hiding behind such names as Beth Sar Shalom, which is, in fact, the American Board of Missions to the Jews. Or consider the subtle change in 1975 from the name Hebrew Christian Alliance of America to Messianic Jewish Alliance of America? There's a group in Stony Brook, Long Island, passing themselves off as B'nai Yeshua who are in the evangelizing business. And, of course, we've all heard of "Jews For Jesus" of whom I cannot think of anything good to say.

I have openly favored a return to Judaism by those who are Christian in name only; those who believe in the one G-d of mankind and do not believe in a divine Jesus who is a personal saviour. Evangelism or proselytizing is, to my mind, the mark of a dynamic religion at work in the world, but I do condemn those who are wolves in sheep's clothing. This seems to be emerging as a trend in many missionary efforts and I urge my fellow Jews to be aware of it.

I salute groups such as the Brooklyn-based "J.A.M.S.," an anti-missionary group, and men such as Rabbi Allen S. Maller of Culver City, California, who has written about this latest wrinkle in the conversion business. And I salute those who found new yeshivas where young Jews can grow up with a love of Judaism that burns like the eternal light.

THE JEWISH FUTURE

By Alan Caruba

Copyright 1978, Alan Caruba



The spirit of Camp David was the Holy Spirit, for Jews are expected to overcome their enemies "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts" (Zech. 4.6). I am not discounting for a moment the need for tanks and planes, but neither am I ready to ignore the fact that the entire focus of Judaism is on peace ... and always has been.

We greet each other saying "Shalom" and the word comes from a root meaning which signifies "wholeness," a state of being. Though the original Israelites were a military people, as were all the others of their time, their conquests were for the purpose of establishing themselves in the land which had been promised to them.

The vast evolution in philosophic Judaism has been toward the central tenet to "Seek peace and pursue it." Not merely obtain it, but take all those steps which are necessary to insure it. In a very real sense, the securing of peace takes precedence over all the commandments and laws.

Menachem Begin understood this. Those who traveled with him understood this and it is devoutly to be hoped that Anwar Sadat understands this. "Who is the mightiest of heroes? He who makes his enemy his friend." (Avot De-Rabbi Natan). This was Begin's triumph and Israel's challenge in the months and years to come.

Clearly, the myth of Arab unity has been dispelled by the events arising out of Camp David's achievement. Though the Amalekites have disappeared, the Syrians have proven themselves once more to be "the seed of Amalek," oppressors whose sins against the people of Lebanon run as scarlet as blood. Other Arab nations moved quickly to disassociate themselves, although the Saudis are already tilting toward Egypt. However, let us not think that the troubles of the Middle East will end all that quickly, now that Egypt has opted for peace.

"Islamic pride and honor," wrote Mordechai Nissan in the Jerusalem Post, "will not tolerate (a Jewish State in the Arab heartland) permanently." It may well be that the more rational Arab leaders will prefer to let the pres-

ures of population overcome and "defeat" Israel by sheer weight of numbers from within.

Of particular concern and one which was left to be resolved was the fate of the West Bank. For myself, I am fearful that the West Bank may prove to be Israel's Achilles' heel, the one totally vulnerable place in the overall map of the nation. I am not for returning the West Bank to the control or sovereignty of any Arab nation.

The wholeness of Jerusalem, to me, is essential to Israel and to the Jewish people around the world. Jerusalem, despite the claims of other faiths, is Jewish. Indeed, the holiness of the city was so well recognized that other faiths were compelled to lay claim to it.

It is especially necessary to understand the Islamic claims and Islamic attitude toward war. The history of Islam demonstrates that the faith was spread by military conquest and to this day, the *jihad*, a holy war, remains a powerful element of the faith. Still, Islamic history records that Muhammad himself submitted to arbitration with a Jewish tribe, the Banu Qurayza.

Let us, therefore, pray that the achievement of Camp David will cause both Islam and Judaism to incline the balance of the world toward the side of good, toward peace.

At the same time, as our American frontiersmen used to say, let us keep our powder dry because the frontier of peace has many perils.



Interlude Productions

Box 40, Maplewood, N.J. 07040

By
**BURTON
LAZAROW:**

**Executive Vice-President,
Jewish Federation of Central N.J.**



Proselytizing by Jews: Some Further Thoughts

To proselytize or not to proselytize — an interesting question.

I have been following with great interest, the letters to the editor in response to Alan Caruba's recent article wherein he encouraged an active program of proselytization by the Jewish community. Because of the somewhat mixed reaction to his proposal, I have looked into the matter at some length and wish to share a summary of my findings.

While the rabbis of old had the goal of sharing the Torah with all of mankind, they did not require the conversion of the rest of the world to Judaism. According to Rabbi Meir, because all men could adopt and integrate the universal elements of Judaism known as the "Seven Noahite Laws" conversion to Judaism was not a pre-requisite for earning divine approval. However, commencing with the first proselyte Abraham, those who have proven their sincere desire to become part of Israel and to share its destiny, have always been accepted.

Talmudic, Midrashic, and Responsa writings have generally maintained a positive and accepting attitude toward proselytites although there have been those who have been opposed to the concept of conversion and proselytization.

Objection to proselytism is thought to have originated in the first century of the Common Era when converts were often found to have been spies and saboteurs in the service of the Romans. Josephus wrote that shortly after Christianity began, those who converted to Judaism often relapsed in time of war, becoming renegades, slandering and denouncing the Jewish community.

However, despite the fact that Constantine and his

successors had made conversion to Judaism a capital crime, proselytization was an active program of the Jewish communities throughout the Diaspora. This may be traced to the teaching of Rabbi Elazar and Rabbi Johanan who in the third century separately deduced from different verses, "The Holy One, Blessed be He, exiled Israel among the nations only in order to increase their numbers with proselytes." In Avot de Rabbi Nathan, there is a directive that every Israelite should endeavor actively to bring men under the wings of the Shechinah even as Abraham did. Aquila, a proselyte, reminded those who criticized the act of proselytizing "Is this all the love which the Lord hath given unto the proselyte, as it is written, 'and He loveth the stranger to give him bread and clothing?' By bread was meant Torah, and clothing referred to tallit.

Through the early centuries there were periods where large groups converted to Judaism. In the fifth century, the Kings of Himyar in Southern Arabia adopted Judaism as did the upper classes of the Khazars in the eighth century.

According to Blumenkranz's "Juifs et Chretiens" the Jews in Christian lands in the middle ages proselytized as hard as they could, law or no law, until the disaster of the Crusades. Although our ancestors' oppressors forbade the converting of Christians to Judaism, the practice of proselytizing continued nonetheless, to the extent that upholding the laws required the edict of the death penalty.

Jewish scholars concur that throughout the middle ages there was quantitative proselytizing which is evidenced by the marked anthropological differences between the

various Jewish communities and the resemblance of every Jewish community to the ethnic type of its environment. These medieval Jewish scholars believed that proselytism was of profound religious significance and was the purpose of Israel's dispersion.

From the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries, proselytism declined because the laws of the various states were more rigidly enforced and death by hangings and fire to both the proselyte and those responsible for the conversion significantly increased.

After the Enlightenment there was little active proselytizing although there is evidence that many Sabbath observing sects of non-Jews in Russia converted.

Alan Caruba is not unique nor is he proposing something new to the modern Jew. In 1944, the United Jewish World Union was founded as a Jewish missionary society with many of the congregations established as a result of their activities still in existence. The Reform movement established in 1951, a "Committee On the Unaffiliated" to extend the influence and acceptance of the Jewish religion. In 1956 "The World Union for the Propagation of Judaism" was established which believed that active acts of general conversion were required by the Jewish community and in 1962 another such missionary

society, the "Jewish Information Society of America," was established.

In "The Jews of Modernity" the author Milton Himmelfarb states, "... our imports ... are better than our exports — and, perhaps, better than the average of our domestic American too ... With some rabbinical initiative, conversion might offset our losses by intermarriage or actually produce a gain. And once we try it for demographic reasons we may find that we like it for its own sake."

As for my personal observations on the subject, I welcome proselytes in the same manner as Rabbi Hillel. You will recall the story of the heathen who came to Shammai indicating that he would become a convert if Shammai would teach him the entire Torah while standing on one foot. Shammai sent him away. But, when he approached Hillel with the same offer, Hillel standing on one foot stated, "What is hateful to you do not do unto your neighbor: that is the entire Torah; the rest is commentary; go and learn."

However, before the Jewish community sets out to fulfill its mission to bring the world to Torah, to monotheistic truth, it must first bring the Jewish people together in that same commitment. If we cannot clean up our own house we really cannot ask others to join us.

—September 21, 1978