



THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE
AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES
A DIVISION OF HEBREW UNION COLLEGE – JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION

MS-630: Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler Digital Collection, 1953-1996.
Series A: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1961-1996.

Box
11

Folder
5

Outreach [New York Federation], 1979-1994.

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

NYFRS



May 2, 1994
21 Iyar 5754

Ms. Ellyn Geller, Director
NYFRS Outreach
838 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10021

Dear Ellyn:

Stu undoubtedly told you of Bruce Cole's uncalled for comments at the meeting when I addressed the Association of Reform Rabbis of New York. Not only was he anguished, and rightly so, Allan Kaplan and Edie Miller were present and both have written to me to express their distress. Both conveyed sincere appreciation and commendations for the manner in which you direct Outreach for our NYFRS.

Indeed, when Dru learned of the incident, she, too, wrote to convey to me her great upset with Bruce. She noted you had spoken at Bruce's congregation - in the middle of an ice storm! - and that at that time he had also denigrated the Union's program generally and you personally. I am truly sorrowed by what transpired at Temple Emanu-El as well as the Association meeting. Had I been aware of his actions in the past I might have been able to respond to him at the moment.

It is obvious from comments of others that you are held in high regard by the rabbis and lay leaders of the NYFRS and the members of its Outreach Committee. I am sorry you and Stu were hurt and want you to know of my great distress that a colleague acted so intemperately. You are a valued member of our staff and certainly Bruce's comments were unwarranted!

With appreciation for all that you are and all that you do in our behalf, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

#10 Ask Dru just what I should be telling Ellyn...Does she know what Bruce said...Whatever she wants me to say to encourage Geller is ok by me...



איחוד
ליהדות
מתקדמת
באמריקה

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

April 15, 1994
4 Iyar 5754

MEMORANDUM

To: Rabbi Alexander Schindler
From: Dru Greenwood *Dru*
Re: Bruce Cole's comments about Ellyn Geller

I was distressed to hear about the lashon hara that was spoken about Ellyn on Wednesday at the New York rabbis' meeting. Ellyn does first-rate work in all areas, including the one-on-one consultation with individuals and couples that allows them to find their way into the right program and into a comfortable relationship with a congregation and rabbi. Ellyn has served Bruce's congregation well, going there to speak at services during one of this past winter's ice storms. I understand that he took that opportunity as well, in front of the congregation, to attack both UAHC programming generally and Ellyn personally. It is particularly unfortunate that he chose Wednesday's meeting in front of 50 rabbis with whom Ellyn works on a professional basis to malign her as he did. I'm sure that those rabbis who know Ellyn's integrity and her work were not swayed by Bruce's comments. Nevertheless, it was a very hurtful situation. Is there any way that it can be rectified?

Chairperson
Harris Gilbert

Co-Chairperson
Rabbi Leslie Guterman

Vice Chairpersons
Elizabeth Linkon
Pamela Waechter

Director
Dru Greenwood

*Is there anything that
I can or should do —
to remedy matters.
Ellyn might appreciate
a note from you.
Please draft an
appropriate note of
Dru's help*

Outreach NY 788

December 2, 1993
18 Kislev 5754

Ada L. Resnick
42 Kent Street
Island Park, NY 11558

Dear Ms. Resnick:

Ellyn Geller has just returned from Colorado where she spent time with her mother who is quite ill. It appears that your August letter never reached her and we are both distressed that you never heard from anyone here at the Union. Ellyn is the director of Outreach for our New York Federation of Reform Synagogues and your letter is one she would neither neglect nor soon forget.

Be that as it may, Ellyn will be calling you to discuss your situation. You should know, however, that we have never turned anyone away from our Introduction to Judaism classes or Outreach because of financial difficulties. I am confident Ellyn will provide sound guidance and help you on your path to becoming a formal member of our community.

With warm good wishes, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

cc: Ellyn Geller



11/18 Edie.
Pls follow up
on this
COPY

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

November 18, 1993
4 Kislev 5754

Ada L. Resnick
42 Kent Road
Island Park, NY 11558

Dear Ada:

Thank you for your letter of November 11th. Ellyn Geller is not here just now, so I cannot ask her why she didn't respond to your letter. I can only surmise that the letter went astray. As soon as she returns, and she is scheduled to do so immediately after Thanksgiving, I will check with her and you will hear from either me or from her.

I hope that there is a way in which we can help you meet your needs.

With all good wishes I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

November 11, 1993

Union of American Hebrew Congregations
838 Fifth Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10021-7064

ATTN: Rabbi Alexander Schindler, President

Dear Rabbi Schindler:

I was very interested when I read the article "Reform Jews to encourage conversions" in the November 11, 1993 issue of the Oceanside/Island Park Herald. The article discussed how conversion is being encouraged especially in inter-faith families. I was surprised at how enthusiastic the article sounded because a few months ago I sent a letter (copy enclosed) to Ellyn Geller regarding certain issues including conversion. I never got a response, whether positive or negative I would have appreciated any response.

A few months ago I stated that my financial situation was not the greatest, however it is improving due to the refinancing of our mortgage. My main concern is still the children, they are asking a lot of religious questions that I don't know how to answer and even though my husband is Jewish he needs to be refreshed which is why I am looking forward to eventually joining a temple. Again I ask, Is there a way my children can go to religious teaching and I can go to conversion classes first, and then after a couple of months join the temple?

Please let me know what I can do, I feel empty religiously and would like some guidance.
Thank you .



Ada L. Resnick
42 Kent Road
Island Park, N.Y. 11558
Home # 516-889-5279
Work # 718-330-3684/5437

August 27, 1993

Union of American Hebrew Congregations
838 Fifth Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10021-7064
ATTN: Ellyn Geller, Director
Outreach Introduction to Judaism Classes

Dear Ms. Geller:

A few months ago I inquired about conversion classes and a list of reform temples in my area. I am interested in converting (my husband is Jewish). I began conversion classes 2 years ago but I became ill and had to go into the hospital. I was unable to finish my classes (5 out of 10) so was therefore unable to convert at that time. I am still very interested, I understand I have to start the classes all over again and I don't mind. However, I am very frustrated because I have a strong desire to become a part of the Jewish religion and more important, I feel my children need religious guidance, but I am finding it a very hard thing to do (financially). We do observe the holidays but up until now they have been more of a family event than a religious event. I feel as if something is missing. I am having a hard time trying to understand why the Jewish religion makes it so difficult for people who want to be involved but can't because of finances.

My husband and I both have good secure jobs, but at the present time we are having extreme financial problems. We are working on solutions to our financial problems, as it is we are in the middle of trying to refinance our house to make our monthly mortgage smaller. We think within 8-12 months we will be in better standing financially.

Our immediate problem is that we would like our children to begin religion classes but are finding it impossible. We have been told, in order for our children to go to school we must be members of the temple. At the moment we cannot afford to join a temple, pay for the children's schooling and my conversion classes all at the same time. The main problem is the children, our daughter is 11 years old and must begin classes soon if she is to have a Bat Mitzvah. Our son is 9 years old. They have both expressed interest in becoming part of a religion/temple. What I would really like is for the children to start their religious schooling first and in a few months we can join the temple and I can start my conversion classes (I don't know what needs to be done first join the temple or my converting). We want to become a more religiously enlightened family and will eventually join the temple where the children are allowed to go to the school. Right now we just can't afford to do everything at once.

Reform Jews to encourage conversions

By Sarina Roffé

A \$5 million national program may encourage more conversions to Judaism, according to local Reform rabbis.

"It doesn't envision standing out on street corners handing out pamphlets," said Rabbi Paula Winnig of Temple Sinai in Lawrence.

The push toward Reform conversions was reaffirmed in a speech given by Rabbi Alexander Schindler, president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, at its national conference in San Francisco recently. The organization represents 850 Reform synagogues with a reported membership of 1.3 million.

"He wasn't suggesting we go on street corners and give out leaflets saying 'Come on, be a Jew.' It was not proselytizing. It is making a concerted effort for those who have a touch of Judaism or who have no faith," said Rabbi Brooks Susman of Temple Israel of Lawrence.

"The Jewish tradition is always to turn someone down three times. If they come back after the third time you would accept them. It seemed sort of exclusionary. This is saying 'let's not shy away.' Let's actively say we're here and you're welcome. That's not all that different from what our policy has been throughout the years," said Rabbi Winnig.

In the past, there has been a reluctance by Conservative and Orthodox Jewish leaders to encourage conversions to Judaism. Orthodox Judaism does not recognize the validity of conversions done by Reform rabbis.

"It's no change whatsoever. What we have always done through outreach is to welcome those who are married to Jews yet still are members of another faith community in name, but not in

fact...welcoming them in some aspect into the communal aspects of the congregation, and perhaps interest them in choosing Judaism as a faith community," said Rabbi Susman.

"Because we have pride in what we do, I believe then we should be proud enough to display it to the world," he said. Rabbi Susman said Jewish groups will not be setting up booths at county fairs to recruit Jews, but rather to "deal with a population that is searching or was already one foot in the Jewish community by being part of an interfaith family. If a family is a member of a Jewish congregation....perhaps with greater care and lovingness, we can influence that member to choose Judaism."

Due to an increasing number of families in interfaith relationships, Rabbi Winnig said that the Reform movement wants a message delivered to the non-Jewish family member.

"We're here. We want you. You're part of a Jewish family," she said.

However, Rabbi Philmore Berger of Temple Avodah in Oceanside said he would rather see the money spent to reach out to unaffiliated Jews.

"The fact of the matter is, we have too many Jews living in Oceanside who are unaffiliated. They come to us only when they need us, so we're kind of like a service station. You need to name a baby, to get married, God forbid you need a funeral, they come to the temple, but they should come to synagogue for other things — to strengthen their Jewish identity, by learning Jewish history, by studying Torah, that kind of thing. The money would be better spent in that way. The fact is that Judaism is not an exclusive faith, it's an inclusive faith," said Rabbi Berger.

Outreach
NY

November 25, 1985

Rabbi Robert J. Orkand
Temple Israel
14 Coleytown Road
Westport, CT -6880

Dear Bob:

I am finally getting around to your note in re Mel Zimmer's commenting on my speech. Let me make a few comments of my own, albeit in random fashion:

a/ The pressure to officiate comes from the fact of intermarriage and not from outreach. The pressure on rabbis to officiate would be the same even if there were no outreach program.

b/ Since one of the primary charges levelled against those of us who do not officiate at inter-faith marriages is 'you are rejecting our children,' an active outreach program at the Temple provides the very best defense: 'How can you say that we are rejecting your children....look at what we do here, how we try to involve them, etc.'.

c/ I do believe, marginally noted, at this point, that rabbis who do not officiate at such marriages should spend even more time with couples contemplating intermarriage than they do with couples where both partners are Jewish. And, if at all possible, they should attend the wedding ceremony even though they themselves do not officiate, just to reinforce the argument of non-rejection by their very presence. Haven't given much thought to the locus, but I might be inclined to be a mekil rather than a machmir on that score.

d/ Obviously, there is a paradox inherent in the outreach credo: 'we are opposed to intermarriage, but that does not mean that we need to reject the intermarried.' There is a risk that the acceptance of the intermarried gives the impression of encouraging intermarriage, yet the contrary risk (of rejecting the intermarried) would entail a far more serious risk of losing them and their children for all time to come. Besides, life is full of paradoxes, and we have to live with them, rejecting either of the opposite and seemingly mutually exclusive poles, finding our place somewhere in the middle between them. In social action we have to live with the two opposites of universalism and parochialism; in our newer emphasis on deeper religious commitments we have to swim between authority and freedom. And so it goes. In liberal religion, alas, it can never be either/or. It must always be both/and.

Rabbi Robert J. Orkand
November 25, 1985
Page 020

I hope these comments are of some help to you.

Lots of love.

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

RABBI ROBERT J. ORKAND

November 8, 1985

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

Dear Alex:

I hope you had a good rest after the Biennial; you certainly deserve it! As I have mentioned to you already, this Biennial convention was one of the best ever. I was most proud to be a rabbi serving our Reform movement.

The enclosed is from Mel Zimmers, a member of long standing of our congregation. I think his note is self explanatory. He has mentioned to me a number of times, as have many of my congregants, the seeming paradox to be found in the Outreach program. It appears to Mel, and many others, that Outreach should, of necessity, lead to rabbis officiating at mixed marriages. How, they ask, can we reach out to mixed marrieds and at the same time refuse to officiate at their weddings. This issue is a source of great concern and ill will. I do think that something must be done to help explain the difference between acceptance of mixed marrieds and officiating at the wedding of mixed marrieds. I don't have to tell you the extent to which we rabbis are being put on the defensive concerning this issue. We need help, Alex, from you. We need for you to somehow explain the fact that acceptance and officiation are not synonymous.

I am sure you have heard all of this before, but I wanted you to see what happens each time something appears in the newspaper concerning the issue of Outreach.

I hope to see you soon. Every best wish from house to house,

Shalom,



Rabbi Robert J. Orkand

RJO/psp

Outread

October 10, 1984

Ms. Miriam Margoshes
69 Midland Avenue
Tarrytown, NY 10591

Dear Ms. Margoshes:

I read your letter of October 8 addressed to Terri Sachs which details your abortive efforts to have the by-laws of your congregation changed.

I do hope that you won't be disheartened by this initial rejection. After all you did convince the majority of those who were in attendance and there is no doubt in my mind that once you continue with your good work, you will ultimately prevail.

As you know, the change in by-laws was recommended by the Commission on Synagogue Administration. It has been accepted in a great many congregations and it has not met with any of the adverse reactions which the opponents of this move, in your case, articulated.

I do hope that you will continue your work with encouragement and faith.

With all good wishes, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

cc: Ms. Terri Sachs

*Rabbi Schindler:
For Your Information
Midland Mergoskes*

for file

69 Midland Avenue
Tarrytown, NY 10591
October 8, 1984

Terri Sachs
Director of Outreach, NYFRS
838 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10021

Dear Terri,

Because I wrote to you in May describing efforts on behalf of the Outreach committee at Temple Beth Abraham in Tarrytown to change the by-laws of the temple, I feel that this follow-up may be helpful in dealing with the problems that Outreach committees face.

In my last letter, I told you that a motion had been made at the board meeting to table the suggested change in by-laws, that had been presented by the Outreach committee, until further study could be made on the proposed change. At that point I believed that the issue was dead. I was pleasantly surprised when the president of the temple named a chairman to head a special committee whose sole task was to deal with the issue. That person immediately worked with the president in selecting a fair representation of individuals who are active in temple affairs, and who represented the many different ideologies that exist in our temple. (As you may recall, we house both a reform and conservative sanctuary under one roof.)

The chairman of the committee has a background in law and approached his given task of finding a meeting ground that would be receptive to all members of the committee with sensitivity and tact. He felt that there was not a tremendous difference in thinking among the members represented and that if we could come up with the right language, we could agree on a change in our by-laws that would be receptive to all. Despite the fact that most meetings occurred in July and August, they were well attended.

At the last meeting of this special group, the proposed language for a change in the by-laws was endorsed by all the committee. One member abstained from the vote.

The president of the temple had discovered that a prior vote at the board level was unnecessary to a congregational vote but out respect to the board he presented the proposed change to them two months prior to the congregational vote so that they could give their input to any questions or changes. A change was made in the wording with the consent of the committee.

The congregational meeting was called for October 2, 1984 and a notice with the proposed changes in by-laws was sent to the congregants.

I know that synagogues can be political arenas but I decided that if the congregants really cared about the proposed changes, they would attend this meeting. It was to be held prior to the board meeting; the feeling being that if it was poorly attended, at least the board would be there to vote. Those who are opposed to change in the temple organize; and although they are a small group, they are involved in temple activity and wield power in imposing their thinking on others. To pass the proposed change, a 2/3 vote of those attending was necessary. The vote was as follows: 23 for, 14 against, and 4 abstentions. Unfortunately the majority did not constitute a win for the measure.

You may be interested in knowing some of the comments that were made before the vote. Although I did not get them verbatim, I shall enclose them in quotes.

"The most important aspect of this change is that we must look to the future and to our children's children. We must make every effort to educate these children in the Jewish faith and keep them in the Jewish family."

"It is appropriate that we have this vote at this time of introspection. We seek to insure the survival of Judaism. We must not be afraid to make decisions."

"All that you say in defense of keeping children in our school and in the Jewish family is true. We can make special provision for them as the need arises, but a non-Jew should not be a member of our temple."

"Now that we know that we are not conforming strictly to our current by-laws, we have no other course but to change them to conform with our actions."

"I came to the special committee convinced that I did not want a change in the by-laws. I come to this meeting tonight ready to vote for its adoption because the future of Judaism depends on our willingness to let people in."

"If we adopt this change, we will lose membership. That type of family should not seek to join us. If we lose membership our costs will increase. The proposal will tear the temple apart. We will get publicity. By welcoming the non-Jew into our membership we take Judaism out of our temple. Defeat this divisive action."

"I propose we table this motion for further study."

Following the vote, a motion from the floor was entered that the board obey the temple's by-laws. The motion was passed by a majority vote. (Several board members voted against the motion.)

I have had a few days to reflect on these actions and although I was disheartened, I now believe that for the sake of those members whose children have intermarried and who want to become a part of our temple family, it is necessary for the outreach message to continue. What I have started with Outreach is a sensitizing of our membership to the needs of mixed married couples who want to identify with Judaism, and who want to belong to our temple. It is necessary for them to know that they have a champion on the board who will support them in their desire to remain aligned to the Jewish faith and their synagogue.

Yours sincerely,

Miriam Margoshes
Miriam Margoshes

cc: Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler
Rabbi Bernard M. Zlotowitz

Temple Beth Abraham

25 LEROY AVE. • TARRYTOWN, N.Y. • 914-631-1770

DR. PAUL R. SIEGEL, RABBI
JEROME HOLLAND, CANTOR

NOTICE OF SPECIAL MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION

Please take notice that a special meeting of the congregation of Temple Beth Abraham will be held on Tuesday October 2, 1984 at 8:00 P.M.

Pursuant to Article XI of the Constitution of Temple Beth Abraham, President Jack Barak has called a Special Meeting of the Congregation to consider an amendment to the Constitution. A quorum of twenty (20) members is required for a meeting and a two third's vote of those present is required to pass the amendment (Articles XI and XIV).

Content and Purpose of the proposed amendment. The proposed changes are attached hereto. They will amend Article II to provide that a non-Jewish spouse of a Jewish member shall be eligible for membership in the Temple, and Article IV to provide that voting privileges at Congregational meetings and membership on the Board of Trustees, the Pulpit Committee and the Board of Education will be reserved to Jewish members of the Congregation. The purpose of this amendment is to correct language in the Constitution of Temple Beth Abraham that is inconsistent with the long standing policy of the Temple which would permit a non-Jewish spouse of a deceased Jewish member of the Congregation to continue membership in the Temple after the death of the member.

You are urged to come to this Congregational meeting and participate in the discussion and vote on this important issue.

7 August 1984

RECOMMENDED CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES
ON THE SUBJECT OF OUTREACH

PRESENT CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE II - Membership

(Introductory paragraph)

Any family or person of the Jewish faith 16 years of age and older, upon approval of an application by the Board of Trustees, may become a member of the Congregation. There shall be three (3) categories of membership, each constituting a unit of membership for purposes of voting and the payment of dues and assessments, as follows:

- A. Family Membership - etc.
- B. Junior Membership - etc.
- C. Single Membership - etc.

Members whose applications are approved after January 1 of any fiscal year shall be required to pay only 1/4 of the dues and assessments for that fiscal year.

AMENDED CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE II - Membership

A. Any Jewish family or person of the Jewish faith, 16 years of age and older, upon approval of the Board of Trustees of an application, may become a member of the Congregation. A non-Jewish spouse not affiliated with any other faith shall be considered such a member and welcome to share in the fellowship of the Congregation.

B. There shall be three (3) categories of membership, each constituting a unit of membership for the purposes of voting and the payment of dues and assessments, as follows:

- 1. Family Membership - etc.
- 2. Junior Membership - etc.
- 3. Single Membership - etc.

C. In the event of the death or divorce of a member the surviving or remaining spouse may continue to be a member of the Congregation if such spouse so desires, subject to the limitations set forth in Article IV Section C4.

(previous concluding paragraph deleted from Article II and added to Article IV A below.)

ARTICLE IV - Dues and Assessments

A. Family Membership dues shall be determined on an annual basis by a majority vote of the members present at the annual meeting of the Congregation. Annual dues shall be payable as follows: $\frac{1}{2}$ on or before August 1 of each fiscal year, the balance on or before January 1 of the following year.

. . .

C. Timely payment of dues and assessments and registration fees shall be a prerequisite to becoming and remaining a unit of membership of the Congregation in good standing. A unit of membership in good standing shall be entitled to the following privileges:

1. The right to two votes per family or jr. family and 1 vote per single member at all meetings of the Congregation. . .etc.

2. Eligibility to participate in all activities held under the auspices of the Congregation including, but not limited to, tickets for the High Holy Day Services.

3. Eligibility for election as Officer or Trustee of the Board of Trustees of the Congregation.

ARTICLE IV - Dues and Assessments

A. Family Membership dues shall be determined on an annual basis by a majority vote of the members present at the annual meeting of the Congregation. Annual dues shall be payable as follows: $\frac{1}{2}$ on or before August 1 of each fiscal year, the balance on or before January 1 of the following year. However, members whose applications are approved after January 1 of any fiscal year shall be required to pay only $\frac{1}{4}$ of the dues and assessments for that fiscal year.

. . .

C. Timely payment of dues and assessments and registration fees shall be a prerequisite to becoming and remaining a unit of membership of the Congregation in good standing. A unit of membership in good standing shall be entitled to the following privileges:

1. (same)

2. (same)

3. (same)

4. The above provisions notwithstanding, voting privileges at Congregational Meetings and membership on the Board of Trustees, the Pulpit Committee and the Board of Education shall be reserved to the Jewish members of the Congregation.

Alex-

I thought you'd be interested in this.
Egon Mayer passed it along to me.
For now, please keep it confidential.

Fondly,
Lydia

File
Outhead



CONGREGATION OHEV SHOLOM 5311 West 75th Street, Prairie Village, Kansas 66208 / 642-6460

Rabbi Marc Boone Fitzerman

September 6, 1984

Dr. Egon Mayer
Department of Sociology
Brooklyn College
Brooklyn, New York 11210

Dear Dr. Mayer,

Since your presentation in Kansas City several months ago, I have, in a sense, been working overtime. As a congregational rabbi, I have been educating and advising potential converts from the very outset of my career. Very few things have given me the same satisfaction; nothing has been more deeply challenging. As you said yourself, the process of conversion is never convenient. There is simply nothing convenient about it.

With that in mind, I've used the summer months to develop a proposal which I'd like now to share with you. In brief, I am currently arranging foundation support for a national publication that will address the problems and possibilities inherent in choosing Judaism. Tentatively entitled Ingathering, the journal will do many things. I know that it can serve as a forum for debate, a conduit of information, a network of support, and a means of disseminating strategies of Jewish growth and self-enrichment. What it does in addition, it will do in response to the felt needs of its readers. I, too, believe that mixed marriages can be made into conversionary marriages, provided that we are willing to invest in the process. And I remain convinced that Jews-by-choice will strengthen our communities with the example of their commitment.

As for the aims of this letter, I want to be as straightforward as I can. Grant proposals are many; successful ones are few. The difference frequently lies in the level of communal support. My hope is that you will agree to serve as an advisory member of the foundation that will produce the newsletter. In addition, I hope that I can append a letter of recommendation from you to each of the proposals I submit. If the idea is a good one, I need lots of people to say so.

What makes this difficult, of course, is that we have spoken together only once. I hope that the outline I have enclosed (as well as my resume) solves part of this problem. But I would be happy to provide any other information that may be useful. The critical issue is endorsement. My hope is that my perceptions and aspirations accord with yours. Given the activist tone of your writing, I feel confident in this regard.

With that, let me close with my sincerest thanks. I have the happy sense

of investing time in a project that will ultimately give benefit to many. I genuinely hope that your contribution will help to clear avenues of support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Marc Boone Fitzerman", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Marc Boone Fitzerman
Rabbi

MBF/mr

7940 Juniper
Prairie Village, Kansas 66208

(913) 648-5379 (home)
(913) 642-5878 (office)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Rabbinic Work

- 1980 to present Rabbi, Congregation Ohav Sholom (Kansas City)
- * Designed and activated a full-scale program of congregational education:
 - ongoing seminars -educational newsletters
 - family institutes -tutorials for the gifted
 - mini-courses -family Shabbatot
 - holiday workshops -guides for the perplexed
 - * Founded and co-directed the Conservative Conversion Program of Greater Kansas City; co-authored the Kansas City Community Conversion Accord
 - * Developed a new curriculum for the Kansas City Community Religious School
 - * Pioneered the formation of congregational havurot
 - * Authored supplementary liturgical material for Shabbat and holidays
 - * Stimulated and shaped a mortgage retirement and building improvement program
 - * Generated a significant increase in regular service attendance
 - * Promoted the affiliation of over 80 new member families
 - * Developed an inter-congregational approach to programming for singles
 - * Charted a course of congregational involvement in the community

Camping

- 1973 to 1978 Division Head, Special Projects Coordinator, and Counselor,
Camp Ramah in Wisconsin
- * Supervised counseling staffs of 15
 - * Originated staff workshops on
 - developing group identity
 - programming in informal settings
 - the gifted camper
 - the cabin project and its role in group formation
 - * Developed and implemented a full range of educational and recreational programs over five summers
 - * Authored a new camper evaluation form and a Guide to Camp Construction Projects

Student Employment

- 1979 to 1980 Rabbinic Intern, Temple Rodeph Sholom, Bridgeport, Connecticut (Rabbi Israel Stein)
- Editor/Curriculum Writer, Leaders Training Fellowship (L.T.F.)
- * Developed experimental materials for teaching Jewish literature
 - * Framed a four-year curriculum on classical Jewish sources
 - * Edited Kashrut: Theory and Practice
- Calligrapher

Student Employment (Continued)

1978, 1980	<u>Solicitor</u> , Jewish Theological Seminary--United Jewish Appeal Campaign
1978, 1979	<u>High Holiday Cantor</u> , Olney, Maryland and Greenville, North Carolina
1978 to 1979	<u>Big Brother</u> , ALYN Orthopedic Hospital, Kiryat Ha-Yovel, Israel
1976 to 1978	<u>Gabbai</u> , The Synagogue of the Jewish Theological Seminary
1976 to 1977	<u>Publicity and Art Director</u> , Student Life Office of the Jewish Theological Seminary
1975 to 1976	<u>Home Visitor</u> , the Brookdale Program of the Jewish Theological Seminary
	<u>Tutor</u>
1974 to 1975	<u>Youth Director and Teacher</u> , Congregation Beth Shalom, Oak Park, Michigan
1972 to 1974	<u>Teacher</u> , Beth Israel Congregational School, Ann Arbor, Michigan

EDUCATIONAL RECORD

1975 to 1980	The Jewish Theological Seminary; <u>M.A., Rabbinic Ordination</u>
1980	Bernard and Sydele Citron Scholastic Prize (for the outstanding graduating student of the Rabbinical School); Rabbi Isaac Border Memorial Prize (for creative contributions in the field of programming publications); S. Gershon Feffer Memorial Prize (for distinguished studies in the history and literature of the Holocaust) [J.T.S.]
1978 to 1979	Year of study at The Hebrew University, Jerusalem
1978	Alexander Kohut Memorial Prize in Codes; Vera Hersman Scholarship [J.T.S.]
1972 to 1975	The University of Michigan; <u>B.A. with High Distinction</u> in Near Eastern Studies and English Literature
1975	Phi Beta Kappa (junior year); James B. Angell Scholar; University of Michigan Merit Scholarship [University of Michigan]
1974	James B. Angell Scholar, Class Honors [University of Michigan]
1973	Class Honors [The University of Michigan]

CURRENT AFFILIATIONS

Rabbinical Association of Greater Kansas City (President)
 Jewish Federation of Greater Kansas City (Board of Governors)
 The Kansas City Community Religious School (Board of Directors)
 Jewish Family Commission of Kansas City
 Jewish Education Council of Kansas City
 Central Chevra Kadisha Committee of Greater Kansas City
 The Nelson Gallery of Art--Atkins Museum Friends of Art
 Contemporary Art Society

FYI

Egon

A PROPOSAL TO
ESTABLISH A
NATIONAL NEWSLETTER FOR
JEWS-BY-CHOICE

SUBMITTED BY
THE NEW JEWS FOUNDATION

Table of Contents

Abstract	1-2
Introduction: An Assessment of Need	3-5
The Program Described	6-10
Objective	6
The Proposal	6
Staff	6-7
Method of Production	7
Sources of Material	7-8
Circulation	8-9
Future Funding	9
Content	9
Frequency of Publication/Mailing	9-10
Timetable	10
Evaluation	10
Budget	11-12
Budget Narrative	13-15

Abstract

The New Jews Foundation is an organization determined to ease the integration of converts into American Jewish life. New Jews sees conversion as a positive phenomenon: one possible solution to the crisis of intermarriage and a mechanism for strengthening the Jewish community. At the same time, it acknowledges the difficulties of the conversion process. Potential converts lack avenues of access. Many Jews-by-choice experience conflict with their families of origin and the families into which they may marry. Quite often, questions about legitimacy and authenticity persist long after the moment of actual conversion.

The enclosed proposal flows directly from this assessment of need. As an expression of its commitment to Jews-by-choice, The New Jews Foundation is determined to establish a national newsletter for Reform, Conservative, Orthodox, and Reconstructionist converts and potential converts. This newsletter, entitled Ingathering, will disseminate information about conversion and serve to link converts in diverse and far-flung communities. It will deal directly with issues of legitimacy and acceptance, and offer guidelines, resources, and advice to Jews-by-choice. In a sense, this newsletter will be the Jewish Daily Forward for a new generation of immigrant Jews. It will be connector, advisor, and, perhaps, champion, all in one.

According to our assessment, such a newsletter will take two years to establish properly. Careful preparations must be made, particularly in the areas of publicity and advertising. The estimated cost of two years of operation is \$90,163. Plans for future funding are also provided.

Support for this project is support for the Jewish community as a whole. We are confident that Ingathering will become an established outlet for a growing

body of opinion on the phenomenon of conversion and related issues. And we are certain, as well, that it will be embraced by its target population and by all those who have an interest in the critical demographic changes in American Jewish life.

Introduction: An Assessment of Need

Since the mid-1960s and the rise of the Jewish Federation movement, the American Jewish community has been awash in demographic studies of increasing variety and complexity. Generally speaking, these studies have confirmed the anecdotal evidence of a profound and discouraging drift in Jewish life. Our birth rate has declined significantly and fewer marriages run the course of a lifetime. Jews are increasingly cut off from the life of the synagogue and the rate of intermarriage continues to climb.

Yet here and there there have been reasons for optimism. In 1979, the American Jewish Committee released a study entitled Intermarriage and the Jewish Future. Conducted by Dr. Egon Mayer, Associate Professor of Sociology at Brooklyn College, the study makes several things clear. First, exogamous ("mixed") marriages in which the Gentile partner converts bear the mark of strong Jewish commitment. Converts report a substantial rate of synagogue and organizational involvement, as well as significant levels of ritual observance. More important than that, the strength of this commitment frequently exceeds the commitment of Jews by birth:

[B]ased on what is known about the religious and ethnic life in endogamous marriages, the family life in conversionary marriages is more consciously Jewish, both in religious practice and in formal and informal Jewish acculturation of children.

Finally, Mayer's sample included a significant minority of Gentiles who have not yet converted, and yet were strongly inclined to identify themselves as Jews. As Mayer comments, "Some of these born-Gentile spouses...may be prepared to increase their connections to Judaism, either informally or formally, and to accept a more committed Jewish family life." Clearly, there is reason for optimism.

Unfortunately, the organized Jewish community has yet to respond to these phenomena in a vigorous, concerted, and interdenominational way. According to the most recent figures, 10,000 men and women convert to Judaism each year. Mayer himself conservatively estimates that there are 100,000 converts in our community already. That number is extraordinary by any measure. And yet these same Jews report problems of enormous complexity. Rabbis are unavailable and in-laws remain suspicious. Despite their adjustments, Jews-by-choice are strangers in a strange land. For potential converts, the problems are more serious still. If we are failing the first group, we have hardly acknowledged the second. Meanwhile, we wait for the mechanism with which to cope with these adjustments. And we wait, as well, to say yes to conversion as an alternative to intermarriage.

The bright spots, of course, are well known. The Commission on Reform Jewish Outreach, a remarkable initiative of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (U.A.H.C.) has placed the issue of conversion on the agenda of Reform Jewish life. The Center for Conversion to Judaism, under the direction of Rabbi Stephen Lerner, has done something similar for the Conservative Movement. And in Orthodoxy, programs established to educate ba'alei teshuvah (re-committed Jews) have effectively educated converts as well. These efforts will no doubt continue.

And yet the obvious fact is that more remains to be done. Jews-by-choice need an instrument to explore the enduring issues of conversion to Judaism: legitimacy and prejudice, acceptance and estrangement. They need guidance and support, the means of empowerment and advice in tapping the resources of Jewish communal life. Despite their strengths, they need to feel fully enfranchised by the community they have chosen. As for converts-in-progress, much the same applies. Potential converts to Judaism must be given all the assistance we can

afford to provide. Proselytism is one thing; information and instruction, an opportunity to learn, to experience, to vent, is quite another. That is the challenge of the decade ahead: a method of self-sharing which avoids the excesses of evangelization.

It is this gap precisely that The New Jews Foundation intends to fill. The issues of intermarriage and conversion are intimately related. Progress in solving one problem means progress in solving the other. We believe that the health of the Jewish community depends in part on the extent to which we encourage Jews-by-choice and open our way of life to the examination of those, both married and single, who would like to join us. We need to do both with vigor and both on a national and "interdenominational" scale. The following pages describe the task we have set for ourselves. Methods of evaluation, budget figures, and timetables are included as well.

The Proposal Described

Objective The goals of this proposal are simple and straightforward. With the number of converts to Judaism growing annually, The New Jews Foundation is eager to:

1. cement and strengthen the ties between Jews-by-choice and the communities they have joined
2. provide a vehicle for the fullest possible discussion of conversion, intermarriage, and related issues
3. furnish an avenue of approach for those who may wish to identify themselves as members of the Jewish community.

In all of this, we expect to be part of a larger process that is currently underway: the creation of a knowledgeable and increasingly self-confident community of Jews-by-choice, determined to contribute its best and most serious efforts to the Jewish community at large.

The Proposal In consonance with these objectives, The New Jews Foundation will establish a national newsletter for Jews-by-choice and others who may have an interest in conversion, Jewish self-identification, and similar concerns. Entitled Ingathering, the newsletter will seek an "interdenominational" audience and report on developments touching conversion throughout the Jewish world. Beyond that, the function of Ingathering will be the function of any special interest publication: discussion and debate, networking, and the dissemination of information

Staff In order to keep the costs of this proposal within reason, staff has been kept to an absolute minimum. A single editor-manager will

1. compose each issue
2. edit all articles
3. maintain records and mailing lists
4. handle correspondence
5. serve as a liaison between the New Jews Foundation and its contractors
6. nurture our relationship with the general Jewish community and its agencies

Board members will be involved with all aspects of the project.

They will serve as reviewers, fundraisers, contributors, and consultants.

Method of Production

Copy for Ingathering will be composed and edited on an IBM Personal Computer equipped with a SAMNA III word processing program. This flexible program will make many things possible. Copy will be delivered to the typesetter clean and ready for processing. The same program will print mailing labels and prepare personalized letters of solicitation. Both are costly services when provided by an outside contractor. Finally, the package we have chosen will obviate the need for a secretary or administrative assistant. All correspondence will flow directly from the editor-manager onto the printed page. Eventually, it may be necessary to expand the staff of the newsletter. At the outset, however, the use of a personal computer should insure a reasonable cost per issue and a finely tuned product.

Sources of Material

As currently conceived, Ingathering will draw material from a variety of sources. In expectation of funding, we have invited rabbis, social workers, and professionals in the organized Jewish community to submit relevant material for publication. No fees will be paid for such material. In addition, Burrelle's Press

Clipping Service, a national press search firm, has been tentatively engaged to provide copy for reprinting. Contingent on funding, we will formalize this relationship. Finally, we are assured of a steady flow of material and information from the Commission on Reform Jewish Outreach and the Center for Conversion to Judaism. As mentioned above, our editor-manager will be responsible for maintaining our relationship with these two organizations, and others as well.

Circulation In order to build circulation, we will publicize our project as widely as possible. Shortly after funding, sample issues will go to every pulpit rabbi in the country. An accompanying letter will ask the names and addresses of Jews-by-choice and potential converts who would like to become trial subscribers. A similar packet will be sent soon afterward to Federation offices and the Anglo-Jewish press. Finally, advertisements will be placed in the 100-plus journals and periodicals that make up the American Jewish Press Association. Our expectation is that the publicity thus generated will create an initial base of 500 subscribers. In Month 14 after funding, each of the aforementioned steps will be repeated. Our target figure for the conclusion of the start-up period is 1,000 subscriptions at \$10 a piece. To put that figure in perspective, Sh'ma, a monthly journal which made its debut 13 years ago, now has a regular readership of 7,200 subscribers. All subscription monies collected will be placed in a special and separate account. Funds from this account will eventually be used to support a third year of production, a year in which large

scale foundation support should not be necessary.

Future
Funding

Future funding for Ingathering will come from a variety of sources. Like all periodicals published by non-profit corporations, Ingathering will rely on subscriptions, advertising revenue, and tax deductible contributions. Thought is currently being given to a permanent endowment that will make regular fundraising unnecessary. We fully expect that grant support will be less and less necessary as time goes on.

Content

Most issues of Ingathering will include hard news on issues related to conversion and intermarriage, as well as

1. reviews
2. information on networking
3. features on festivals and modes of observance
4. letters to the editor
5. information regarding material and merchandise of interest to Jews-by-choice
6. interviews
7. answers to readers' questions
8. personal statements by Jews-by-choice
9. articles on issues of general Jewish interest

The first 7 issues will be four pages each. Beginning with the second year of publication, the number of pages will rise to 6.

Frequency
of
Publication
and Mailing

As currently planned, Ingathering will be published ten times a year, monthly from November to June, with combined issues in July-August and September-October. Like all publications, Ingathering will be ineligible for a second-class mailing permit until it establishes a list of regular subscribers. Until that time, the third-class rate for non-profit organizations will apply: 11¢ per piece while the application for third class rates is pending, 5.2¢ after that. Some refund will be made by the U.S. Postal

Service after the formal application for third-class rates is approved.

Timetable During the first year of operation, Ingathering will be published no more than eight times. Months 1 and 2 will be given over to the myriad editorial and administrative matters which must necessarily precede the first issue. At the beginning of Month 3, the sample issue will be sent to rabbis, Federation offices, and Anglo-Jewish newspapers. The two months following will be used to build a copy bank, compile subscription files, and prepare for the inaugural issue. Finally, at the beginning of Month 6, the inaugural issue will be sent to subscribers. Issues will subsequently appear on the schedule described above.

Evaluation In the case of any publication, evaluation is a relatively simple process. If Ingathering achieves a paid circulation of 500 by the end of its first year and 1000 by the end of its second year, we will have met our expectations. At that point, our flow of cash from subscriptions, advertising, and contributions should be strong enough for continuing publication.

Budget

	<u>First Year</u>	<u>Second Year</u>
STAFF		
Editor-manager's salary	23,000	23,000
Benefits	4,600	4,600
EQUIPMENT		
IBM Personal Computer	3,055	-0-
NEC 3550 Spinwriter printer	2,540	-0-
Computer station	200	-0-
SAMNA III (word processing program)	550	-0-
Filing cabinets	200	-0-
OFFICE SPACE	-0-	-0-
PRODUCTION		
Typesetting and paste-up at \$30 per page	720	1,800
Printing	806	2,548
MAILING		
Third-class permit	80	40
Newsletter mailing	330	520
Office correspondence	240	240
PROMOTION		
Typesetting for promotional issues	120	180
Printing of promotional issues	2,031	2,650
Central Conference of American Rabbis mailing list	75	75
Rabbinical Assembly mailing list	150	150
Rabbinical Council of America mailing list	40	40
Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association mailing list	-0-	-0-
Mailing envelopes	410	410
Mailing to rabbis	527	383
Mailing to Federations	34	25
Mailing to Anglo-Jewish press	22	11
Paid advertising in Anglo-Jewish press	2,000	2,000
FINANCIAL SERVICES		
Bookkeeping	390	360
Audit	200	200

	<u>First Year</u>	<u>Second Year</u>
PHONE		
Initial Installation	117	-0-
Basic Rate	197	197
Long distance rate	600	600
OFFICE CONSUMABLES		
Supplies	200	150
Stationary	190	190
Photocopying	200	200
CLIPPING SERVICE	1,785	1,785
TRAVEL		
General Assembly of the Council of Jewish Federations	1,000	1,000
MEMBERSHIPS		
American Jewish Press Association	100	100
COSMEP, International Association of Independent Publishers	45	45
	<hr/>	<hr/>
TOTAL	46,754	43,409

Budget Narrative

Staff	Fringe benefits for staff include Social Security, unemployment insurance, health insurance, and workman's compensation. The total is estimated at 20% of salary.
Equipment	A tractor feed attachment on the letter quality printer will enable the printer to produce mailing labels. This attachment is \$250 and is included in the cost of the printer listed here
Office Space	All of the equipment listed will occupy a relatively small space. No special office facility will be required.
Production	The cost of printing 500 copies of a 4 page newsletter is \$134.39. The amount listed in the first column is this number multiplied by 6, yielding the printing cost for the first year of production. The cost of printing 1,000 copies of a 6 page newsletter is \$245.79. The figure listed in the second column is this number multiplied by 10, yielding the printing cost for the second year.
Mailing	Third-class mailing privileges require that the user pay a one time permit fee of \$40 and an annual user's fee of \$40. For the first 6 issues, the application for a non-profit rate will likely still be pending. Hence, each copy will cost 11¢ to mail, provided that rates do not rise. At the beginning of the second year, we expect to have non-profit rates and the cost per piece will drop to 5.2¢, providing, once again, that rates do not rise. For both printing and mailing, we have based our budget estimates on the

maximum number of copies we expect to mail in a given year.

Promotion	The expenses listed here flow from a desire to make <u>Ingathering</u> as widely available as possible. Rabbis will get multiple copies of each promotional issue, in order that they can be distributed to staff and individual Jews-by-choice. Federations will also get multiple copies, in order to maximize access. Paid advertising will be done on a selective basis, although an effort will be made to cover most communities in the country. Mailing costs for promotion will drop, as described above, from the first year to the second.
Financial Services	Bookkeeping will be done inexpensively on a contract basis. The difference between the first year and the second year figures reflects a start-up fee of \$30.
Phone	The New Jews Foundation expects a long distance charge of \$50 a month for its newsletter. Board members will need to be consulted and some arranging with contributors will need to be handled by phone.
Office Consumables	The figure for supplies listed in the first column is somewhat higher than the normal estimate for non-profit corporations. This figure reflects the fact that this is a start-up budget for a publication. Some decrease is expected in the second year.
Clipping Service	Burrelle's Clipping Service is a national organization which offers a specialized service for Jewish publications. The monthly charge is \$148, with separate charges for each clipping.

Travel

The General Assembly serves as a showcase for many publications, new and well established. The New Jews Foundation hopes that the General Assembly and the exposure it helps to provide will ensure the success of its efforts. Plans are also being made to hold annual board meetings concurrently with the convention.

Memberships

The American Jewish Press Association is the organization which embraces most Jewish publications in this country. COSMEP offers support services and guidance for small-scale publishers, with particular attention to newsletter producers.

Outreach

June 25, 1985

Mrs. Goldie Greenberg
194-10 87th Road
Hollis, N.Y. 11423

Dear Mrs. Greenberg:

Your recent letter touched me deeply and at the same time caused me great distress. Alas, I simply cannot think of any way in which I could be of help to you in terms of your family situation.

Our Outreach Program is remarkable and I am pleased that you were impressed by what you read of it. However, our efforts have been successful because we deal with people who have reached out to Judaism, people who turn to us out of a desire to learn about Judaism and the Jewish people. While you hold a deep desire to have your son and his family turn to Judaism, it will come to naught until and unless your family determines that they want to know about Judaism and turn to the Jewish faith. From what you write, it appears that your son and his wife have no desire and/or intention to change their religious commitment.

Believe me, I wish I might respond to you in a more positive manner. I simply cannot. You might want to discuss your situation with your own rabbi and perhaps that will help you to deal with the pain you feel. We have learned a great deal from our Outreach program and one of the things which has become clear to everyone involved is that the desire of the parents cannot move an individual or a couple to embrace Judaism, the initiative must come from the person or persons involved.

Since you asked about Lydia Kukoff, I am taking the liberty to share your letter with her. I know that she, too, will be moved by your letter and she will feel the same sorrow that I do because of an inability to give you a positive, hopeful reply.

With my warm good wishes, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

cc: Ms. Lydia Kukoff

June 20, 1984

Dear Rabbi Schindler

I have read in the newspaper about Outreach and was very much impressed.

I am Jewish. My youngest son married a Catholic girl 15 yrs. ago. There are two children - girls. His wife is a devout Catholic & I have the feeling that my son converted to her faith.

In 1979 I was invited to go to church for a Communion. I haven't spoken to him since.

My home is Kosher & so is my oldest son's & his daughter's.

If there is any possibility at this time to persuade them to connect to Judaism I would be most grateful. If there is any expenses I will be glad to pay for them.

I know you will do your best. Sincerely,

Mrs. Goldie Greenberg
194-10 87 Rd.
HOLLIS NH. 03043

776-8757

over

Schindler

January 20, 1984

Mr. Yehuda Rosenman, Director
Communal Affairs Department
The American Jewish Committee
165 East 56 Street
New York, New York 10022

Dear Yehuda:

Thank you for your letter of January 17. I am grateful to you for keeping us up-to-date on the research work Committee is doing in the area of intermarriage. Needless to note, I am well aware of your previous endeavors in that area and I thank you for letting me know of your present plans.

The Union is involved in research in this area. We, too, do not wish to duplicate efforts. While it would be nice to get together with you, I would strongly urge that you arrange to meet with our Director of Synagogue Planning and Research, Rabbi Sanford Seltzer. It would be much more fruitful for you to talk with him, for Sandy is most directly involved in our Research program.

With repeated thanks and all good wishes, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

cc: Ms. Lydia Kukoff
Rabbi Sanford Seltzer



The American Jewish Committee

Institute of Human Relations • 165 East 56 Street, New York, N.Y. 10022 • 212/751-4000 • Cable Wishcom, N.Y.

January 17, 1984

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

Dear Alex:

I wish to keep you posted on our research work in the area of intermarriage. As you know, we have done two studies, one in the late '70s of 450 intermarried couples and the other one completed and a report published last year of the children of the original intermarried sample.

Presently, we have completed plans and are proceeding with a third national study whose main objective is to learn about why some non-Jewish partners convert and others do not. This study will also attempt to further elaborate on the differences in religious and communal attitudes and behavior between conversionary and mixed marriages.

I know of your and the Union's interest and work in this area and considerations by the Union of possibly undertaking some study on intermarriage. I therefore wanted to advise you about our plans so that we could prevent duplication of efforts.

I would welcome an opportunity to get together and chat with you about a number of things which may be of mutual interest. I shall phone your office to arrange for an appointment.

I hope this finds you and yours in the best of health. Warmest regards.

Cordially,

Yehuda
Yehuda Rosenman
Director
Communal Affairs Department

YR:bh

cc: Lydia Kukoff
Rabbi Sanford Seltzer

Outread

July 1, 1982

Mr. John D. Garhart
Hartwick College
Oneonta, N.Y. 13820

Dear Mr. Garhart:

Unfortunately, your letter of June 28 reached our office during the absence of Rabbi Schindler. He left for Europe just yesterday and will not return until the end of the month.

The situation you described in regard to your friends is not at all trivial and you need not apologize for writing as you did. You were most sensitive in every way. Were I to share your letter with three or four rabbis I might get three or four varying answers. Without going into detail, I would strongly suggest that your friends be very open and honest with the rabbi who has agreed to officiate at their marriage. The rabbi has a right to know about the bride's background and I hope you can persuade this couple to speak with the rabbi at the earliest. I believe it is their moral responsibility to do so for it is possible that the rabbi has very strong feelings which would preclude his officiating at this wedding. He may still agree to officiate once he has heard the full story but he most certainly is entitled to have the facts placed before him.

With all good wishes, I am

Sincerely,

Edith J. Miller
Assistant to the President

June 28, 1982

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler
838 5th Ave.
New York, NY 10021

Dear Sir:

Since, so far as I know, I live more than fifty miles from the nearest rabbi, I must seek at some distance for answers to questions about Judaism. You find yourself at the other end of that distance because your name appears in the World Almanac. I hope that you will excuse me for bothering you with a question that you may find trivial.

My problem arises from the wedding plans of some friends of mine. The young man and the young woman are genetically Jewish. He was raised in a religious home, is faithful in the Sabbath worship, and strictly observes the dietary laws. She, on the other hand, was raised by parents who were marxist and atheist. Her only religious instruction during childhood was provided by Roman Catholic neighbors and at the age of twenty-four she was baptized a Christian. At present she worships in the Episcopal Church and will continue to do so after the marriage. To date this information has not been shared with the rabbi who will officiate at the wedding, and I am wondering if it would make any difference to him if he knew. In other words, should this be treated as a "mixed" marriage, or do the genes of her marxist mother protect her against the effects of the Christian sacraments?

Perhaps I should add that because the bride-to-be is epileptic they have decided that they will not have children. The absense of children might make the question of mixed faiths of less practical importance.

Finally, if these are facts that would be of importance to the officiating rabbi, and if no one mentions them to him before the ceremony, is there any risk that the marriage might be annulled if they were to surface later?

I don't want to cause trouble for my friends. At the same time I would not want the rabbi to act contrary to conscience. I hope that your answer to my questions will indicate that there is no problem.

Sincerely,



John D. Garhart

Calvin

BARBARA R. MESSNER
8 SURREY LANE
GREAT NECK, NY 11023

no further

June 30, 1983

Rabbi Joseph Glazer
Executive Director
Central Conference of American Rabbis
21 East 40th Street
New York City, NY

Dear Rabbi Glazer:

We are affiliated Reform Jews who agree with the CCAR decision recognizing as Jews children of Jewish fathers (mothers not) who are raised as Jews. We also agree with your comments as quoted in the current JEWISH WEEK. The CCAR action is a necessary step in the right direction, for a variety of reasons, as you indicated.

Sincerely,

Barbara and Arnold Messner
Barbara and Arnold Messner

cc: Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler
President, UAHC ✓

Outreach

December 23, 1981

Dr. Nathaniel S. Lehrman
10 Nob Hill Gate
Roslyn, NY 11576

Dear Dr. Lehrman:

Thank you for taking the time to respond to
Rabbi Roth's letter in the New York Times. It was good of
you to share your comments with me.

With kindest greetings, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

FROM THE DESK OF

NATHANIEL S. LEHRMAN, M.D., F.A.P.A.

10 NOB HILL GATE

ROSLYN, NEW YORK 11576

AREA CODE 516

TELEPHONE MA 6-0238

12/18/81

Dear Rabbi Schindler,

Why should our "light unto the
nations" be hidden under a yarmulke?
I enclose my reply to Rabbi Roth

Best

Yisroel
Thank
you.

NATHANIEL S. LEHRMAN, M.D., F.A.P.A.
10 NOB HILL GATE
ROSLYN, N. Y. 11576
516 - 626-0238

December 18, 1981
Letter# 12/81-2

The Editor
The New York Times
229 West 43rd Street
New York, N.Y. 10036

Dear Sir:

Many of Orthodox Rabbi Sol Roth's objections (December 17) to Reform Judaism's program to win converts are indeed justified. Of these, a few can be reconciled through deeper appreciation of Judaism's historical origins. But others may not be entirely valid.

Largely because of its possession of the Bible, Judaism has always considered itself "a light unto the nations," a "chosen (and, now, 'choosing') people." One confirmation of this belief is the dissemination and acceptance throughout the world of this Book, probably the best moral text ever written. But this spread was accomplished by Christians.

Less well recognized is how Judaism's ethical monotheism is closely associated with, and mutually supported by, the twin concepts of women's sexual fidelity in marriage and viewing the marital embrace as a holy act. The Song of Solomon, accepted into Canon toward the end of the first century, C.E., equated the love of wife to husband with that of Israel to God. A very strong and effective family structure is thereby created, and this too has been disseminated throughout the world, by Mohammedanism as well as by Christianity. (Masculine fidelity to one wife was accepted only later in Judaism, but Christianity espoused it first.)

Because of the seriousness with which Judaism has always viewed sexuality and marriage - in contrast to contemporary mores - someone seeking to become Jewish because of marriage to a Jew might, and perhaps should, be considered as doing so "for no other reason that that Judaism expresses ultimate religious truth." But strict requirements should be adhered to before such applicants are accepted into Judaism.

Rabbi Roth objects to Judaism's reaching out to those "with no religious preference" because halacha, Jewish religious law, does not "sanction initiatives intended to secure converts to Judaism." But if Judaism does indeed represent "a light unto the nations," why not permit those without religious preference to be exposed to, and perhaps even to share, that light?

Rabbi Roth seems entirely correct, however, in criticizing Reform's declining to try to win back Jews "who are embracing another faith." Great rewards are often given to those who convert - my late teacher, psychoanalyst Gregory Zilboorg, M.D., was one outstand-

December 17, 1981

ing example - and unless Judaism seeks actively to win back those being actively recruited away from it, leadership loss and brain drain may result. How erroneous concepts in Freud and Marx increase vulnerability to such conversion also warrants attention.

Rabbi Roth's "supreme missionary obligation to retain Jews within the Jewish community" would seem therefore directly on target. "If we are not for ourselves," as Hillel said, "who will be for us?"

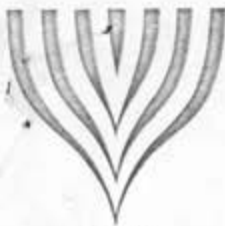
The Reform position emphasizes Hillel's other aspect, "if we are only for ourselves, what are we?" The discussion resembles that of almost 2,000 years ago, between Jews focusing on traditional law and others focusing on ethical concerns. Both were correct then, and now.

Open, face-to-face discussion is therefore needed of the differences between Jewish approaches, reconciling those which can be, accepting those which cannot be, and establishing a firm unity of all Jews to preserve Judaism and democracy, and to combat the lurking dangers of anti-semitism. And as Hillel said, "if not now, when?"

Sincerely yours,

Nathaniel S. Lehrman, M.D.

Dr. Lehrman, the retired Deputy Director at Brooklyn State Hospital, is a nominee for the Albert A. List Chair of Jewish Studies at Harvard.



איחוד
ליהדות
מתקדמת
באמריקה

Outreach

Task Force On Reform Jewish Outreach

UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS - CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN RABBIS
1330 BEACON STREET, SUITE 355, BROOKLINE, MASSACHUSETTS 02146 (716) 277-1655

December 22, 1981

Mrs. Sharon Sokel
243 Spruce Street
West Hempstead, NY 11552

Dear Mrs. Sokel:

I am responding to your letter of December 9 to Rabbi Alexander Schindler in my capacity as director of the Task Force On Reform Jewish Outreach. I know I speak for Rabbi Schindler as well as for myself when I express appreciation for your taking the time to write your letter reflecting your concerns over the future of Jewish survival.

One of the problems with newspaper reports is that the reporter makes the final decision as to how much of what the person interviewed has said will be included in the article as well as what the reporter will choose to emphasize. Unfortunately, this would appear to be the problem with the article from which you quote that appeared in the New York Times. The goals of the Task Force On Reform Jewish Outreach are far more comprehensive than reaching out to non-Jews. This is not to minimize that particular component of our program. You would be amazed, Mrs. Sokel, to discover how many non-Jews, not to speak of born Jews, labor under the misconception that Judaism is a private club restricted to those whose Jewishness is an accident of birth. Welcoming the religiously non-preferenced in a dignified and sensitive fashion is an endeavor which is in keeping with historic Jewish practice.

However, as I previously indicated, the thrust of our Outreach program is also directed to an intensification of efforts to more fully involve born Jews in the synagogue. Permit me to quote from the formal resolution

Chairman
David W. Belin

Co-Chairman
Rabbi Sheldon Zimmerman

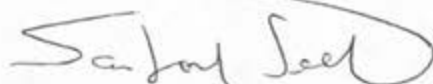
Director
Rabbi Sanford Seltzer

passed by the Board of Trustees of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations in 1978: "To intensify our formal and informal Jewish educational programs within the Reform synagogue and the Reform Jewish movement to stimulate positive and knowledgeable Jewish identification."

The various segments of our Outreach program are not mutually exclusive. If anything, they complement each other. We have already had graphic evidence indicating conclusively that born Jews who have been alienated from the practice of Judaism or who, at best, are luke warm in their activities discover in the decisions of non-Jews to convert to Judaism a new incentive to reexamine their own lack of commitment and identification. Nor should the increasing percentage of non-Jews married to born Jews who determine to become Jewish in their own right and transmit Judaism to their children be under emphasized. The goal of encouraging non-Jewish partners of born Jews to become Jewish as well as the effort to ensure the Jewishness of their children are undertakings of extreme importance.

In conclusion, let me again stress that we are neither unmindful of nor prone to lightly dismiss the needs of Jewish teenagers, the indifference of some of their parents to Judaism nor any other considerations potentially affecting the future of the Jewish people. On the contrary, the programs we have set in motion have been designed to hopefully respond to and achieve what you and so many others ardently wish, namely the preservation of a proud, knowledgeable and identified Jewish community.

Sincerely yours,



Rabbi Sanford Seltzer

RSS:dan

Edith J. Miller

December 15, 1981

Rabbi Sanford Seltzer

Will you please respond to Mrs. Sokel's letter in behalf of Alex and please share a copy with us.

Many thanks.

*Send to Seligson
L. Curran*

243 Spruce Street
West Hempstead, N.Y. 11552
December 9, 1981

Rabbi Alexander Schindler, President
Union of American Hebrew Congregations
838 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10010

Dear Rabbi:

It was with great disbelief that I read an article in The New York Times today entitled, "Reform Jews to Seek Conversion of Non-Jews." I assume you are familiar with its contents.

What concerns me is the article's statement that because of the rising rate of intermarriage "among other factors" American Jews are re-considering conversion. "Other factors" - dismissed so lightly, should really be given more attention. What are the "other factors"? I believe one factor to be considered very seriously is the alarming rate at which we are losing our Jewish teenagers to cults, missionaries and indifference to Judaism on the part of their parents.

Instead of looking to non-Jews to make up for our lost numbers, wouldn't it be wiser to try and regain our own lost people? To paraphrase you, Rabbi Schindler, propose a massive effort to transform the attitude of our community from a resigned, embarrassed acquiescence into a determined, emphatic counteraction toward reclaiming our own.

Yours truly,

(Mrs.) Seligson Seligson

Outreach

December 16, 1981

Mrs. Sara L. Henegy
313 De Forest Road
Syracuse, NY 13314

Dear Mrs. Henegy:

I have your recent letter and want to thank you for sharing your thoughts with me. Please know that your words have been heard and that your concerns are shared by many.

The participation of rabbis in mixed marriages is an emotional matter for rabbis as well as laity. It is not a simple matter and, as with so many situations, there are varying approaches. You will be interested in learning that in the months ahead the Task Force on Reform Jewish Outreach will seek to deal with this very concern. It will not be an easy task for views on the subject are not divided among rabbis and lay people, there are strong feelings as to yea or nay by laity as well as the rabbinate.

With appreciation and every good wish, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

Dec 12, 1888
Dear Rabbi
Thank you for shining thoughts
with me. Your words are heard
I hope you are a listener etc
Your Convention in Boston, Mass.
unfortunately included those
that are offends or between
of the Rabbinate.
I am merely a Parent of
a children of a mixed marriage.
I was indignant that our
Rabbi would not marry
(ceremony) our Daughter and
present son-in-law. Our Daughter
requested a Rabbi - our son-
in-law is an agnostic of
three generations. His Grandfather,
a Professor, I believe had been
an author of the agnostic philosophy.
The point I make is that
he was a perfect candidate for
Judaic following and that

opportunity was denied. I
do not approve of Conversion
for I believe it is unfitting
for one to try to change to
person's beliefs if they are
high in moral character.

I do feel if a bride is
Jewish and has declared
her beliefs which will be
continued in her children
it is the human duty of a
Rabbi to perform the Ceremony
All the Phdonic about setting a
date and Conversion is of
less value than those that
are totally dedicated to
observe Jewish life and in
a harmonious marriage there
is no problem in that intermarriage.
When there are Rabbin performing such
ceremonies it does create a lack of
respect for one's religion.

Sincerely yours,
Sara Lerner Harris



איחוד
ליהדות
מתקדמת
באמריקה

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

NEW YORK FEDERATION OF
REFORM SYNAGOGUES

October 18, 1979

Patricia A. Sullivan
299 Pearl Street
New York, New York 10021

Dear Patricia Sullivan,

As you know Rabbi Schindler has shared with me the letter you wrote him. I feel confident that I can be of some help to you.

Won't you telephone me to make an appointment? Your problem is one that we should discuss together, if you can manage it.

With all greetings to you and a warm Shalom,

Yours cordially,

Elizabeth V. L. Stern

Mrs. Richard M. Stern, Administrator
Classes for Prospective Converts to
Judaism

EVLS/leb

September 19, 1979

Ms. Patricia A. Sullivan
299 Pearl Street
New York, N.Y. 10021

Dear Ms. Sullivan:

It was thoughtful of you to write after seeing me on the Donahue Show. I am grateful for your warm comments and I do hope the UAHC will be able to provide guidance and assistance to you and your fiancée.

I am taking the liberty of sharing your letter with Mrs. Richard M. Stern of the UAHC staff. She directs our New York area Introduction to Judaism program. While this program is geared primarily to those who seek to embrace Judaism, we would welcome students, either non-Jewish or Jewish, who are eager to learn more about the Jewish people and our faith. Mrs. Stern is a very sensitive and understanding person and I would urge that you seek to meet with her to discuss your personal situation.

With every good wish, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

cc: Mrs. Richard M. Stern

MEMORANDUM

From Rabbi Allan L. Smith
To Rabbi Alexander Schindler
Copies
Subject OUTREACH OR BIENNIAL PRESENTATION

Date August 13, 1981

*cc DWB
S.S. 7/21/81*

This summer we did a number of statistically valid surveys of our teenage population. The results are most interesting.

300 individuals were surveyed. They were randomly chosen. However, their geographic distribution does not reflect the exact Jewish geographic distribution.

Most interesting: Of all individuals surveyed who have siblings who have married in the past five years, 68% of these siblings married individuals who were born non-Jewish. Of that 68% only 35% converted to Judaism prior to marriage. Of the total group 88% of both parents were born Jewish.

Of the group surveyed, all were very active in TYG. 90% of all parents were also affiliated in a very active manner. There were more rural and midwestern individuals (people out of the Northeast, Florida, Illinois, Ohio, Michigan and California concentrations) than would be the true distribution factors. We also do not have any statistic revealing whether the siblings were active or not. Overall, however, it shows that in Reform affiliated families the level of marriage to individuals born non-Jewish is extremely high. The need for outreach to assure the Jewish character of these families cannot be overstated. If even a part of this is accurate, the very nature of the American Jewish Family of the year 2,000 will be so very essentially different from today.

Further, based on the latest surveys, it is clear that almost 10% of the American Jewish community consists of Jews who have immigrated to the United States since 1970. It is clear that most of the Israelis in this group came after 1973. What seems apparent is that the level of immigration to the United States from the Soviet Union (so long as Russia does not close the doors) and from Israel will continue to be very high during the next ten years. In addition, there is some significant immigration from South Africa and potential significant immigration from South America.

The American Jewish community of 2,000 will surely look different from that of today. It is with this in mind and our basic success with the Russians, French, Dutch, English and Israeli kids at Kutz this summer that international outreach should be worked upon and expanded over the next few years.

Thought you might see some use for this information.

AS

Allan



Union of American Hebrew Congregations
838 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021 (212) 249-0100

7.9.1.

16 West 16 Street
New York, N.Y. 10011
9 May 1981

Rabbi Daniel B. Syme
National Director of Education
Union of American Hebrew Congregations
838 Fifth Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10021

Dear Rabbi Syme:

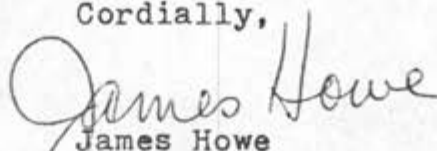
Thank you for your nice letter of 6 May. I will be out of town from tomorrow through the 19th, and will give you a call upon my return. I am interested in meeting with you, too, and look forward to setting up a date.

The summary of my Jewish background is brief. I converted to Judaism over two years ago. I am an active congregant at the Village Temple where I serve on the Board of Trustees. After taking the conversion course at UAHC, I became very interested in Hebrew and continued to study on my own at my temple and NYU. I also spent a month in Israel studying at Ulpan Akiva in Netanya. It is my hope to live in Israel for a year sometime in the not-too-distant future and to improve my Hebrew to a point where I can write a children's book in that language. To answer your other question, to date I have not written anything for a Jewish audience.

I grew up in a religious environment, being the son of a Protestant minister. I was very active in religious education and youth groups in that setting.

Again, I am looking forward to meeting and talking with you further.

Cordially,


James Howe

cc: Rabbi Bernard Zlotowitz

Patricia

June 19, 1981

Mrs. Richard M. Stern, Coordinator
NYFRS Introduction to Judaism Program
838 Fifth Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10021

Dear Evaloe:

Many thanks for sharing with me your report for the 1980-81 academic year. It is an impressive report and I read it with great interest and admiration.

Evaloe, your stewardship of this important aspect of our program is indeed a labor of love. All of us of the Union are deeply grateful for the dedication and devotion you give to this area of our work. You have much reason to be proud of all you have accomplished.

With warmest regards to you and Richard, in which Rhea joins, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

MEMORANDUM

From Mrs. Richard M. Stern, Conversion

Date 6/10/81

To Rabbi Alexander Schindler and Rabbi Bernard Zlotowitz

Copies

Subject

*Write flowers
admiration
etc
she has
reason
for
pride*

Dear Friends,

Allow me to make this informal report on the progress of our "Introduction to Judaism" classes. From September 8, 1980 through August 31, 1981, the current academic year, we shall have held fourteen classes of twelve weekly lessons per class. In previous years we had conducted just ten classes of nine lessons per class. We have tried to keep the registrations down to twenty students per class, who, with their Jewish partners, fill our chapel to such capacity that chairs must be brought in to augment the seating. Our instructors are ordained Rabbis or fifth year Rabbinical students who have been recommended to me by Dean Paul Steinberg of the H.U.C.-J.I.R.

We provide a printed course of study which includes reading lists. These materials have been prepared by me in consultation with a "cabinet" of Rabbis, and we also provide text books and other reference materials. An interview between the candidate with a Jewish partner, (if there is one), and the sponsoring Rabbi is reported to me by the Rabbi with his recommendation for the candidate's admission to the class.

Our fee for the course includes:

- 1) The services of the sponsoring Rabbi
- 2) All textbooks and reference books
- 3) Attendance of the candidate and Jewish partner
- 4) Attendance certificate on the conclusion of all twelve lessons.

The teaching Rabbi receives \$600.00 as reimbursement. We also have requests for private instruction. The student pays \$425.00 for this, including books, of which we pay \$300.00 to the Rabbi.

We find that about 15% of our students are not interested in marriage at all. Most of our students convert to Judaism within a few weeks of completing the course, and former students send us many notes of appreciation. A recent study by Mrs. Barkan shows that the representative student is an adult in the upper twenties, who has had at least a college education. Single parents who convert to Judaism are eager to involve their children in the Jewish religion and its community life.



(2)

I am happy to report that Rabbi Karen Fox is offering a course in Washington Township, New Jersey, to begin on Tuesday, July 7. She is using all our materials, and a teacher who has had experience with us. We are taking care of all the administrative details, and look forward to additional classes in the surrounding areas.

We have many inquiries from all parts of the United States and even from Europe as to the details of our procedures. Of course we have many questions growing out of the various marital situations, and many expressions of gratitude that Reform Judaism can help and is eager to help. The relation I have with these many people and their problems has given me a rich education and made me very grateful that we can be of assistance.

I must express my appreciation of Mrs. Lou-Ellen Barkan's understanding, patience, and warm cooperation in all that we do.

Yours cordially,

Elizabeth V.L. Stern

Professor Elizabeth V.L. Stern

I hope you will take the time to run through the enclosed two "evaluations" by students, writing at the end of the course. It gives me grounds to say that they are representative.
E.S.

EVALUATION OF THIS COURSE

- 1) When you started this course, what were the 3 questions you most wanted to have answered?

I HAD BEEN CONSIDERING THE IDEA OF ADOPTING JUDAISM FOR QUITE A WHILE, BUT HAD NEVER PURSUED IT. AFTER SOME PRELIMINARY READING, I CONSULTED WITH A RABBI, STATING I WANTED TO LEARN MORE SO THAT I COULD EVENTUALLY COME TO A DECISION ABOUT CONVERTING. HE SUGGESTED THIS COURSE. SO I CAN'T SAY THERE WERE SPECIFIC QUESTIONS. OBVIOUSLY I WANTED TO LEARN ABOUT JUDAISM - HISTORY, DOCTRINES ETC. BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY I WANTED TO LEARN PRACTICES - WHAT DO DIFFERENT CEREMONIES & SYMBOLS MEAN OR SIGNIFY. HOW DO YOU BECOME A "GOOD JEW" - WHAT IS REQUIRED OF ME IF I DECIDE TO BECOME JEWISH? AND OF COURSE, BEING OF CHRISTIAN BACKGROUND, I WANTED TO ASK "WHAT DOES A JEW BELIEVE?"

- 2) Were these points covered to your satisfaction?

OF COURSE THE BACKGROUND OF JUDAISM WAS THOROUGHLY COVERED, HISTORY, HOLIDAYS, STRUCTURE ETC. ESPECIALLY BY THE READING LIST. I THINK THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CEREMONIES & SYMBOLS WAS COVERED RATHER WELL. (IT WAS IMPORTANT TO LEARN, FOR A MINOR EXAMPLE, THAT A MEZUZAH IS NOT SOME MYSTICAL THING BUT JUST A PHYSICAL REMINDER) - STUDY OF SABBATH & HOLIDAY PRACTICES WAS PARTICULARLY ENLIGHTENING - BUT ALL OF THIS MEANS NOTHING WITHOUT CONTINUING PRACTICE IN YOUR HOME & AT THE SYNAGOGUE - THAT'S THE MORE IMPORTANT CLASSROOM.

AS TO "BELIEFS" OR CREED - THROUGH THE READINGS I'VE LEARNED THAT THAT IS OF SECONDARY IMPORTANCE - BUT I DON'T RECALL DISCUSSING THIS ISSUE IN CLASS.

- 3) What, if anything would you like added to, elaborated on, or omitted?

AT THE BEGINNING OF THE COURSE, A MORE DETAILED DISCUSSION OF CONVERSION, OF ATTITUDES TOWARD CONVERSION WOULD HAVE HELPED. ALSO, A LITTLE MORE GENERAL OVERVIEW OF JUDAISM & THE OBJECTIVES OF THE NEXT 12 WKS.

CANNOT THINK OF ANYTHING THAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN OMITTED.

- 4) Now, as you are completing this course, what (if anything) do you want to know more about?

I HAVE NOT MADE A DEFINITE DECISION ABOUT CONVERTING. I THINK THAT IT IS TOO IMPORTANT A DECISION TO RUSH INTO FOR POSSIBLY THE WRONG REASONS - THE MAIN QUESTION TO BE SURE OF FOR ME: CAN I BE A JEW, AND FEEL FULFILLED AS A PRACTICING JEW - BOTH IN MY HOME & COMMUNITY - AM I GENUINELY IN MY HEART READY TO ADOPT THESE BELIEFS, PRACTICES & WAYS OF LIFE? AND AM I READY TO HOLD TO THESE IDEAS AND WORK TO OBEY THESE MITZVOT FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE? THIS WILL

- ONLY COME THROUGH CONTINUED PRACTICE & STUDY - I WANT TO LEARN MORE HEBREW SO I CAN BE MORE COMFORTABLE WITH THE SERVICES. WE WILL CONTINUE TO CELEBRATE SABBATH & HOLY DAYS ADOPTING SLOWLY NEW CUSTOMS & PRACTICES. GRADUALLY I'M SURE I WILL ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS -
- 5) Please discuss what you consider a) the strong points b) the weak points of this course.

STRONG POINTS: ENJOYED THE READING LIST - MIXTURE OF VERY ELEMENTARY READING WITH MUCH MORE DIFFICULT WORKS - SOME "TRADITIONAL" THINGS - SOME VERY MODERN FEELING. HEBREW BOOKS - VERY GOOD. 12-WKS WAS GOOD - WOULD HAVE FELT CHEATED WITH ONLY 8 AND COULD PROBABLY CONTINUE ANOTHER 2-3 WKS, LONGER.

WEAK POINTS: BAD SET-UP FOR CLASS - NO FORUM FOR DISCUSSION - WE MIGHT HAVE GAINED ALOT MORE BY SHARING COMMENTS, AND BEING ABLE TO SEE EVERYONE ELSE.

- 6) What, if any, suggestions have you for changes in the course?

IT SEEMS IT WOULD HAVE HELPED FOR THE INSTRUCTOR TO KNOW WHERE EACH PROSPECTIVE CONVERT "WAS COMING FROM" AT THE BEGINNING. WHERE I WAS THERE WITHOUT HAVING MADE ANY DECISIONS; I THINK THERE WERE SEVERAL PEOPLE THERE WHO HAD ALREADY DECIDED TO CONVERT AND WERE JUST TAKING THE COURSE AS A REQUIREMENT. DISCUSSING ALL OF OUR REASONS FOR BEING THERE WOULD HAVE AIDED HIM IN THE DIRECTION & CONTENT OF THE COURSE - AND HEARING OTHER PEOPLE DISCUSS HOW THEY APPROACH THESE DECISIONS MIGHT HELP ME - BUT THE WHOLE ISSUE OF WHY WE ARE HERE SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN SKIRTED. IT ALSO UPSET ME THAT SO MUCH OF THE LECTURE IN CLASS WAS REITERATION OF THE READING, RATHER THAN ELABORATION AND DISCUSSION OF MATERIAL WE WERE SUPPOSED TO HAVE READ.

- 7) How much, if at all, did you use the bibliography on pages 14 through 19?

THE BASIC READING LIST WAS MORE THAN ENOUGH TO KEEP ME BUSY - BUT I'M SURE I WILL REFER TO IT MANY TIMES IN CONTINUED STUDY ON MY OWN.

8) What about your teacher did you find especially effective? Why?

RABBI MATH IS AN EXTREMELY HONEST, SINCERE PERSON - HIS PERSONALITY & TEACHING SEEMED TO EMIT A WONDERFULLY WARM HUMANITARIANISM. I THINK HE WAS THERE WITH THE GENUINE DESIRE TO HELP US ALONG THIS ROAD OF VERY DIFFICULT TRANSITION & DECISION MAKING, WITHOUT GIVING US A "HARD-SELL" TREATMENT. YET HE WAS NOT AFRAID TO VOICE HIS OPINIONS ON ISSUES - TEMPERED WITH THE OPPOSING VIEWPOINTS -

I AM PLEASED TO HAVE HAD AN INSTRUCTOR THAT HOLDS MANY RITUALS & MORE TRADITIONAL PRACTICES AS IMPORTANT - AND YET UPHOLDS THE "REFORM" IDEALS.

JUST AN ADDED NOTE:

WE ADOPTED A CUSTOM OF RELITENING THE SHMA AT THE BEGINNING OF EACH CLASS (RABBI MATH'S IDEA) - I OBJECTED TO THIS - IT WAS NOT TREATED AS PRACTICE - IT BECAME A RELIGIOUS STATEMENT, AND I WAS NOT IN A POSITION YET TO HONESTLY ADOPT THAT STATEMENT - IT PUT ME IN AN ODD POSITION -

EVALUATION OF THIS COURSE

1) When you started this course, what were the 3 questions you most wanted to have answered?

- 1- Why don't Jews believe Jesus is the Messiah
- 2- Why are the Orthodox so anti-conversion and anti-converts.
- 3- Are you considered a "bad" Jew if you don't keep beliefs like kosher and observe the Sabbath - does a convert always have to do more

2) Were these points covered to your satisfaction?

Yes, except #1. Rabbi Math was very gentle in explaining the differences between Orthodox and Reform.

3) What, if anything would you like added to, elaborated on, or omitted?

In the beginning of the class, 12 weeks seemed very long. Now, I see, it is too short, and can really only be a general introduction to the subject. Rabbi Math made what could have been dry and tedious very interesting. His enthusiasm and compassion for us was wonderful.

- 4) Now, as you are completing this course, what (if anything) do you want to know more about?

I would like to know the Bible more. In my own reading I am learning these stories, but would like to have had them elaborated on in class.

- 5) Please discuss what you consider a) the strong points b) the weak points of this course.

(The
adder
book) The weak point is the Hebrew. This book was fine, but it's a hard language! The best point was being amongst other converts and hearing their problems and triumphs.

- 6) What, if any, suggestions have you for changes in the course?

As I keep saying, Raber Math was a delight. Maybe some Jewish women in the community could speak to a class - (one who is kosher - one who isn't) I feel the class wasn't informed about what is there for them in the Temple - are there groups of young couples - volunteers for local charity?

- 7) How much, if at all, did you use the bibliography on pages 14 through 19?

I used it - but found the books issued were fine along w/ what I found browsing in either Jewish bookstores or regular ones.

8) What about your teacher did you find especially effective? Why?

Rabbi Mather is a very special person. He is very at ease w/ his beliefs and fits them into a life that is also the life of a young person in NY. He has the ability to teach with true interest and, although surely very busy, always has time to listen and counsel. He also loves the Hebrew language, the customs of Judaism and the holidays, which he explained in such a way that most of us were excited to practice them. Although with Reform Judaism one is free to choose the degree of practice, Rabbi Mather suggests doing that little bit more so we could truly experience the customs. He was very open in discussing what he personally does on the Sabbath^{and} the holidays. He was very strong in his discussion of having us quit Christmas cold-turkey. Inasmuch as many Jews practice "something" at Christmas, I thought he was brave to suggest this. He did not speak against the Orthodox as I have heard another Rabbi do, but

explained their degree of belief with understanding and respect. He is very sensitive to people's feelings and made women feel as though we are ~~not~~ included in the Reform view, without criticising the Orthodox for their view of women. He explained it so that I, at least, saw that the Orthodox are not against women, but see them in a special way. He is not without humor and truly made the classes something to look forward to, rather than a situation to be dreaded.

~~7058~~

1

1

Very sincerely,
Gertrude J. Lind

Gertrud J. Lind
635 Eastbrooke Lane
Rochester, N. Y. 14618

Gertrud J. Lind
635 Eastbrooke Lane
Rochester, N. Y. 14618

October 9, 1979

Mrs. Gertrud J. Lind
635 Eastbrooke Lane
Rochester, N.Y. 14618

Dear Mrs. Lind:

It was thoughtful of you to write after seeing the Donahue Show on which I appeared. I am grateful to you for sharing your thoughts with me. Your comments and your commitment touched me deeply.

Rabbis Miller and Gold are fortunate in having you as a member; I am certain you bring many fine qualities of heart and mind and understanding to your congregation. So many of our people cannot comprehend the concept of the rabbi searching his or her own conscience in regard to the performance of intermarriage. I agree with you fully on this point as well as other comments in your letter.

From time to time we will share with the readers of REFORM JUDAISM, the UAHC newspaper which goes to every member-family of every member-congregation, excerpts from letters on our Outreach Program. You have articulated some very cogent points very beautifully and it is my hope you will grant us permission to include some of your comments when we prepare such a report.

Again, my sincere thanks for your having shared your thoughts and concerns with me. With every good wish to you and your dear ones for a healthy, happy and fulfilling New Year, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

cc: Rabbi Judea B. Miller
Rabbi Rosalind A. Gold

sh

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

Dear Rabbi Schindler,

I am a Convert to Judaism and have been following the debate regarding Conversion with great interest. This morning I watched the Donahue program and would like to make three points.

1. Choice - in relation to identity: That young girl who phoned in expressed a confusion that has been created by all this "freedom" and the "me" craze. If we really listen to our children, we will recognize that they cannot cope with some of the choices that we force upon them out of our own weakness. In fact, this so-called freedom can become a major burden for them. The young girl said: "I want to be told I am Jewish." My husband's teenage daughter once complained: "You are leaving it up to me where I want to spend this day ... if I come to you, my mother will be hurt, but if I spend it with my mother, I'll have to worry about your feelings." The girls are absolutely right. Therefore I've made similar decisions for my son fully expecting that day when he may point an accusing finger. At that time I can explain, and should there be any guilt, that will be entirely my problem - not his.

Carrying this process over to religious beliefs: If we indicate to our children that they can choose between denominations, we not only imply our own insecurity but far more important, we deprive them of an identity. I was attracted to Reform Judaism especially because it offers individual choices every day, it promotes personal growth through study and practice, and most of all because it allows freedom of thought. How many more choices does one need? I feel that this ethic is the most valuable gift we can give our children.

It took a lot of courage for me, a German-born girl, to walk up to a Rabbi and make inquiry about conversion. Since then I have discovered how close my independent struggles with my faith had brought me to Judaism. The term "un-churched" embraces such a wide group of people that it gives no identity to the individual. While I came from a Lutheran background, there was no room for religion in our lives, and since my teenage years I could not honestly call myself a Christian. So who was I? A free thinker? A believer in God? The discovery at about age 10 that I had been baptized only because of pressure by family and friends set off a search and a guilt ride that lasted well into my adult years. Since I could not identify with any group, I could not seek guidance from anyone. (I would have been a perfect victim for a cult!) How many sleepless nights it took until I was finally able to conclude that "death of the marriage" had parted us and to proceed with a divorce. (My first marriage to a man of a different faith performed by a Justice of the Peace.)

This leads to my second point, the Jewish marriage ceremony. When my husband and I were married 8½ years ago, a religious ceremony was never considered, neither one of us felt a need for it then. However, I soon became aware of the difficulty of finding a Rabbi who would conduct a marriage ceremony with only one partner Jewish. Frankly, it did turn me off until some of my liberal

friends defended Rabbis for this refusal. At that point I went home to read more carefully about the subject and now I must agree that a Rabbi cannot in good conscience perform a traditional Jewish wedding ceremony for an intermarriage couple, nor can a conscientious non-Jew participate in one. The very nature of the wedding contract seems to make that impossible - however, this is a point I have never heard anyone explain in discussions about intermarriage. Obviously, this will continue to be a problem for many couples who lean toward Judaism but are not ready to make a commitment at the time of their marriage.

After five years of marriage, Conversion has added tremendously to my life. It also helped my husband identify with his Jewishness. The concern for my son's religious education finally gave me the encouragement to seek membership in a Temple. We all have found a warm welcome.

3. My third, minor comment refers to the sale of tickets for the High Holy Days. Our temple does not sell any, instead members are supplied with unreserved admission cards. Our family attends services on a weekly basis, but if we want to sit in the Sanctuary instead of the Auditorium on these special days, we have to arrive as much as 80 minutes before the service begins. "Out there" we feel quite lost - as do many of our friends - so I can appreciate but do not share the desire for reserved seats.

I very much agree with you that Judaism cannot be counted out yet: In a time of chaos it provides for order, in a time of mobility it gives identity. It does not require us to believe in the unbelievable.

Shalom!

Gertrud J. Lind

October 2, 1979

Gertrud J. Lind
635 Eastbrooke La.
Rochester, N.Y. 14618

Copy: Rabbi Judea B. Miller)
Rabbi Rosalind A Gold) Temple B'rith Kodesh

cc: aab

EAGLE-A
QUALITY
MANUSCRIPT

July 24, 1979

Mr. Leon L. Gildesgame
Millwood Road
Mt. Kisco, N.Y. 10549

Dear Leon:

Dan Syme shared with me the correspondence between you and Don Rogers. I was deeply touched by his words to you. They are a lovely tribute and you have every right to be pleased and proud that you have been instrumental in bringing a new and devoted Jew into the fold.

I hope you have been enjoying a pleasant and rewarding summer. Rhea joins me in sending warmest regards to you and Ruth.

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

from the desk of:

BS

Rabbi Daniel B. Syme
UAHC Department of Education

Alex - F.Y.I.

For fund raising
reasons, I'd appreciate
if you'd drop Leon
a note congratulating
him on bringing
a new Jew to
Judaism.

Thank,
D.

התאחדות 31227
התאחדות 47281.3.31
0110 1577 277

With the Compliments of
Leon L. Gildesgame
Millwood Road
Mt. Kisco, N.Y. 10549

Encl. cc. Don Rogers, 7/18 1979

Please send all your mail to the above address

Dear Ruth and Leon - 6/21/79

My deep appreciation
for such a beautiful book,
"The Biblical Heritage of American
Democracy": I can't wait to
read it; just now I'm still
in the books from the conversion
course, such as "The Story of
Judaism" Bamberger, and others
by Steinberg, Bial and Rabbi Henry
Cohen - all of which I couldn't
possibly have read in the short time
I had. At the same time when I looked in
your dissection from the bima, the
first thing that came to my mind
I blurted out, and, though I had
a captive audience - I couldn't
think of another thing to say 'til I
got back to the chalice; but I am
truly happy and proud that you

Leon, had not only seen my He-
brew teacher but the reason I
started seriously thinking about
turning to Judaism - after a
chat with you a few years ago.

All my love and best wishes
go with you both; I just can't go
away for aye, so let me simply
say - Shalom, l'hitra-ot!
Always your friend Don

117 HEATS AV
HAIR-CALF NY 10430

Don Rogers

Thank You

6 July 1979

Mr. Don Rogers
117 Deats Avenue
Hartsdale, NY 10530

My dear and beloved friend Don,

I was truly delighted to read your letter of June 21 for which I thank you very much.. It never occurred to me that teaching you the Hebrew language as I did a few years ago would prompt you to adopt Judaism as your religion.

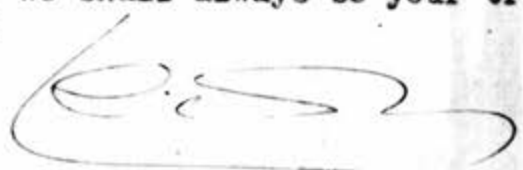
Of course, the teaching of Hebrew must of necessity be based on its origin, the Torah, the Hebrew Bible, the origin of Christianity and all its various denominations.

I never intended to be a catalyst for your conversion and therefore I was joyfully surprised when Rabbi Stern made the announcement from the pulpit during the Shabbat service at our Temple Beth-El on Friday evening, June 15th.

There were about 600 members of our congregation on that evening to bid you farewell on your retirement from our Temple Choir after your dedicated service of over eleven years. During your response from the pulpit to the congratulations and blessings from the Rabbi, you very graciously declared that it was Leon Gildesgame whose teaching of the Hebrew language and religious songs inspired you to embrace Judaism.

That is why I said that I am delighted with your letter in which you state "I am truly happy and proud that you, Leon, had not only been my Hebrew teacher, but the reason I started seriously thinking about turning to Judaism".

Ruth and I send you our sincere love and best wishes for a happy and healthy future with the members of your family and to assure you that we shall always be your true friends. Shalom, l'hitra-ot!



Leon L. Gildesgame

July 20, 1979

Ms. Giselle B. Schlesinger
16 Magaw Place
New York, N.Y. 10033

Dear Ms. Schlesinger:

Thank you for sharing your thoughts with me. Let us agree to disagree agreeably.

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

३०४२

Dear Rabbi Schindler:

May I respectfully urge that, instead of attempting to fill out thinning Jewish ranks by proselytizing among the "unchurched," you concentrate on restoring to Reform Judaism the authenticity it sacrificed when it rejected its traditions and heritage. The Reform movement's demolition of Jewish integrity is responsible for the Jewish decline in the first place (all data verify that it is within Reform Judaism that defection from our faith is rampant): Why you would expect religious commitment from the "אני אלוהים" you propose to create--when Reform cannot hold even the Jews it began with--is not clear.

You need look no further for the answer to the mystery of the vanishing American Jew than to the watered-down, spurious "Judaism" that Reform offers the American Jew. The Reform movement must resist the urge to inflict this travesty also on the "unchurched," whom, like the Jews, you will only end up alienating. Those "searching" for "religious roots" will hardly find them in a Jewish movement that has foresaken its own roots.

Authentic Judaism's concern has ever been quality--not quantity. Our historic status as דיוקן קטן --"smallest among the peoples"--presents no problem, just so long as we are a people, and not a fraud. The urgent need is for the Reform to look inward, and remove the sham, before all remaining Reform Jews become the "unchurched."

Yours sincerely,

grüßle B. Schlesinger

Giselle B. Schlesinger
(age 28, New York City)

cc: Rabbi Mark Tannenbaum
American Jewish Committee

~~Tk y 4 star y th -~~
~~you can get it for~~
~~less than we sell~~
~~were 100's of defects~~
~~were 100's of multipliers~~

אגוד הרבנים המתקדמים

CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN RABBIS

790 MADISON AVENUE • NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021 • (212) 734-7166

July 11, 1979

Mrs Dot Luria Nadler
Box 117
Jefferson, NY 12748

Dear Mrs. Nadler,

Your recent letter to the UAHC concerning conversion ethics has been referred to this office.

Our code of ethics for rabbis does contain a paragraph on the subject of conversion. The text is as follows:

"Reform Judaism openly welcomes prospective converts. We take pride in this fact. It is essential that the relationship of the rabbi with prospective converts should avoid any semblance of commercialism. Instructing prospective converts and officiating at their ceremonies of conversion are deemed to be within the normal duties of a rabbi; therefore no fees should be expected or accepted. Where groups of congregations combine to provide such instructions, the charge to students should be set at the minimum necessary to cover costs (books, materials, reasonable fees for visiting instructors) with scholarship aid for those who may be unable to meet even this minimum cost."

I hope that this answers your questions. If this office can be of further service to you, please let me know.

All good wishes.

Sincerely,



Rabbi Elliot L. Stevens

cc: Ms. Edith Miller
Rabbi Solomon Agin

ELS:lmn

OFFICERS

Jerome R. Makno, President
Danbury, CT

Herman E. Schallman, Vice President
Chicago, IL

Joseph B. Glaser, Executive Vice President
New York, NY

Meyer Heller, Treasurer
Beverly Hills, CA

Robert J. Marx, Recording Secretary
Highland Park, IL

Sylvan D. Schwartzman, Financial Secretary
Cincinnati, Ohio

Elliot L. Stevens, Administrative Secretary
New York, NY

Sidney L. Regner, Executive Vice President Emeritus
New York, NY

Jacob R. Marcus, Honorary President

July 9, 1979

Mrs. Dot Luria Nadler
Box 117
Jeffersonville, N.Y. 12748

Dear Mrs. Nadler:

Your letter of July 4 was received during Rabbi Schindler's absence from the office. He is not due back at his desk for some weeks.

In order to avoid undue delay in responding to your query, I am taking the liberty of sharing your letter with the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the rabbinic association of the Reform Movement. They will be in the best position to tell you the practices of our rabbis in regard to fees for conversion and the performance of a marriage ceremony.

With kindest greetings, I am

Sincerely,

Edith J. Miller
Assistant to the President

cc: CCAR

JUY 4TH 1979

DEAR RABBI ALEX SCHINDLER

HAVE AN IMPORTANT QUESTION.

A FRIEND OF MINE;SHE CONVERTED AND TOOK LESSONS
FROM RABBI SOLOMAN AGIN;MONTICELLO.HE CHAGED IO.WANT
ED 20.

ADDER THE CEREMONY HE WOULDNT GIVE THE GROOM THE
CERTIFICATE UNLESS THEY PAID HIM 75,WHICH THE GROOM
DIDNT HAVE ON HIM;HE PROMISED TO BRING IT THE NEXT DAY

MY QUESTION:IS IT CUSTOMARY FOR A RABBI TO MAKE THE
FEE??IT WASNT IN MY DAYS;WAS IT ETHICAL FOR THE RABBI
TO WITHOLD THE CERT.??

I'VE BEEN FUND RAISING CHAIRMAN FOR THE WOMENS' DIV.
OF THE BOARD OF RABBIS (IO EAST 73)AND ONE OF THE
FOUNDERS OF THE YESHIVA FIFTY YEARS AGO.

WOULD CONSIDER IT A REAL MITZVA IF YOU WILL ENLIGHTEN
US.

THANK YOU;

SINCERELY:

W. Nadler

dot luria nadler,
interiors

•
•
•

box 117
jeffersonville, n. y. 12748
phone 914-482-4902 385:

May 31, 1979

Mr. Samuel J. Blechman
2707 Creston Avenue
Bronx, N.Y. 10468

Dear Mr. Blechman:

Thank you for your letter in regard to my outreach proposals. It was good of you to share your concerns with me.

I must tell you that historically the record proves that gere tzedek have always been among the foremost defenders of Judaism and the Jewish people.

With kindest greetings, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

②

[illegible]

מחזור חורף
2008

S. Bleckman

SANDEL J BLECHMAN
2707 CRESTON AVE
BRONX NY 10468



Rabbi Alexander Schindler
% Union of American Hebr. Cong.
838-5th Ave
New York N.Y. 10021

May 23, 1979

Mr. B. Zeidman
701 Empire Blvd. Apt. 5B
Crown Heights
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11213

Dear Mr. Zeidman:

Thank you for your letter of May 20th.

I think that you are being very selective in your quotations from the Talmud. While it is true that the passage which you cite appears therein, moreover it appears three other times in rabbinic literature, I can cite you literally hundreds of passages from the Mishnah and from the Gemara and from Maimonides and prominent Jewish thinkers and scholars throughout the generations which take precisely the opposite point of view.

The preponderance of rabbinic opinion clearly is on my side. Not only are we to welcome converts, once they accept Judaism we ought to treat them as Jews, as sons of Abraham. I refer you only to Maimonides' well known letter on the subject.

As a matter of fact, you might also find it instructive to look at the Tosefot to the very passage which you cite and which appears to be negative. I refer to the statement that the convert is "like a plague." Tosefot says "indeed the convert is like a plague, he is so observant and so punctilious in heeding the 613 commandments that he puts Jews to shame, in this sense he is a plague."

Unhappily, correspondence is a poor means of establishing communication and I'm sorry that I have to be so brief. I think it would be well if you were to do some research on this subject. You might find it highly instructive.

With every good wish, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

202
Cfer

B. Zeidman, ^{Apt} S-B
701 Empire Bld.,
Crown Heights,
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11213
May 20, 1979

U.A.H.C. - The House of Living Judaism
835 Fifth Ave - 65th Street
New York, N.Y.

Dear Rabbi Schindler:

This past Sunday, May 20, 1979, I read in The New York Times that you wish to bring Judaism to the "uncommitted Christians." Perhaps you are unaware of what it says in the Talmud and the Shulchan Aruch. It is forbidden to convert non-Jews to the Jewish Faith. In fact, it is just the opposite you must seek the gentiles away when they ask to join our faith. The Gemara states "an insincere convert is like a scab on the skin" (when troubles fall on the Jewish nation they fall away, just like a scab on the skin). The Talmud tells us that a Jew cannot teach Torah to a non-Jew (Sanhedrin 59A).

How ~~can~~ can you make yourself greater than the Sages? For example, I am not a Rabbi and I have to observe all that the Sages ordered in the Oral Torah. Since you use the title Rabbi you should be even more careful in the keeping of the commandments. Maybe your title means nothing to you.

Maybe you use the title "Rabbi" only
as a source of income. In the English
language there is a word for people who sell
themselves for physical comforts.

One final word. You do not believe
that ours is the only true and valid Faith. This
is not a boast. It is just that you lack
enough, and need a proof. Tonight when you
have some free time re-read the second book of the
1715 - Sefer Exodus (Shemos). HASEM says that Jewish
people are "His First Born", and a "Special
Nation, a Priestly Kingdom" (cite Tanya, part I).
Since G-d considers the Jewish people as the
main reason for continuing the existence of the
universe, maybe you should re-order your
priorities. You still need proofs, read the Kuzari
by Judah Halevi.

I hope ^{you know} ~~that~~ that your actions were foolish,
and ^{you} will cease and desist from them. After all,
your actions can only increase anti-Semitism.
Thank you for taking time to read my letter.

Sincerely yours,
HNF"3 L32

April 3, 1979

Mr. Henry Salfeld
799 Park Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10021

Dear Mr. Salfeld:

Mr. Vorspan has shared with me a copy of your letter of March 23. It was thoughtful of you to share your concerns in regard to my recent Board address and call for an Outreach program.

From the mail and comments I have received from the Christian community, I believe your fears are ill-founded. On the whole there has been a most positive response, from Jews as well as Christians, to the various proposals I made and which were adopted by the Board of the UAHC.

With repeated thanks to you for writing and with kindest greetings,
I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

HENRY SALFELD
799 PARK AVENUE
NEW YORK, N. Y. 10021

March 23, 1979

Mr. Albert Vorspan,
Executive Editor,
Reform Judaism,
838 Fifth Ave.,
New York, N.Y. 10021

Dear Mr. Vorspan,

As a long time active member of Jewish organizations and interested in and working with interfaith movements I am deeply concerned about the call of Rabbi Schindler and UAHC's Board of Trustees' for an affirmative program of conversion of non-Jews in this country.

We have just succeeded in improving our relationship with our Christian fellow citizens and causing most of their churches to discontinue active missionary work amongst the Jews, there comes Rabbi Schindler and asks the UAHC and its members to "launch program to win converts." For over 2000 years Jews were the object of such programs and all its horrible consequences, reversing this trend in the interest of Judaism will only result in other faiths resuming the same tactics as in the past. If Rabbi Schindler wants to convert for instance the non-Jewish spouses of Jews does he believe that the priests or ministers of the churches to which the non-Jewish partner belonged will not try to convert the Jewish spouse to Christianity? And the non-believers in this country to whom Rabbi Schindler also addresses himself are to an overwhelming extent an offspring of Christian parents and an attempt to convert them to Judaism will result in an outcry against such tactics by the Christian clergy. If Rabbi Schindler intends to destroy the successful cooperation between Christian and Jews which developed during the last few years he certainly has four

HENRY SALFELD
799 PARK AVENUE
NEW YORK, N. Y. 10021

II.

a means of doing it. The active program proposed by him and the Board of UAHC will poison the atmosphere, unless the conversion activities are limited to those who voluntarily asks to be accepted in the Jewish faith. I may add that I have not found a single Jewish lay person or rabbi who agreed with the the program as outlined in the March 4, 1979 issue of Reform Judaism.

I sincerely trust that the UAHC will reconsider this decision .

Yours very truly.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "H. Salfeld", written in dark ink.

February 7, 1979

Mr. Carl I. Parker
15 Lansdale Road
New City, N.Y. 10956

Dear Mr. Parker:

Thank you for your thoughtfulness in writing to express your support of my stand on conversion. I am grateful to you.

For your interest I enclose herewith the full text of my address to the UAHC Board of Trustees.

With kindest greetings, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

Encl.

Carl I. Parker
15 Lansdale Road
New City, N.Y. 10956
Feb. 6, 1979

Rabbi Schindler
UOHC
838 Fifth A e.
New York, N.Y.

Dear Rabbi Schindler:

I praise your stand on coverting gentiles. As a born Jew I have
been saying the same thing for years.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Carl I. Parker". The signature is fluid and extends across the width of the letter.

Carl I. Parker

9/5
1/25
WEP

December 29, 1978

Mr. Jack J. Diamond
14 34 Breeze Point Place
Far Rockway, N.Y. 11691

Dear Mr. Diamond:

Your letter of December 22 was received during Rabbi Schindler's absence from the country. Be assured it will be brought to his attention on his return.

For your interest, a copy of the full text of his address to the UAHC Board is enclosed.

With every good wish, I am

Sincerely,

Edith J. Miller
Assistant to the President

Encl.

GR1-7094

DECEMBER 22, 1978

RABBI ALEXANDER SCHINDLER
UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS
838 FIFTH AVE.
N.Y. N.Y.

DEAR RABBI SCHINDLER

YOUR RECENT CALL TO TRY TO CONVERT THE UNCHURCHED TO JUDAISM AND YOUR QUOTING OF SOME DATA RE JEWISH POPULATION ARE QUITE INTERESTING TO ME PARTICULARLY, SINCE I HAVE TRIED ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS TO GET THE REFORM MOVEMENT TO GET INVOLVED WITH JEWISH POPULATION, BUT TO NO AVAIL.

FOR SEVERAL YEARS, I HAVE WRITTEN AND CALLED DEAN PAUL STEINBERG TO INCLUDE A COURSE ON THE HISTORY OF AMERICAN JEWISH POPULATION, WHICH IS VITAL TO AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMUNITY AND ITS SURVIVAL. THE REPLY WAS NEGATIVE.

LAST SUMMER, I MET WITH RABBI SCHOOLMAN REGARDING AMERICAN JEWISH DEMOGRAPHY. HE SUGGESTED I WRITE AN ARTICLE FOR THE REFORM NEWSPAPER, WHICH I DID, BUT ~~IT~~ IT WAS TURNED DOWN BY THE EDITOR.

THEREFORE, YOUR CONCERN WITH JEWISH POPULATION IS QUITE A REVERSAL FOR THE REFORM MOVEMENT.

I WOULD LIKE TO MEET WITH YOU TO DISCUSS THE AMERICAN JEWISH POPULATION AND WHAT THE REFORM MOVEMENT CAN DO ABOUT IT.

(Jack) Diamond

212 Gr 1-7094

Jack J. Diamond is available for lectures on the theme of the American Jewish population such as:

1. The Rise and Fall of the American Jewish Population.
2. Where is New York City's Jewish Population Headed?
3. Can we stem the decline of the American Jewish Population?
4. An "Endangered Species" - American Jews.

As one of the principal researchers and writers on the topic of the American Jewish population, Jack J. Diamond has written a special article, "A Reader in the Demography of American Jews" in the American Jewish Year Book, 1977 which gives an overview of the demographic changes in the Jewish Community as they were recorded in the pages of the Year Book since 1899.

In the January 1978 issue of Congress Monthly, he has written on "How Many Jews in New York City?" which draws attention to the erosion of Jewish population in the city and to its probable accelerating decline.

"A Demography of the Jews of New York City, A Preliminary Survey", was written in August 1976 for two executives of the American Jewish Committee. This unpublished paper has stimulated efforts of the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies to get demographic data on the Jews of New York.

Mr. Diamond has also researched and written about Jewish immigration to the United States in the American Jewish Year Book for 1966 and 1969.

As a "Jewish civil servant", Mr Diamond has had about thirty years of experience in Jewish organizations as a statistician, analyst, and researcher. The organizations include:

Jewish Child Care Association
Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture
American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee
HIAS
Jewish Education Committee
Council of Jewish Federations & Welfare Funds
American Jewish Committee

Educational Qualifications:

Bachelor of Science, CCNY 1937
Bachelor of Hebrew Literature, Seminary College of Jewish Theological Seminary 1941
Fellowship, YIVO Institute for Jewish Research 1942-44
Graduate School, Columbia University, studied under Professor Salo W. Baron
Master of Business Administration, CCNY 1948
Candidate for Doctor of Jewish Literature at Jewish Teachers Seminary & People's University

Lecture rates are moderate.

Also available in series of 3,5,7,8, and 15 lectures

December 29, 1978

Ms. Florence P. Byerley
5861 85th Terrace, North
Pinellas Park, Fla. 33565

Dear Ms. Byerley:

Your letter of December 23 was received during Rabbi Schindler's absence from the country. It will, of course, be brought to his attention on his return.

For your interest, I enclose herewith a copy of the full text of his address to the UAHC Board.

With every good wish, I am

Sincerely,

Edith J. Miller
Assistant to the President

Encl.

bcc: Sandy Seltzer
Note the letterhead

E

MY FAVORITE In 1979--- not mere tolerance--- but Understanding Love!

From The Home Of . . .

Florence P. Byerley

BYERLEY'S REALTY

Old Fashioned

But

Dependable Service

5861 85th Terr. N.

Pinellas Park, Fl. 33565

December 23, 1978

544-7459



JEWISH MOTHER



Dear Rabbi Shindler;

We enjoyed reading Marjorie Hyer's article about you, "Reform Jews Asked to Begin Program of Evangelism", and we want to congratulate you. I invite you to become a part of our prayer covenant asking the heavenly Father to use the above symbol of Peace, Truth and Love in a mighty way to promote His kingdom on earth. Please read the enclosed clippings and ask God what He would have you do.

When Pope Paul died Parade Magazine published an article on Will Durant in which he was quoted as having said, "He, (Jesus) undoubtedly was the most permanent influence on our thoughts, but not on our actions, and that's an important modification. Our actions are very seldom Christian, but our theology often is." This reminded me of the enclosed anonymous writing, and it seemed rather prophetic.

We sent posters, clipping and letters not only to the Vatican postal Service, but to both Pope John Pauls, for we thought that the pope is the one person who can do more than any other one person to rectify this ironic, tragic situation. Pope John Paul 2 is a humble man who has first hand knowledge of the Holocaust. As we sent these

communications our we thought, "Who is going to listen to a couple of insignificant Methodists? Our letters may get no farther than the secretary translator." But we felt that we had to try.

A recent letter from Monsignor L. Saccia, Department Head, Secretariat of State, Vatican, with a picture of Pope John Paul 1 told us that our message arrived after the pope's death. No mention has come as yet of our letters to Pope John Paul 2. Incidentally, we asked this new pope to add to the Litany of Mary, "Our blessed Jewish Mother."

We have been praying that the new pope would see fit to completely exculpate the Jews, thereby finalizing the wonderful work begun by Pope John. We suggested that the Vatican Postal Service issue a commemorative stamp honoring the Christian's Favorite Jewish Mother.

Rabbi, every convert you win will be one less person who will be gobbled up by a dangerous suicidal cult.

If I were to completely lose my faith in Jesus Christ I would never consider becoming a Jew. I have deep admiration and affection for the "People of the Covenant", and I feel that I can be of far more service to them as a Christian fighting anti-Semitism. Please help your Christian sisters and brothers to gain a deeper understanding of Rabbi Joshua.

We had the privilege of studying under Rabbi Morris B. Chapman at Temple B'Nai Israel in St. Petersburg. He maintains that those Christians who have learned from him have thereby deepened their Christian commitment--and we can attest to the fact that he is right!

Do Let us hear from you.

Shalom!

Rabbi, this is the anonymous writing to which I referred in my letter. Certainly Pope John Paul 2 has more power to rectify this tragic state of affairs than any other one person, and we pray that he may do so. Postal stamps honoring the Christians' Favorite Jewish Mother would help to completely exculpate the People of the Covenant.

It was not easy for Father Francis Mac Nutt and Rev. Paul Swedberg to set this beautiful example for all of us, but can you imagine what would happen if John Paul 2 saw fit to follow this example? He could initiate a spiritual revival such as the world has never seen. Truly he might bring forth a Messianic age. We pray that he may have the humility and wisdom to do so. Please pray with us.

Many thanks for publishing, "Bigotry Is Alive and Well On Planet Earth." A short time after I had written it we took a trip to visit the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima at Inverness, Fla. On the rear wall of the lovely little chapel was an embroidered writing that was touchingly eloquent:

You call Me master, yet heed Me not—
 You call Me light, yet I shine not in you—
 You call Me the way but you follow Me not—
 You call Me the life, yet My name is forgot—
 You call Me the truth, but play a false role—
 You call Me guide, yet despise My control—
 You call Me love, withholding your heart—
 You call Me rich, yet desire no part—
 You call Me good, yet evil, your ways—
 You call Me eternal while wasting your days—
 You call Me noble, yet drag Me down—
 You call Me mighty, not fearing My frown—
 You call Me just, Oh, if just I be
 When I shall condemn you reproach not me.

Anon

I read this over several times, then copied it. I thought of man's inhumanity to man during the past nineteen hundred years, especially the horrible things that were done in the very name of the compassionate Christ. My day dream took me to that first Holy Thursday and I found myself saying with the twelve in the Upper Room, "Is it I, Lord?"

Shalom,

W.A.S.P. (Flossie Byerley)

Dear Mrs. Cox:

As I thumbed through my September Christian Herald I ran across an article that was so inspiring, so edifying that I wish to share it with all my friends and neighbors on the Island. It's about a Harvard-educated Dominican, Rev. Father Francis McNutt and a Lutheran pastor, Rev. Paul Swedberg.

First the Roman Catholic priest knelt before the Lutheran pastor and asked forgiveness for the wrongs the Catholic Church had done to Protestants. Then the Lutheran pastor knelt before the Catholic priest and asked forgiveness for the injustices and misunderstandings of Catholics fostered by Protestants.

This act seeking to reconcile churches long divided was not planned but was witnessed by 1,800 persons who overflowed St. Alphonsus Catholic Church in the Minneapolis suburb of Brooklyn Center, Minnesota. Few of them had dry eyes.

"Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Praise the Lord!

Shalom!

Flossie

Marc Soslow, 1717 Bergen Street, Philadelphia, Pa. a generous Jewish friend donated well over 1,000 posters in black and white on quality paper suitable for coloring and framing. We colored ours with the Star of David resembling stained glass. Sister Aloysius displayed these in her classrooms to demonstrate to her students the fact that Jews deserve recognition and respect as Christ Givers. Thus Marc affirmed his Christian friends and Sister affirmed Jesus' people.

Rabbi, this article from the Beach Haven Times clearly shows the mighty way in which God works when we are willing to give up our old fashioned, grudging tolerance for Understanding Love-- a love that enables us to affirm one another. When we Christians learn truly to affirm each other, surely the heavenly Father will give us the grace to affirm our Jewish brothers and sisters, so that there may never again be a holocaust!

Chain Reaction

By Florence Byerley

If we were on Long Beach Island now I would be running up to St. Francis' Charasmatic meeting to share with them a most inspiring human interest story. Of course, I would already have told my own beloved pastor, Rev. Duane Johnson all about it.

First let me tell those who do not know, that Church Women United is the group which sponsors the annual "World Day of Prayer Services" that are celebrated on the first Fridays of March. All those who belong to United Methodist Women, automatically become members of Church Women United. (We learned from the Beach Haven Times that your host church this year was the Lutheran Church in Barnegat Light.)

Omega Books published a paperback, "Just Because" written by Margaret Shannon that gives a complete history of Church Women United in U.S.A. 1941 through 1975.

Ruth Carter Stapleton wrote us recently saying, "We must pray for organized religion and ask that they all get centered in our Lord and de-emphasize their own rules and rituals." Good Pope John 23rd could have written that!

Just Because Pope John opened the windows of the Vatican and permitted God's Holy Spirit to fly in, Sister Mary Stanislaus R.S.M. of Cincinnati was permitted to spend a week or so with her Methodist sister, Alma, in Pinellas Park.

Just Because The Martha Circle of the United Methodist Women's Society was known for its ecumenical outreach, Sister agreed to attend a meeting. She listened attentively to the discussion, and when she was invited to join in her reply was, "I really don't have anything to say. I'm just enjoying listening. You women are a source of edification both socially and religiously. I think it's just wonderful the way in which you meet in each others homes to discuss the Bible. You know, Catholic women are beginning to do this too."

Just Because members of the Martha circle found Sister Mary Stanislaus so charming they mailed her study material from their next meeting and invited her to become an honorary member of their circle.

Just Because she beheld the Christ Spirit in the Martha Circle she replied, "I would be honored to become an honorary member of your group. What are my dues and duties?" Sister Mary Stanislaus was told that her dues and duties would

consist of joining our prayer covenant and praying with us for the advancement of God's kingdom on earth. Thus Sister became the very first and perhaps the only practicing Roman Catholic nun to become an honorary member of United Methodist Women.

Just Because Sister Mary Stanislaus was an honorary member, the society decided to expand its outreach to its Catholic brothers and sisters. In 1976 when First United Methodist of Pinellas Park was host church for World Day of Prayer a supreme effort was made to involve Catholics.

Just Because this effort was crowned with success, in 1977 Sacred Heart agreed to be host church for World Day of Prayer. Sister Aloysius, the very talented principal of the school, was in charge of the service.

Just Because she involved all her students and made of World Day of Prayer a truly inspiring time to remember, Church Women United decided that in 1978 they would urge all church oriented schools to sponsor services for their children.

Despite terrible weather 1,078 adults attended services at 11 churches, one mobile park and one retirement home—but 4,762 students and their adult leaders participated in World Day of Prayer services for children!

Mrs. Ruth Hoddinott, president of United Methodist Women of St. Petersburg remarked, "I am so sorry that we neglected such a tremendous source of Christian power during all the years in the past." She was talking about the Christian Power generated by the Roman Catholic nun! We believe these good women along with their sisters, the Ladies of the Salvation Army, are true "Woman's Libbers" in the most exalted sense. They do not want to become liberated by aping the bad habits of men. Instead they want an equal share with their brothers in promoting the kingdom on the Christ on earth. Many a Salvation Army Lass has had the finger of a well meaning but misguided clergyman shaken in her face to warn her that she was going to burn in hell for speaking from the pulpit.

Has the "chain reaction" come to an end? We pray that all who read this story will make sure that it hasn't!

Church Women United owes much of its success in this year's World Day of Prayer to Bishop Charles McLaughlin and the Diocese of St. Petersburg.

"Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me."

Crossroads

'Next year . .

Editor: When our Jewish friends enjoy a celebration, they express the hope "Next year in Israel." We have a hope — a dream of our own: "Next year, not mere tolerance, but understanding love."

Rabbi Baseman of B'Nai Israel in Clearwater says "Rabbi Joshua was the most misunderstood man who ever lived." Then he went on to say that Jews, for the most part do not look for a personal Messiah, but rather they anticipate a Messianic Age when "Men shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks;" when "Every man shall sit under his own fig tree and no man shall make him afraid."

All of a sudden it dawned on me. Wasn't this what Jesus had in mind when He taught us to say when we pray, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on Earth as it is in heaven"?

FLORENCE BYERLY
Pinellas Park

From United Methodist Reporter

United Methodist Reporter
Published by the
United Methodist Church

Let's not judge

To the Editor:

A million thanks for publishing the letter written by Ruth Erder who brings up the question, why don't we quit trying to evangelize the Jews and put all our energy into evangelizing Nazis, Klansmen and youthful criminals.

We cringe in Sunday School when we hear "born again" Christians declare that we must reach all Jews with the gospel of Jesus Christ or they are going to go to hell. How dare they judge! How many souls are there whom we accuse of having rejected Jesus Christ when in truth they have not rejected Him at all. They have merely rejected our unkind, unloving witness!

Let us not insist that there are two kinds of people in the world, the saved and the lost. Let us say instead that there are the saved and the potentially saved, and only Jesus Christ knows for sure which is which. Our first duty toward the nonbeliever, however we may interpret the term, is to love Him. If we do this we can trust God for his eternal salvation.

We insist that Jesus Christ is God, the Creator is God, the Holy Spirit is God! That's the doctrine of the Trinity. If the Jews are obedient to God and serve Him to the best of their ability, then they are serving Jesus Christ whether they know it or not. "Who serves my Father as a son is surely kin to me." Let us affirm Jesus Christ's people and with them help build a better world.

Florence P. Byerley
Ship Bottom, New Jersey

This article fails to mention the fact that Rabbi Morris B. Chapman said both the Invocation and the Benediction. Could this have happened during the pre-Pope John Days?

From Crossroads- St. Pete Times News
on Religion

Ecumenical example

Editor: We just returned from New Jersey to Pinellas Park and eagerly grasped our first copy of *Crossroads*. We were especially interested in "Lutherans and Roman Catholics Healing Breach Made 461 Years Ago."

It reminded us of an incident a few years ago when Harvard-educated Dominican, Rev. Father Francis MacNutt, and Lutheran pastor, Rev. Paul Swedberg, shared leadership in a charismatic prayer service. First, the priest knelt before the minister and asked forgiveness for the wrongs the Catholic Church had done to Protestants. Then the minister knelt before the priest and asked forgiveness for the injustices and misunderstandings of Catholics fostered by Protestants.

What a beautiful example these two men set for all of us. Truly they were surrendering their old-fashioned grudging tolerance for Christ-inspired understanding love — a love that enabled them to affirm one another. When Christians learn truly to affirm each other, surely the heavenly Father will give them the grace to affirm their Jewish brothers and sisters so that there may never again be a Holocaust.

We made a special effort to reach Florida before Wednesday, Oct. 25, for that was the date of the Third Annual Membership Banquet for Morningstar School sponsored by the executive board of O.T.H.E.R.S. (Opportunity To Help Educate Receptive Students). How pleased we were to see our good friends, Rabbi Morris B. Chapman and his wife Rivy, as they shared the head table with Bishop Charles B. McLaughlin, Sister Mary Dolorita and other honored guests. It was exciting to see Catholics, Jews and Protestants praying together, affirming one another and uniting in behalf of Morningstar's very special children.

Shalom!

Florence P. Byerley
Pinellas Park

According to Jack Williams, Coordinator, Citizens' Stamp Advisory, "The suggestion has received support from many groups and individuals." What an eloquent reply this series of stamps would be to the K K K, the Nazis and Madelyn Murray O'Hair. Ms. O'Hair is now protesting the Susan B. Anthony coin because Ms. Anthony was an atheist. If she was indeed an atheist this coin is the most exciting one ever minted for it shows that we who are "one nation under God" are eager to affirm the good done by one who doesn't even believe in Him. Not all atheists are as abrasive and bigoted as M. M. O'Hair. Many understand the truth that a belief in a righteous God helps people live a more productive happy life and they would not take away this so called "crutch".

Stamp Symbol

Editor
Beach Haven Times

Dear Mrs. Cox:

We thank you very much for the many letters you published for us in the past. We believe your readers would be interested in reading the following letter recently sent to Postmaster General Benjamin Franklin Bailar:

Dear Postmaster General Bailar:

Remember the old radio program, "Crime Does Not Pay?" If we had such a program on TV today our young people would call it a comedy show, for they know full well that crime does pay! If the crime is sufficiently heinous it pays handsomely by way of TV appearances, and book and magazine rights!

We display a poster which reads "War and pollution are not healthy for children and other living things." We think you will agree with us when we say that murder, rape, mugging and pornography are not healthy for children and other living things.

Some time ago we wrote you requesting that you use the illustration of a mother and child in the heart of a Star of David called My Favorite Jewish Mother as a commemorative stamp. We pointed out that this stamp is not a declaration of faith, but merely demonstrates to the Christian that his roots are deeply embedded in Judaism and that his Jewish brothers and sisters are Christ givers and Bible givers.

Jews do not even see Jesus and Mary in this symbol. Instead they see their own maligned mothers and themselves.

You assured me that this stamp would be considered by the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee, and that a symbol worthy of consideration must have "historical significance" and "national interest." We knew that the symbol had undeniable historic significance, and we set out to prove that it did have national interest by requesting our friends and other prominent people to write you.

Since that time we requested that this symbol be used during the Christmas Season as a twin stamp with a stamp honoring the Feast of Hanukkah. You replied that a Hanukkah stamp had already been suggested and rejected for lack of national interest. Perhaps there would be more interest if the two were issued together, but I have a better idea. Why not a cluster of four stamps: My Favorite Jewish Mother—next a beautiful stamp honoring the Torah Scroll; under these two an eloquent stamp depicting the Ten Commandments, next to a Hanukkah stamp. As Congressman Wm. J. Hughes of New Jersey pointed out, "This could herald the beginning of a whole series of postage stamps depicting the various religions practiced in the United States and how they have contributed to our cultural heritage."

Mr. Bailar, you know better than anyone that we should never underestimate the power of the commemorative stamp. Remember the "Giving Blood Saves Lives" stamp? For six months after it was issued the nation did not experience any significant shortage of blood.

The cluster of stamps that we now propose would reiterate the fact that we are "One nation under God" and that all men are brothers under the Fatherhood of an infinitely righteous—ethical God. In these perilous times it is imperative that we affirm one another and unite in an all-out war against the evils that infest our beloved nation.

Shalom!
Florence P. Byerley
Ship Bottom

Rabbi, have you ever read the Prayer of Repentance composed by Good Pope John? The Ladies of the Salvation Army invited me to talk to them at the Citadel in St. Petersburg on "Mary, My Favorite Jewish Mother" I stressed just two indisputable truths about her: (1) She was a mother. (2) She was Jewish. How they listened when I read them Pope John's prayer! They were quite prepared to accept my conclusion, that if Mary were speaking for herself, her sole request probably would be the one she made at Cana, "Do whatever my Son tells you to do."

Postal Stamp

Dear Mrs. Cox,

Perhaps some of your readers from last summer will remember the project that we began during the bicentennial year. We are continuing in our effort to persuade the U.S. Postal Service to issue a commemorative stamp during some future Christmas Season depicting a Mother and Child in the heart of a Star of David called My Favorite Jewish Mother. Since that time we have suggested that when they issue this stamp (N.B. I did say "when" not "if") that they issue at the same time a stamp honoring the Feast of Hanukkah. I was moved to do this after I had read a Prayer of Repentance composed by Good Pope John 23. May I share it with your readers and see if they are as deeply moved as I was?

"We admit that over hundreds of years our eyes were blinded so as not to see the beauty of Thy Chosen People and not to recognize the features of our first born brother. We admit that the sign of Cain is upon our forehead. For centuries Abel was lying in blood and tears while we had forgotten Thy love. Forgive us, O Lord, the curse we unjustly spoke out over the people of Israel. Forgive us, that in their flesh we crucified You the second time! We did not know what we were doing..."

According to "Let My People Live" a book by Dagobert Runes, when the Pontiff was on his death bed he urged that this prayer be said in all Catholic places of worship. Having read Father Ed Flannery's book "The Anguish of the Jews," we feel that the prayer ought to be said throughout Christendom especially during Lent, that sacred time of repentance and forgiveness that was such a nightmare to our Jewish brothers and sisters.

One of our Methodist friends remarked that the "Favorite Jewish Mother" separated the men from the boys: "You can tell which ones are the true Christians and which ones are the bigots." Our enthusiasm stems from the fact that we sincerely believe that bigotry is the most insidious, the most destructive sin that infests our churches and synagogues, making our fight against pornography, child abuse, crime and corruption less effective than it ought to be.

We were eating in Bill's Restaurant last week when we overheard an amusing, thought provoking if slightly irreverent conversation by two so called "non-believers."

"I wonder what the Man

upstairs thinks when he sees the disharmony, and the doctrinal bickering that goes on in Christianity and Judaism."

The reply was, "He probably looks at Jesus and says, 'Son, you shoulda never left home'."

We wrote TV KYW recently telling them all about our effort to promote our commemorative stamp idea. They called us and requested that we "Put it in writing. Write Something so condensed that you can read it in 50 seconds." "Fifty seconds! Impossible! Don't you mean fifty minutes?" I exclaimed, "Fifty seconds!" He reiterated, "You can do it."

I submitted my copy with the notation "Fifty seconds - if you read it fast." I have been asked to come in to tape it. Just pray with me that the right people will be listening.

Shalom!

W.A.S.P.

Flossie Byerley

January 5, 1978

Ms. Ilka List
125 Dubois Rd.
New Paltz, NY 12561

Dear Ilka:

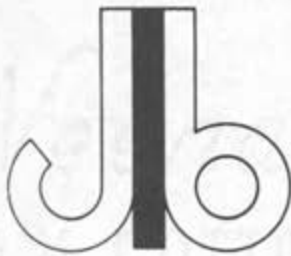
It was good speaking to you the other day, and I again wish to assure you of our willingness to help you to convert to Judaism.

You mentioned that you would call me after the first of the year so that we might set up an appointment and decide how you should proceed to prepare for conversion.

Looking forward to hearing from you, I am

Warmly,

Rabbi Bernard M. Zlotowitz
cc: Rabbi Alexander Schindler



FOUNDED BY BERNARD G. RICHARDS IN 1932

The Jewish Information Bureau, Inc.

250 WEST 57TH STREET, NEW YORK, N. Y. 10019 • (212) JU 2-5318

December 21, 1978

HON. EMANUEL CELLER
Honorary Chairman

JUDAH A. RICHARDS
Chairman

RUTH EISENSTEIN
ELEAZAR LIPSKY
RICHARD YAFFE
Vice-Chairmen

MARTIN GROOB
Treasurer

JEROME LUTNICK
Secretary

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

YITSHAQ BEN-AMI
DR. LAWRENCE BRODY
PROF. WERNER J. CAHNMAN
MYRON EISENSTEIN
ALBERT FRIEDMAN
JAMES L. GOLDWATER
HERBERT GREENBERG
MYRON JACOBSON
MOSHE KAGAN
MITCHELL LEVENTHAL
RABBI THEODORE LEWIS
CHARLES A. MADISON
MICHAEL L. ORENSTEIN
HERMAN Z. QUITTMAN
PAUL SAFRO
FAYE SCHENK
MILTON TAYLOR
HON. LESTER L. WOLFF

ADVISORY COUNCIL

DR. ABRAHAM BERGER
RABBI MORRISON BIAL
PROF. EUGENE BOROWITZ
PROF. JANE S. GERBER
MONROE GOLDWATER
PROF. ISRAQUE GRAEBER
PROF. SIMON GREENBERG
I.L. KENEN
PROF. LEE E. KOPPELMAN
PROF. SAUL LIEBERMAN
RABBI EUGENE LIPSEY
RABBI JOSEPH LOOKSTEIN
PROF. JACOB R. MARCUS
RABBI JUDAH NADICH
THEODORE R. RACOOSIN
DR. MANHEIM S. SHAPIRO
PHILLIP SLOMOVITZ
RUDOLPH G. SONNEBORN
RABBI MORDECAI WAXMAN
HON. JACK B. WEINSTEIN

Rabbi Dr. Alexander M. Schindler
Union of American Hebrew Congregations
838 Fifth Ave.
New York, N.Y. 10021

Dear Rabbi Schindler,

Although the Jewish Information Bureau, historically, is non-partisan, non-political, and non-denominational, many of my associates subscribe wholeheartedly to your proposal to actively recruit converts from among the "lost sheep", as reported in the general press and in the JTA Weekly Digest of Dec. 8, in particular.

To me this represents a noble effort to fill an emotional and spiritual need as to protect those from cults, who may want to "keep up with the Joneses".

You are doubtless familiar with the history and continuing function of the Bureau, described in the enclosed article reprints.

Sincerely yours,

Judah Richards
Judah Richards
Chairman

enc:

A useful agency seeks to survive the 70's

By Albert Friedman

Not long ago, when a woman in Melbourne, Australia, wrote to the "Chief Rabbi, Jewish Synagogue, New York, U.S.A.," her letter somehow escaped oblivion. The Post Office, in its wisdom, directed it not to any one of New York City's 800-odd synagogues on the presumption that it might be the domain of the "Chief Rabbi," but to The Jewish Information Bureau at 250 West 57th Street, in Manhattan.

The 45-year-old Bureau has often served as the recipient for misaddressed mail intended for various Jewish organizations, individuals or institutions, a logical consequence of the Bureau's contact with almost every facet of the Jewish community. But the small, bustling bureau is far more than a catch-all for misaddressed or misidentified correspondence. Primarily, it is an all-purpose Jewish fact-dispensing center—possibly the only one of its kind—which acts, as well, as a referral agency to direct the Jewish public to Jewish services.

As for the Australian woman, it turned out that she was seeking information about her great-grandparents, who had come to New York City from their native Russia at the turn of the century. The bureau sent her a list of agencies which have kept records, over the years, of immigrant arrivals at the port of New York, and the names and addresses of libraries and research facilities. No doubt she is now happily engaged—like so many others—in pursuing her past.

Stream becomes torrent

Inquiries like hers have always accounted for considerable correspondence at the Bureau—in fact, ever since it was founded in 1932, by its late director, Bernard G. Richards, known to thousands as BGR. But the recent "Roots" phenomenon, followed by the publication of several popular books on Jewish genealogy, have expanded a steady stream into a torrent.

Nobody can say for sure what—if anything—this will mean in the long run, but the Bureau's present director, Judah A. Richards, the son of the founder, considers it a promising augury.

"Maybe it's because I hear so many scholars offering gloomy prognostications about the future of diaspora Jewry that I value the

lively counter-trends that show up in the Bureau's mail."

Interviewed after his return from several weeks in Israel, where he was a World Zionist Congress delegate representing the American Jewish League for Israel, Richards said much of the Bureau's correspondence reflects strong currents of Jewish consciousness, which seems to be getting stronger.

"Of course, we can't consider the Bureau a barometer of Jewish social developments," he said, "but the people who write to us do seem to represent a cross-section of the Jewish population. It's heartening to find that the assimilation trend is being checked in many places—sometimes where we least expect it."

Places of interest

Aside from an unstoppable flow of questions related to family history, the Bureau of late has been receiving an ever-increasing number of inquiries about places of Jewish interest around the world. It is not surprising that people want to know about the authentic centers of Jewish life. But there are others who seem intent on tracking down hints of a Jewish presence in places from which Jews have long since disappeared or where there is no evidence of their ever having lived.

Another trend of note is the increasing number of inquiries from older people about housing, job prospects, and welfare assistance, and concurrently, a heavy traffic in requests from Jewish singles of all ages for information about social activities. Also impressive are numerous inquiries about Soviet Jewry, both from American Jews who want to trace relatives living in the USSR and from Soviet Jews transplanted to the United States who want assistance on visa status, financial aid, and many other problems. All are referred to appropriate agencies.

Christian inquiries

In this age of mobility when many families move to communities where the main breadwinner has a new job, there are many inquiries about synagogues, Jewish schools and Jewish centers. These are referred to regional federations and community synagogues.

Equally noteworthy is an increasing vol-

ume of mail from non-Jews.

"Either Gentiles are becoming more curious about Jews than in the past, or they are now less timid about asking questions," said Richards. It is a circumstance he finds both curious and frustrating.

"We're happy to answer their questions or refer them to agencies or individuals. But some of the questions are discouraging. They certainly show that information about Jews and Judaism is in short supply in many Christian communities."

One fundamentalist preacher in a small Midwestern town, for instance, wanted to know when the Jews offer up the sacrificial lamb on the synagogue altar. Another asked how he could ascertain the "tribe" of a Jewish family that had recently moved into his neighborhood. Another wanted to know why the Jews had incurred the righteous wrath of "Christian" Germany during the Hitler period. And not a few, after requesting information on one subject or another, innocently wind up their letters with a "Yours in Christ."

Most questions from Christians deal with Jewish customs. Many are from business executives who need to know the dates of the Jewish holidays when their Jewish employees will be absent from work. Many ask for these dates so that they will know when to send greeting cards to Jewish friends.

Need for services

But the greatest number of inquiries, now as always, pertain to Jewish services. As an intermediary between the public and the vast network of Jewish institutions and agencies, the Bureau serves the Jewish community as a whole.

During the lifetime of Bernard G. Richards, the Bureau operated virtually as a one-man enterprise. It was sustained by modest membership fees and small grants. BGR, a founder of the American Jewish Con-

gress and a sagacious observer of Jewish developments around the world, was an inveterate collector of clippings and publications of all sorts which still comprise an invaluable resource for researchers. When he died at the age of 94, his son, Judah Richards, decided not to dismantle four and a half decades of his father's labors and dedication but to keep the Bureau alive.

Richards is a tall, outgoing, impetuously optimistic publicist and advertising man with a solid background in the Zionist movement. Aside from many Jewish community involvements, he is a member of the New York State Task Force for Clean Water and of other ecological groups. Despite his many prior commitments, he resolved to devote as much time and effort as possible to the Bureau.

His first task was to enlist the Jewish scholars, journalists, rabbis and organization leaders, most of them friends of the late BGR, as board members and advisors. An on-the-job training program was initiated, enabling students in Jewish studies to work at the Bureau's office. BGR's quarterly publication, *The Index*, was revived.

It is a survey of current publications and a review of Jewish public services and socially-significant community developments. A program of Jewish public affairs programs was projected. Other projects included the updating of Bureau files, the acquisition of duplicating equipment and other initiatives designed to modernize the Bureau's operations.

Much has already been accomplished, through a membership drive and small institutional grants, but many of the Bureau's major objectives remain unfulfilled. Richards not only draws no salary for his considerable labors as director but frequently reaches into his own pocket to meet deficits.

The Jewish Week, Washington, D.C. June 1-7, 1978

JEWISH INFORMATION BUREAU

250 WEST 57 STREET

NEW YORK, N. Y. 10019

THE JEWISH NEWS

Incorporating The Detroit Jewish Chronicle commencing with the issue of July 20, 1951

PHILIP SLOMOVITZ
Editor and Publisher

CARMEL M. SLOMOVITZ
Business Manager

VOL. LXXIII,

Friday, May 28, 1978

The Jewish Information Bureau Answering Torrent of Questions

NEW YORK — Not long ago, when a woman in Melbourne, Australia, wrote to the "Chief Rabbi Jewish Synagogue, New York, U.S.A.," her letter was sent to The Jewish Information Bureau, 250 West 57th St., New York 10019.

The 45-year-old bureau has often served as the recipient for misaddressed mail intended for various Jewish organizations. But primarily, the bureau is an all-purpose Jewish fact-dispensing center — possibly the only one of its kind — which acts, as well, as a referral agency to direct the Jewish public to Jewish services.

As for the Australian woman, it turned out that she was seeking information about her great-grandparents, who had come to New York City from their native Russia at the turn of the century. The bureau sent her a list of the agencies which have kept records, over the years, of immigrant arrivals at the Port of New York, and the names and addresses of libraries and research facilities.

The Jewish Information Bureau was founded in 1932 by its late director, Bernard G. Richards. The recent "Roots" phenomenon, followed by the publication of several popular books on Jewish genealogy, have expanded a steady stream of inquiries into a torrent.

Nobody can say for sure what — if anything — this will mean in the long run, but the Bureau's present director, Judah A. Richards, son of the founder, considers it a promising augury.

"Maybe it's because I hear so many scholars offering gloomy prognostications about the future of Diaspora Jewry that I value the lively counter-trends that show up in the Bureau's mail."

Aside from an unstoppable flow of questions related to family history, the bureau has been receiving an ever-increasing number of inquiries about places of Jewish interest around the world.

It is not surprising that people want to know about the authentic centers of Jewish life. But there are others who seem intent on tracking down hints of a Jewish presence in places from which Jews have long since disappeared or where there is no evidence of their ever having lived.

Another trend is the increasing number of inquiries from older persons about housing, job prospects, and welfare assistance, and concurrently, a heavy traffic in requests from Jewish singles of all ages for information about social activities. Also impressive are numerous inquiries about Soviet Jewry, both from American Jews who want to

trace relatives living in the USSR and from Soviet Jews transplanted to the United States who want assistance on visa status, financial aid, and many other problems. All are referred to appropriate agencies.

Equally noteworthy is an increasing volume of mail from non-Jews.

"Either Gentiles are becoming more curious about Jews than in the past, or they are now less timid about asking questions," said Richards. It is a circumstance he finds both curious and frustrating.

"We're happy to answer their questions or refer them to agencies or individuals. But some of the questions are discouraging. They certainly show that information about Jews and Judaism is in short supply in many Christian communities."

THE JEWISH INFORMATION BUREAU, INC.

250 West 57th Street, New York, N. Y. 10019

The Jewish Information Bureau is a non-profit agency rendering a free service of information to the public by answering inquiries and supplying data in all matters relating to Jews and Judaism and our community endeavors of every description.

Your subscription will help encourage a worthwhile educational undertaking and will bring to your home significant information on Jewish affairs and items of general Jewish interest.

Name _____ Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Individual Member \$ 15 Organizations \$ 50
Supporting Member . . . \$ 25 Sustaining Member . . . \$100

MEMORANDUM

From Edith Samuel
To Rabbi Alex Schindler
Copies
Subject The "Outreach Task Force"

Date 12/19/78

*Thank Edie
Love for (Aron)*

Apropos of yesterday's meeting, I have been mulling over a serious thought:

Had either you or I anticipated such heavy (secular) press coverage, I think we might have paused before linking our shrinking numbers with a missionary program. As matters now stand, the impression is widespread that the major reason we want to undertake such a program is that we are worried about our declining Jewish population and the high rate of intermarriage. If we do go ahead and launch a program, it should not have a negative motivation (i.e., we are worried). Rather, it has to be based on positive reasons (e.g., because we are convinced of the merits of Judaism and want others to benefit by it).

Hayim Greenberg said it this way in his essay, "The Future of American Jewry" (1951), which appears in The Inner Eye, vol. 2, p.69:

"I too think that a people which believes that its religion is an expression of eternal truth is duty-bound to proselytize; it must not monopolize the truth for itself but should spread it also among others."

IMPORTANT

Quote

S. R.



Union of American Hebrew Congregations
838 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021 (212) 249-0100

INTERMARRIAGE **AND THE JEWISH FUTURE**

**A NATIONAL STUDY
IN SUMMARY**

by
Egon Mayer
and **Carl Sheingold**

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

Institute of Human Relations

165 East 56 Street New York, N.Y. 10022

TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE*

ALVIN CHENKIN	Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds
ESTHER FLEISHMAN	National Opinion Research Center
HAROLD HIMMELFARB	Ohio State University
MILTON HIMMELFARB	American Jewish Committee
MARSHALL SKLARE	Brandeis University
MERVIN VERBIT	Brooklyn College

RABBINIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE*

RABBI JOSIAH DERBY	Rego Park Jewish Center
RABBI LUDWIG NADELMANN	Jewish Reconstructionist Foundation
RABBI SOL ROTH	Atlantic Beach Jewish Center
RABBI MAX ROUTTENBERG	Rabbinical Assembly
RABBI MARTIN ROZENBERG	Community Synagogue, Sands Point
RABBI HAROLD SAPERSTEIN	Temple Emanu-El, Lynbrook
RABBI JOEL Y. ZION	Temple Israel of Lawrence

The American Jewish Committee is grateful to the members of the Technical Advisory Committee and the Rabbinic Advisory Committee for their interest and guidance in the development of the study and in the preparation of this report. Responsibility for the study itself, however, as well as the conclusions cited in this summary, rests solely with the researcher and the American Jewish Committee.

**Institutional affiliation listed for purposes of identification only.*

INTERMARRIAGE AND THE JEWISH FUTURE

A NATIONAL STUDY IN SUMMARY

by Egon Mayer
and Carl Sheingold

*Based on a study
designed and directed
by Dr. Egon Mayer,
Associate Professor of Sociology,
Brooklyn College*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thanks are due to the many couples and individuals who participated in this study, and without whom it could not have been conducted.

The following AJC chapters, volunteer coordinators and other volunteers gave generously of their time and energy in order to gather the data:

Cleveland Chapter: Lois Butler and Dr. Sue Klarreich

Dallas Chapter: Leslie Bass and Andrea Weinstein

Long Island Chapter: Judy Lusterman and Sue Aronowitz

Los Angeles Chapter: Madeline Goodwin

New York Chapter: Marilyn Penn

Philadelphia Chapter: Ruth Septee

San Francisco Chapter: Marsha Gould and Lynn Winter

Westchester Chapter: Dr. Jane Gerber

Mrs. Ruth Kobrin provided invaluable coordination of the data collection in all its phases. Mrs. Sonya F. Kaufer, the AJC's Director of Publications, edited this report and provided helpful suggestions as to its content and organization.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

EGON MAYER received his Ph.D. in sociology from Rutgers University and is currently Associate Professor of Sociology at Brooklyn College. He is the author of numerous articles and research reports, and his book on the Orthodox Jewish community of Boro Park, *From Suburb to Shtetl*, will soon be published by Temple University Press.

CARL SHEINGOLD received his Ph.D. in sociology from Harvard University and has taught at the State University of New York at Buffalo, Cornell University and Brown University. He currently serves as a Program Specialist in the Jewish Communal Affairs Department of the American Jewish Committee.

INTRODUCTION

Intermarriage has been a part of the Jewish experience—and a source of Jewish concern—for several millennia. Vastly outnumbered throughout most of their history by the dominant political and religious majorities among whom they lived, Jews have never been entirely free of the fear that their sons and daughters would, either through coercion or attraction, be swallowed up by the larger community. Intermarriage, an obvious route to such assimilation, has therefore been viewed as a perennial danger to Jewish viability and continuity.

Ironically, this danger has always been greatest when more direct threats to Jewish safety and security—pogroms, widespread economic discrimination and rigid social ostracism—were absent. The bonds that have traditionally tied Jews together in the face of virulent anti-Semitism have also traditionally weakened whenever the surrounding society was benign and accepting. "What centuries of persecution had been powerless to do," wrote Lewis S. Benjamin, in 1907, in his book entitled *The Passing of the English Jew*, "has been effected in a score of years by friendly intercourse."

Small wonder, then, that the rate of intermarriage in the United States has grown precipitously in recent decades, and that the issue is currently of major concern not only to Jewish parents (few families are entirely untouched by the phenomenon), but to the Jewish community as a whole. Despite this growing concern, however, there are few available data to explain why Jews intermarry or what happens to their Jewish connections or those of their children when they do. Reliable statistics of any kind about American Jews are notoriously scarce: the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution has been interpreted as barring official inquiries regarding religion, and demographic studies by voluntary agencies are extremely difficult to conduct and interpret.

It was the publication in 1971 of data from the National Jewish Population Study, conducted by the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds, which first highlighted the sharp increase in intermarriage over a surprisingly short period of time. From the turn

of the century until 1960, the rate of Jewish intermarriage stayed well below 10 percent; in fact, for reasons that are still unclear, it even declined slightly during the last half of the 1950s. But after that, the figures began to change rapidly. From 1961-1965 the rate rose to 17.4 percent and from 1966-1972 it climbed to 31.7 percent.

These statistics, alarming in themselves to a small group that a generation ago lost one-third of its total world population in the Holocaust, are doubly threatening when viewed together with other disturbing trends—the sharp decline in the Jewish birthrate, quite possibly to below actual replacement level; the increased divorce rate and other evidences of family turmoil in the Jewish community; the reduction in synagogue and communal involvement; the growing ignorance about Jewish religious and cultural matters among American Jews as a whole.

Elihu Bergman, Assistant Director of the Harvard Center for Population Studies, predicts, on the basis of unpublished projections by colleagues (questioned by some), that 100 years from now the American Jewish community will have dwindled to between 10,000 and 940,000 persons. Bergman bases this ominous forecast on the low Jewish birth rate and the erosion of Jewish identity, and argues that intermarriage is the greatest factor in this assimilation process. On the other hand, some American Jews believe that intermarriage in the United States today need not, as it did in earlier periods here and in Europe, lead inevitably to total assimilation; they even argue that intermarriage may actually add new familial connections and influences to dwindling Jewish numbers.

A number of the factors which contribute to the spiralling intermarriage rates among Jews—their acceptance by the better colleges and professional schools, their quick climb up the economic ladder, and their general success in American society—are, by virtually any standard, positive developments. And many of the values that most modern Jews endorse—universalism, brotherhood, equality, and the like—make condemnation of intermarriage a special dilemma for some people, particularly since there is no expectation that the Jewish partner will reject his or her Jewishness.

Many Jews are troubled by intermarriage without really being able to explain to themselves or to others, including their children, why they feel this way. Parents, particularly, find themselves uneasy at the prospect of their son or daughter marrying a non-Jew because the arguments that come to their minds in opposition to such marriages appear to run counter, in many respects, to the principles by which they raised their children. It is difficult for many fathers or mothers, in the 1970s, to say to their children, "Don't marry the man or woman you love because that person is not Jewish." And unless

there is a strong religious conviction, it is equally hard to insist on the conversion of a non-Jewish spouse as a condition of marriage. These difficulties do not necessarily reflect an intrinsic conflict between liberal values and opposition to mixed marriage, though it may reflect the ambivalence of some Jews about their Jewish commitment.

At the same time, there are some signs of a greater commitment to Judaism's survival on the part of some young Jews—a reflection, in part, of the general ethnic resurgence in America and of the collapse of so many secular messianic dreams. Though it is too early to tell how widespread and durable this movement will prove, it does suggest that the pressures for assimilation may not be entirely irresistible, and emphasizes the importance of helping Jews to find acceptable ways to remain in the fold. For many reasons, therefore, the Jewish community needs to know more about the dynamics of intermarriage and about the relationships of intermarried men and women to Jews and Judaism.

Few empirical studies have been conducted on this subject, and most of those which were done involved single communities. The National Jewish Population Study does, as mentioned, contain some useful data; but it was not designed to permit intensive analysis of intermarriage and most other reports have concentrated on the rates and causes of intermarriage, rather than on its consequences.

Because there is so little in the way of hard facts to support the passionately held positions on all sides of this issue, the American Jewish Committee undertook, in 1976, to sponsor a study on the effects of intermarriage. This study, directed by Dr. Egon Mayer, Associate Professor of Sociology at Brooklyn College, was conducted in eight American communities with the participation of the local chapters of the American Jewish Committee and with the cooperation of many individuals and groups in and out of the AJC.

The study sought to examine the impact of intermarriage on the couples involved and on their families, as well as on their ties to the Jewish community. The goal was to locate a representative sample of intermarried couples and to determine, through a questionnaire and in-depth interviews:

- 1) whether intermarriage leads to a diminishing identification with Judaism and the Jewish community on the part of the Jewish spouse;
- 2) whether intermarriage promotes conflict between marriage partners;
- 3) whether intermarriage causes alienation between the Jewish spouse and his or her parents, siblings, extended family;
- 4) how non-Jewish spouses feel about the introduction of Jewish content into their family life and about efforts to provide Jewish

acculturation for their children;

5) the effect on Jewish commitment where the born-Gentile spouse has converted to Judaism.

The pages that follow describe the highlights and implications of this study.* The American Jewish Committee hopes that this report will help Jewish religious and communal organizations assess the impact of intermarriage on Jewish life and plan policies and programs to ameliorate its threat to the Jewish future.

We are indebted to Dr. Egon Mayer for designing and directing this study, to the many individuals in AJC and in other Jewish organizations who helped carry it out, and to Dr. Carl Sheingold for his help in preparing this summary.

YEHUDA ROSENMAN, *Director*
Jewish Communal Affairs Department
The American Jewish Committee

THE STUDY

For the purposes of this investigation, intermarriage was deliberately defined in its broadest possible terms to include a marriage between any individual who was born Jewish and one who was not. Thus, the sample included some persons who, from a *halachic* and/or communal point of view, were Jewish, since they had converted to Judaism. This decision was made in hope of shedding some light on the consequences of conversion as well as on the consequences of intermarriage itself. The term "intermarriage" is therefore used in this report as an inclusive term covering all respondents; the term "mixed marriage" refers to marriages in which neither partner had converted; and the term "conversionary marriages" describes marriages in which the born-Gentile spouse has converted to Judaism.*

The Respondents

Respondents in this study included 446 intermarried couples, in Cleveland, Dallas, Long Island, Los Angeles, New York City, Philadelphia, San Francisco and Westchester. Both husband and wife filled out identical self-administered questionnaires and participated in identical in-depth interviews.

Two-thirds of the couples consisted of a Jewish man and a non-Jewish woman, a sex ratio which has, in the past, been typical of the intermarried. There was, however, a greater proportion of Jewish women in the younger age groups of the sample, and it is possible that as the educational and occupational patterns of women become more like those of men, the earlier ratio will be altered.

The family lives of the born-Jewish men were generally more Jewishly oriented than those of born-Jewish women. For instance, 41.4 percent of the born-Jewish men often or always attend High Holy Day services, compared to 30.0 percent of the born-Jewish women. Over 30 percent of the men are affiliated with a synagogue, compared to 23.8 percent of women. And with few exceptions, ritual

*Dr. Mayer's full report is available on request from the American Jewish Committee.

*Although the study does include a few couples in which the born-Jewish spouse converted from Judaism to another faith, the number was too small to permit analysis.

observances at home, the celebration of religious rites of passage for children, involvement in Jewish organizations, were marked by the same sex differences. Born-Gentile wives married to Jewish men were also more likely to convert to Judaism than were the born-Gentile husbands.

Ninety percent of the marriages studied were intact, and for over 80 percent of the spouses it was their first marriage.

The sample included a full range of age groupings, though the percentage of respondents aged 50 and over was larger than it should have been, given the low rate of intermarriage before the 1950s.

Eighty-five percent of the couples studied were parents, and approximately 30 percent have more than two children.

Educational attainment, occupational status and income were all higher for the respondents than for both the national average and the national Jewish average. Born-Jewish women were more likely than born-Jewish men to have the same level of education as their spouses, and to have met their spouses at college.

The family background of the born-Jewish spouses in this sample closely approximated the religious affiliation patterns of American Jews, including a substantial representation of the Orthodox (see Table 1).

The born-Gentile spouses also represented a variety of religious backgrounds (see Table 2).

Just over 21 percent of the non-Jewish respondents and 3.3 percent of the Jewish respondents had converted to their spouses' religion—again figures consistent with data from other studies. The rate of conversion was highest in the 20-39 age groups.

Table 1
**Denominational Backgrounds
of Born-Jewish Respondents**

	<u>Percent</u>
Orthodox	11.1
Conservative	29.3
Reform	26.7
Not affiliated	32.9

Table 2
**Religious Backgrounds of
Born-Gentile Respondents**

	<u>Percent</u>	
	<u>Converts</u>	<u>Non-Converts</u>
Protestant	53.7	45.1
Catholic	17.7	30.8
Other	13.5	6.3
None	11.4	17.7

Note: Totals across do not equal 100% because some respondents did not answer this question.

The Sample

The goal of the study was to obtain a large representative sample from the national population of intermarried couples. Because this goal proved difficult to achieve, it is important to indicate some of the limitations of this particular sample.

Since there is no central listing of Jews, much less of marriages and religious backgrounds, it was necessary to rely on a variety of strategies for locating intermarried couples. Most of the couples in this study were identified as intermarried by members of the local Jewish community. Thus, although efforts were made to randomize as much as possible, the respondents do not, in a strict sense, constitute a random sample. A number of resulting biases can be identified:

1) All the Jewish spouses included in the sample had to be known, at least to some members of the Jewish community, as Jewish. Thus, the most assimilated intermarried couples in the community were probably underrepresented.

2) Ninety percent of the marriages studied were intact. Since this is a higher percentage than for marriages as a whole, intermarried couples with severe marital problems were probably underrepresented.

3) As with any study on a sensitive personal topic, the refusal rate (the percentage of people contacted who declined to be interviewed) was high. One obvious result was a smaller sample than had been hoped for. But it is also possible that couples most sensitive about their intermarriage, for whatever reason, were underrepresented.

4) All the communities studied were large metropolitan areas with sizeable Jewish populations—the kind of communities in which most

American Jews live. Couples living in small towns, where both intermarriage and assimilation may be harder to avoid, are not represented in the sample. It is possible that their experiences differ significantly from those of couples who were included.

These biases are important enough to make this investigation less than a definitive study. But there are a number of reasons to view its findings as significant and reliable. In the first place, the study yielded a richer lode of relevant data than most earlier researches in this area. And on those questions where it was possible to compare the results with the more representative National Jewish Population Study, the findings were, for the most part, consistent.

Even more important is the fact that virtually all the biases tended in a similar direction—an overrepresentation of couples with more positive feelings about, and ties to, the Jewish community. Thus, while it is possible that, from a Jewish communal perspective, the effects of intermarriage are more damaging than these data suggest, it is highly unlikely that they are less so. Also from a Jewish communal perspective, the sample contains an overrepresentation of the kind of families most likely to retain some contact with the Jewish community. *They are the group the community has to work with.* If the goal is to develop a viable communal response to intermarriage, then this sample has considerable insight to impart.

THE FINDINGS*

One important area probed by both the written questionnaires and the personal interviews was the family background in which the partners to the intermarriage, particularly the born-Jewish spouses, grew up. The findings not only corroborate earlier studies and conventional wisdom to the effect that those who intermarry come from less religious and less intensively Jewish homes than those who don't; they also provide clues as to the religious and cultural background and experiences that those who intermarry bring to their marriage.

Family Background of Born-Jewish Spouses

Almost 70 percent of the parents of the born-Jewish spouses belonged to a synagogue, and over 65 percent were perceived by the respondents to have been "somewhat religious" (as compared to "very religious" or "not at all religious"). It is not clear, however, just how much of a religious involvement these perceptions indicate.

More revealing, perhaps, are the data concerning the religious and ritual objects that were available and/or used in the homes in which the born-Jewish spouses grew up (see Table 3).

In interpreting these data it is necessary to take into account the ritual and religious significance of the various objects checked off by the respondents. Keeping separate dishes for meat and dairy foods, and using a *hardalah* set and *t'fillin*, obviously connote a far deeper religious involvement than owning Jewish books or a menorah, particularly if these are the sole marks of Jewishness in the home. The data suggest that only 10 to 20 percent of the respondents were raised by parents who kept a kosher home or laid *t'fillin*, and a similar percentage were raised by parents who did not even own Jewish books or a menorah. The vast majority grew up in homes with some objects that are generally associated, in at least a minimal way, with Jewish identity; but a considerably smaller number experienced religious observance or practice.

*Some tables do not total 100% because of minor deviations due to rounding.

Table 3

**Religious and Cultural Objects
in the Parental Homes
of Born-Jewish Respondents**

	Percent		
	Own Use or Display	Own But Do Not Use	Do Not Own
Mezuzah	54.7	9.1	36.1
Sabbath Candle	45.2	23.3	31.3
Kiddush Cup	32.8	22.3	44.9
Menorah	66.9	14.7	18.4
Havdalah Set	12.1	6.5	81.4
Talith	27.8	24.4	47.7
T'fillin	14.0	21.8	64.2
Seder Plate	47.2	13.5	39.3
Jewish Bible	35.5	43.7	20.7
Jewish Prayer Book	46.1	31.0	22.9
Jewish Books	47.5	35.0	17.4
Separate Dishes for Meat and Dairy Foods	7.1	22.3	70.6
Kipah	38.5	26.1	27.8
Jewish Musical Records	25.5	22.5	52.0
Jewish Art Objects Poster, etc.	44.9	18.6	37.6
	24.9	14.9	60.3

In the face-to-face interviews, slightly over 10 percent of the respondents described their parents as anti-religious. Approximately 20 percent said their parents had insisted on some ritual observances; most of the rest reported an explicit or implicit desire on the part of their parents for Jewish identity—"a sense of being Jewish"—without much actual religious practice or cultural involvement.

A small minority of the born-Jewish partners had an intensive Jewish education; the largest group had some Jewish education but not a great deal; and a significant group appears to have had no Jewish education at all (see Tables 4A and 4B).

Table 4A

**Amount of Jewish Education Reported
By Born-Jewish Respondents
(By sex)**

	Percent	
	Male	Female
1-5 years*	39.0	38.0
6+ years	19.0	8.0
No answer/None	42.0	54.0

*Most respondents in this group had less than four years of Jewish education.

Table 4B

**Type of Jewish Education Reported
By Born-Jewish Respondents
(By sex)**

	Percent	
	Male	Female
Day School or Yeshiva	11.7	3.0
Sunday or Afternoon School	64.9	62.6
Yiddish School or other (e.g. tutoring)	6.5	8.4
Can't recall	16.7	26.0

Though very few of the born-Jewish respondents grew up in an exclusively Jewish environment, the vast majority grew up in neighborhoods where at least half their peers were Jewish, and between 15 and 20 percent were raised in a predominantly non-

Jewish environment. The degree of contact with non-Jews increased when dating began, but only a minority said that they dated "mostly non-Jews." Thus, while the typical respondent had extensive social contacts with non-Jews, he or she also had extensive Jewish contacts. In such a setting, intermarriage must be viewed as a possible, but not as an inevitable outcome.

The born-Jewish partners reported that their parents grew more and more uneasy as their sons' and daughters' contacts with non-Jews moved from friendship to dating to marriage (see Table 5). Though a majority of the parents were clearly opposed to their children's intermarriage, most were not strongly opposed; and approximately one-third were perceived by their children as neutral.

Table 5

Parents' Attitudes Toward Friendship, Dating, and Marriage Between Jews and Gentiles

	FATHER Percent			MOTHER Percent		
	Friend-ship	Dating	Mar-riage	Friend-ship	Dating	Mar-riage
Strongly opposed	.6	11.5	19.7	.9	12.7	21.3
Opposed	6.7	33.4	39.5	11.0	38.9	39.7
No opinion	58.0	48.5	35.0	53.9	41.1	33.7
Approved	29.2	6.6	5.8	27.6	6.3	5.1
Strongly approved	5.1	****	****	6.3	.9	.3

In sum, the typical born-Jewish spouses in the sample studied came from homes which, though neither non-Jewish nor anti-Jewish, were not intensively Jewish, particularly in religious terms. While most reported that their parents were opposed to the intermarriage, it did not, in light of their upbringing, represent either an unnatural development or an act of rebellion. Nor was the parents' opposition great enough to rupture their ties to their children when the latter proceeded with the marriage.

Family Background of Non-Jewish Spouses

As might be expected, the non-Jewish respondents grew up in a more exclusively non-Jewish environment than did their spouses. Most said they had few, if any, Jewish friends while they were growing up, and the majority reported dating mostly non-Jews. And not surprisingly, the typical non-Jewish respondent was much more ignorant about Jews and Judaism at the time of the marriage than his or her spouse was about Christianity.

The findings also indicate that the parents of the non-Jewish respondents were somewhat more religious than their Jewish counterparts. Approximately three-quarters of these parents belonged to a church; fewer of the fathers were perceived by their children to have been "anti-religious," and more of the mothers were perceived as "very religious." And though many of these parents, too, were opposed to their children's intermarrying, a majority of the respondents said their parents were either neutral or favorably disposed toward their marriage (see Table 6).

Table 6

Parental Attitudes Towards Children's Intermarriage (Non-Jewish Parents)

	Percent	
	Convert	Non-Convert
Favorable	19.5	22.6
Neutral	31.7	29.4
Unfavorable	48.8	48.8

Married Life

Marital Harmony: Many of the questions in the study were designed to elicit information as to agreement or disagreement between the spouses about lifestyle, religious involvement, child-rearing, and related matters. The vast majority of couples reported family harmony (or at least the absence of intense conflict) on most matters, including ethnic and religious issues. Though self-report data are not altogether reliable, and the high percentage of intact marriages in the sample may have skewed the responses to some degree, they do seem to negate the widely held assumption that intermarriage results in friction between the spouses and does not

work. In this sample, at least, it seems to have worked well enough.

Extended Family Ties: Another widely held belief about intermarriage is that it tends to damage family ties. If this were true it would, of course, be a tragedy in its own right. It would also eliminate possible sources of Jewish content in the lives of intermarried families. All of the data make it clear, however, that the ties between the couples surveyed and their parents and other relatives were intact. Not only did most of the respondents say they got along well with their families, many even reported that their relationships with their parents were better than before the marriage. They saw their families as regularly as time and distance permitted, and in the vast majority of cases their spouses were accepted into the extended family. None of the respondents reported a total break with their families as a result of their marriage.

Table 7

**Celebration of Jewish Holidays
With Jewish Parents**

	Born-Jewish Husband			Born-Jewish Wife		
	Percent			Percent		
	Always	Sometimes	Rarely Never	Always	Sometimes	Rarely Never
Rosh Hashanah	30.9	17.4	51.7	32.5	15.0	52.5
Yom Kippur	27.8	17.5	54.7	32.7	13.8	53.4
Hanukkah	29.9	15.2	54.9	42.1	15.4	42.5
Passover	44.8	16.8	34.4	50.3	10.6	39.0

Note: Percentages total 100 percent across.

Though most respondents, Jewish and non-Jewish, report getting along well with their in-laws, the data suggest that the couples are in closer touch with their Jewish than their non-Jewish parents, perhaps simply because many of the couples live closer to the Jewish parents.

The data also reveal specific ways in which the couples' social ties with their extended families are cemented (see Table 7). A significant minority of the couples celebrate Jewish religious holidays with their

Jewish parents (but, except for Passover, a majority do not). The holiday most consistently celebrated with Jewish parents is Thanksgiving; and a sizeable minority of the couples also celebrate Christmas with their Jewish families (see Table 8).

These data suggest that for many intermarried couples the close ties with Jewish parents and extended Jewish family represent an opportunity to enrich the Jewish content of their family lives. In reality, however, shared holiday observances have more of a social than a religious or ritualistic meaning for most of the families.

Religious and Ethnic Life

If intermarriage is a threat to Jewish continuity, it is so particularly because such families provide so little Jewish upbringing for their children. Thus a major concern of this study was the religious and ethnic life of intermarried families and the level of their Jewish identification.

Because there was a dramatic difference, in virtually every area studied, in the responses of couples whose non-Jewish spouse did not convert (mixed marriages) and the responses of couples whose born-

Table 8

**Celebration of Christmas and Thanksgiving
With Parents**

	Percent	
	Celebrate with Jewish Parents	Celebrate with Gentile Parents
Christmas		
Often	25.6	54.3
Sometimes	16.9	13.3
Rarely	7.3	9.8
Never	49.8	21.8
Thanksgiving		
Often	49.5	37.0
Sometimes	24.5	26.4
Rarely	9.0	12.1
Never	16.7	24.5

Gentile spouse had converted to Judaism (conversionary marriages), the data for the two groups were considered separately.

Mixed Marriages

Religious Identification: Close to two-thirds of the Jewish respondents among the mixed-marriage couples declared that they thought of themselves as Jews and that being Jewish was important to them. A significant minority, however, indicated indifference to any expression of Jewishness, however minimal.

As might be expected, the vast majority of the non-Jewish spouses who did not convert do not identify as Jews. But surprisingly, close to 12 percent of these spouses do consider themselves Jewish, and another 7.3 percent consider themselves partly Jewish. Only about one-third currently identify with the religion of their birth—roughly half the number that did so prior to their marriage (see Table 9). More than three-quarters of the non-Jewish spouses report experiencing religious feelings—however they choose to define that—fairly often.

Organizational Involvement: Twenty-two percent of the mixed-marriage couples report some involvement with Jewish communal organizations and 37 percent contribute to the United Jewish Appeal. Though this level of involvement is lower than that of endogamous Jewish couples, it is not dramatically different. According to the National Jewish Population Study, approximately 40 percent of the Jewish population participates in the activities of Jewish organizations, most of them on a sporadic basis.

Synagogue Involvement: The Jewish involvement that probably exerts the greatest influence on the religious and ethnic identity of young children (and their parents) is participation in synagogue life.

The data make clear that while 15 to 20 percent of the mixed-marriage couples surveyed do belong to a synagogue, and attend services with some regularity, the vast majority do not (see Tables 10A-C). It should be noted, however, that intermarried couples often find scant welcome in both religious and secular Jewish organizations. Lack of involvement does not always reflect a lack of desire on the part of the intermarried couples to belong.

Home Observances: Not surprisingly, only a handful of the mixed-marriage couples surveyed keep a kosher home, own and use a *hardalah* set or other ritual objects, light Sabbath candles, or otherwise observe the Sabbath with any regularity (see Table 11).

Table 10A

Affiliation of Mixed-Marriage Couples Belonging to Synagogues (18% of total)

Type of Congregation	Percent*
Reform	34
Conservative	20
Orthodox	9
Unidentified	37

*These are percentages only of the 18% of the mixed-marriage couples who belong to synagogues.

Table 9

Religious Self-Identification of Born-Gentile Respondents (Non-converts)

	Percent	
	Prior to Marriage	Currently
Protestant	45.0	26.0
Catholic	30.0	10.0
Other	6.0	7.0
None/no answer	18.0	57.0

Table 10B

Attendance of Born-Jewish Spouse at Regular Weekly Services (Mixed-marriage)

Frequency	Percent
Often	5
Sometimes	17
Rarely	26
Never	52

Table 10C

Attendance of Born-Jewish Spouse at High Holy Day Services (Mixed-marriage)

Frequency	Percent
Often	27
Sometimes	14
Rarely	19
Never	40

Table 11

**Ritual Observances Performed by
Born-Jewish Spouses
(Mixed-Marriage)**

Frequency	Percent	
	Light Sabbath Candles*	Light Hanukkah Candles
Often	8	41
Sometimes	8	12
Rarely	12	7
Never	71	40

*These data are skewed by the fact that two-thirds of the born-Jewish spouses in the study were men, and lighting Sabbath candles is a woman's ritual.

Fewer than half own and use a menorah, and less than one-half often light candles on Hanukkah. Indeed, while roughly one-third of the respondents reported owning and/or using a number of Jewish objects (see Table 12), not a single object on the list was owned and used by a majority. And a comparison of Tables 3 and 12 makes it clear that every item on the list is owned and used with less frequency in mixed-marriage couples than was owned and used by the families in which the born-Jewish spouses grew up.

Raising Children: At the heart of Jewish concern about inter-marriage is whether the children of such marriages will be part of, or lost to, the Jewish fold. The data summarized above bear significantly on this question; but the study provides data even more relevant to the subject.

Approximately one-third of the mixed-marriage couples surveyed said they thought of their children as Jewish, and would be upset if their children did not think of themselves as Jews. Forty-three percent of the respondents reported that their sons had been, or would be, ritually circumcised—a figure greater than might be expected.*

*The study did not probe why more respondents said they had had, or planned to have, ritual circumcisions for their sons than said that they considered their children Jewish. It is likely that at least some of the respondents ignored the difference between religious and medical circumcision and reported the latter as "ritual circumcision," or that some of the respondents, convinced that circumcision was desirable for medical or hygienic reasons, agreed to ritual circumcision to please the Jewish grandparents.

But fewer than a third of the couples said that their children had had, or would have, a Bar or Bat Mitzvah—a rite of passage with strong direct impact on the child—and some of the couples reported they were planning to have their children baptized and confirmed. In most cases, however, there were no plans to replace Jewish rites with Christian rites (see Table 13).

Perhaps the most sobering statistic, given the low level of Jewish content in the family life of most mixed-marriage couples, is the small number of such families that provide formal Jewish instruction for their children. Only about one-quarter, at most, of the children whose parents were involved in this study receive a formal Jewish education, and even fewer receive intensive Jewish schooling (see Table 14).

Table 12

**Ritual and Cultural Jewish Objects
in the Homes of
Mixed-Marriage Couples**

	Percent		
	Own, Use or Display	Own But Do Not Use	Do Not Own
Mezuzah	22.9	6.6	70.5
Sabbath Candle	16.3	16.9	66.8
Kiddush Cup	12.9	12.7	74.4
Menorah	43.5	12.2	44.4
Havdalah Set	2.4	3.8	93.8
Talith	8.8	12.3	78.9
T'fillin	4.9	9.8	85.3
Seder Plate	18.9	5.9	75.2
Jewish Bible	23.5	35.1	41.4
Jewish Prayer Book	23.8	23.0	53.2
Jewish Books	30.6	32.6	36.8
Separate Dishes	5.2	2.4	92.5
Kipah	20.1	26.1	53.8
Jewish Musical Records	18.4	13.2	68.4
Jewish Art Objects Posters, etc.	29.6	15.3	55.1
	15.1	9.3	75.6

What then do the data indicate about mixed-marriage couples and about the Jewish component of their lives? It seems fair to conclude that while most of the Jewish spouses have an abstract sense of Jewish identity, only a minority of them act on it; and even among the latter, very few act on it with any intensity. The majority of these couples express neither desire nor intention to have their children identify as Jews, and only a small proportion of the families studied will provide formal Jewish education or other experiences explicitly designed to raise their children Jewishly. Despite the fact that the sample selected for this study may be expected to skew the responses in the direction of optimism, the Jewish content of family life in mixed marriages is, by every index, less than it is among endogamous marriages.

Table 13

**Selected Rites of Passage Observed or
Planned by Mixed-Marriage Couples
for Their Children
(Reported by Born-Jewish Spouses)**

	<u>Percent</u>
Ritual Circumcision (of son)	43
Bar or Bat Mitzvah	30
Baptism	13
Church Confirmation	11

Table 14

**Type of Religious Education
Currently Given to Children**

	<u>Percent</u>
Day School	6
Afternoon/Sunday School	19
Home Instruction	13
Other/None (including non-Jewish)	62

Table 15

When Did Conversion Occur?

	<u>Percent</u>
Prior to meeting spouse	15.0
Prior to marriage	40.0
Prior to first child, but after marriage	22.0
After first child	6.0
No answer	15.0

Table 16

**Reasons for Conversion
Reported by Converts**

	<u>Percent</u>
Personal conviction	32.2
Influence of spouse and in-laws	38.0
For the sake of the children	8.9
Combination of above, and other reasons	20.9

Conversionary Marriages

Just over 21 percent of the born-Gentile respondents in the sample had converted to Judaism by the time of the study.* Of this group, 40 percent converted prior to, and in connection with, the marriage, and another 15 percent before they met their current spouse (often in connection with an earlier marriage). This still leaves a large group (approximately one-third of all the converts) who converted after the marriage (see Table 15).

The data indicate that most of these later conversions were not entered into primarily for the sake of the children, but were the

**It should be noted that 3.3 percent of the born-Jewish respondents had converted out of Judaism; but this is too small a group to analyze, and no effort was made to do so.*

culmination of long and thoughtful consideration. The most common reason cited for conversion was the influence of the Jewish spouse and family (see Table 16).

Conversion into Judaism was more common among women than men. Twenty-seven percent of the born-Gentile women, compared to 14 percent of the born-Gentile men, had converted to Judaism by the time of the study.*

A larger proportion of converts were between 20 and 39 years of age than was the case with non-converts (see Table 17). The data on those under 20 years of age, however, point the other way; but those marrying this young are, in any case, not typical.

As might be expected, conversion was more common where the parents of the Jewish spouse were more religiously involved. In addition, it would appear that religious feelings combined with a lack of identification with the religion of one's birth on the part of the born-Gentile spouse play a part in the impetus for conversion.

The data reveal few significant differences between mixed and conversionary marriages on such matters as education, income,

Table 17

Age Distribution of Converts and Non-Converts

	Percent	
	Converts	Non-Converts
Under 20 years old	1.0	15.2
20-29	18.9	10.3
30-39	41.0	32.9
40-49	22.2	20.3
50-59	13.7	14.6
60 and over	3.1	6.6

family harmony and ties to extended family. But they point to dramatic and important differences in religious and ethnic identification. Close to 83 percent of the converts consider themselves Jewish and another 6.4 percent consider themselves partly Jewish. The vast majority said that being Jewish was important to them.

*This pattern was reversed among the small group of respondents who converted out of Judaism; 11 of the 15 were men.

Organizational Involvement: The families of converts are more involved in Jewish organizational life than the families of non-converts, but the differences are not dramatic. Thirty-eight percent of the converts said they contribute to the UJA, 9.4 percent said they were frequently involved in the activities of Jewish organizations, and 32.3 percent reported less frequent involvement.

Synagogue Involvement: The vast majority of converts are actively involved in their synagogues, and approximately two-thirds attend services with some regularity (the comparable figure for non-converts is less than one-third). According to the National Jewish Population Survey, fewer than half of all endogamous Jewish families are involved in synagogue life, making the affiliation rate of the converts doubly dramatic (see Tables 18A-18C).

Ritual Activities and Objects in the Home: Approximately half of the converts in this study light Sabbath candles, at least some of the time, and more than three-quarters regularly light Hanukkah candles (see Table 19).

As Table 12 indicates, the majority of mixed-marriage respondents did not own or use the religious and cultural objects listed in the study. Most of the respondents in the conversionary marriages, however, reported owning virtually all of these items, including items of considerable ritual or religious significance, and a majority said they used these objects. As the data on separate dishes indicate, few of the conversionary-marriage families are strictly observant; but in the homes of most of them, artifacts of Jewish life are visible and used (see Table 20).

Table 18A

**Affiliation of Conversionary-Marriage Couples
Belonging to Synagogues
(68% of total)**

Type of Congregation	Percent*
Reform	47
Conservative	18
Orthodox	11
Unidentified	23

*These are percentages only of the 68% of the conversionary-marriage couples who belong to synagogues.

Table 18B

**Attendance at Regular Weekly Services
(Conversionary Marriage)**

	Percent	
	Born-Gentile Convert	Born-Jewish Spouse
Frequency		
Often	20	21
Sometimes	42	37
Rarely	20	34
Never	18	7

Table 18C

**Attendance at High Holy Day Services
(Conversionary Marriage)**

	Percent	
	Born-Gentile Convert	Born-Jewish Spouse
Frequency		
Often	72	73
Sometimes	9	11
Rarely	7	7
Never	12	9

Table 19

**Ritual Observances Performed by Born-Jewish
Spouses
(Conversionary Marriage)**

	Percent	
	Light Sabbath Candles	Light Hanukkah Candles
Often	36	80
Sometimes	22	11
Rarely	15	6
Never	27	3

Table 20

**Religious and Cultural Objects in the Homes of
Conversionary Marriages**

	Percent		
	Own, Use or Display	Own But Do Not Use	Do Not Own
Mezuzah	57	6	32
Sabbath Candle	52	24	19
Kiddush Cup	43	16	36
Menorah	87	3	7
Havdalah Set	8	9	80
Talith	24	17	57
T'fillin	10	14	72
Seder Plate	47	6	43
Jewish Bible	40	38	18
Jewish Prayer Book	52	27	18
Jewish Books	62	20	15
Separate Dishes	9	4	82
Kipah	43	26	26
Jewish Musical Records	30	23	43
Jewish Art Objects	56	6	34
Posters, etc.	35	9	51

Note: Totals across do not equal 100% because some respondents did not answer this question.

Raising Children: Eighty percent of the Jewish spouses in conversionary marriages said they considered their children Jewish and would be upset if their children did not regard themselves as Jewish, compared to about one-third of the Jewish spouses in mixed marriages.

Close to three-quarters of the conversionary-marriage couples provided, or plan to provide, for ritual circumcision of their sons as well as a Bar or Bat Mitzvah for their children (in mixed marriages, close to half of the couples opted for ritual circumcision and less than a third for a Bar or Bat Mitzvah). Fifty-six percent of the conversionary-marriage couples said they were providing a formal Jewish education for their children, and 16 percent were sending their children to Jewish day schools (less than one-quarter of the children of mixed marriages receive a formal Jewish education).

Denominational Background: Based upon the denominational background of the Jewish parents, the rates of conversion were 28 percent for Reform, 19 percent for Conservative, and 31 percent for Orthodox. While the vast majority who converted under Reform or Conservative auspices later affiliated with the same denomination, the vast majority of those who converted under Orthodox auspices are currently affiliated with Reform synagogues. Reform, Conservative and Orthodox converts all scored higher on measures of Jewishness than non-converts, but those who converted under Conservative and Orthodox auspices tended to score higher than the Reform group, and in some cases significantly so.

Other Findings

Rabbinic Officiation at the Wedding: One of the most controversial issues raised by intermarriage is the appropriateness of rabbinic officiation at wedding ceremonies. Only 10 percent of the sample (49 couples) were married by a rabbi in the absence of conversion; thus, our data are of limited value with regard to this issue, and it would be inappropriate to provide detailed data on this question. In general, however, the Jewish commitment and practice among this small group was less than within conversionary marriages (particularly those involving conversion under Conservative or Orthodox auspices), greater than within other mixed marriages, but similar to mixed marriages in which the Jewish spouse had had a significant Jewish background.

The desire to be married by a rabbi, and the willingness to make an effort to find one willing to participate, suggest a basic Jewish commitment greater than is typical among the intermarried. It is likely that this prior commitment rather than rabbinical participation led to a higher rate of Jewish practice after the wedding, just as the prior commitment and practice of the born-Jewish spouses may have led to a higher rate of conversion among their born-Gentile partners.

The Effect of Jewish Background

While there are not enough data to permit a systematic identification of the religious and cultural factors which influence the Jewish component in intermarriage, there is enough information about the background and commitment of the born-Jewish spouse to warrant a brief examination of some relevant data.

Given the relatively low commitment of the born-Gentile spouses to the religion of their birth and their lack of opposition to Jewishness in their family lives, it is reasonable to assume that the level of pre-

marital commitment to Judaism by the born-Jewish spouse played an important part in determining the Jewish religious and ethnic content of the couple's family life. This assumption seems to be corroborated by the findings on the Jewish spouses' Jewish education and personal commitment and their parents' synagogue affiliation.

When the data on Jewish education and synagogue affiliation are examined together with the responses of both spouses about how important their religious background had been to them just prior to their marriage, there is little doubt that religious background was subjectively of greater importance to the born-Jewish spouses than to the born-Gentile spouses (see Table 21).

Table 21

"Thinking Back to the Time Just Prior to Your Getting Married, How Important Would You Say Your Own Religious Background Was to You?"

	Percent			
	Born-Jewish Spouse		Born-Gentile Spouse	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Very Important	27.5	32.8	13.9	19.5
Somewhat Important	39.3	27.2	19.1	31.4
Unimportant	27.0	35.1	56.4	41.3
Tried to Avoid It	3.6	3.3	5.4	.9
Rejected It	2.6	1.6	5.8	6.8

The data also highlight the relationship between these background variables and several measures of the Jewishness in the couples' married life.

Jewish Books in the Home: 30 percent of the born-Jewish spouses who had had no Jewish education reported that they own and read Jewish books, compared with 36 percent for those with one to three years of Jewish education and 48 percent for those with four or more years of Jewish education. Also, 28 percent of those whose parents had not belonged to a synagogue reported that they own and read Jewish books, compared to 43 percent for those whose parents had belonged to a synagogue. Only 18 percent of the born-Jewish spouses who said their religious background had been unimportant to them before marriage said they owned and read Jewish books after marriage.

compared with 42 percent for those who said that it had been "somewhat" important and 60 percent for those who considered it "very" important.

Mezuzahs: Twenty-seven percent of the born-Jewish spouses with little or no Jewish education owned and displayed mezuzahs in their homes, compared to 41 percent for those with four years or more of Jewish education. Mezuzahs were owned and used by 23 percent of those whose parents had not belonged to a synagogue, compared to 36 percent for those whose parents had belonged, and only about 20 percent of those whose religious background had been unimportant to them before marriage, compared to about 40 percent of those for whom it had been "somewhat" or "very" important.

Bar or Bat Mitzvah: The percentage of born-Jewish spouses who had celebrated or planned to celebrate a Bar or Bat Mitzvah for their children ranged from 40 percent for those with less than four years of Jewish education to 57 percent for those who had had four years or more. The comparable figures are 38 percent for those whose parents had not belonged to a synagogue, and 49 percent for those whose parents did belong. About one-third of those whose religious background had been unimportant to them before marriage had, or planned to have, a Bar or Bat Mitzvah, compared to over half of those to whom religious background was "somewhat" or "very" important.

Attendance at High Holy Day Services. Thirty-two percent of the born-Jewish spouses with no Jewish education said they regularly attend High Holy Day services, compared to about half of those with four years or more. Half as many (21 percent) of those whose parents had not belonged to a synagogue regularly attended such services as did those (42 percent) whose parents did belong. And the comparable figures were 13 percent for those whose religious background had been unimportant to them before marriage, 42 percent for those to whom it had been somewhat important, and 62 percent for those to whom it had been very important.

All of these data, though admittedly limited in scope, tend to confirm the relationship between the Jewish background of the born-Jewish spouse and the Jewish content of the intermarriage. The strongest influence, it would appear, lies in the importance the individual ascribed to his or her religious background prior to the marriage. An impressive percentage of those who brought into the intermarriage a strong religious involvement in Judaism managed to carry some of that involvement into their family life.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Given the deep feelings about intermarriage in the Jewish community, the findings in this study will inevitably be cited to support a number of contradictory assumptions. In the preceding pages a determined effort has been made to let the data speak for themselves. The final pages will summarize the findings and draw such implications as seem warranted to the researchers and sponsors of the study.

Major Findings

The study indicates that:

—In most mixed marriages, the born-Jewish spouse affirms a Jewish identity, but does little to act on this affirmation. Only a minority, when they become parents, provide formal Jewish education for their children, and in general, the transmission of Jewish knowledge, skills and experience is minimal.

—On every index of Jewish attitudes and practice, couples whose born-Gentile spouses have converted to Judaism scored higher than other intermarried couples. Indeed, based on what is known about the religious and ethnic life in endogamous marriages, the family life of conversionary marriages is more consciously Jewish, both in religious practice and in formal and informal Jewish acculturation of children.

—The factor most responsible for the Jewishness of intermarried families—including the conversion of the born-Gentile spouse—would seem to be the extent of Jewish background, knowledge and commitment of the born-Jewish spouse.

—Lack of Jewish identity and practice in intermarried families is not the result of pressure by the non-Jewish spouse. Most born-Gentile spouses do not identify strongly with the religion of their birth; in fact, even among those who did not convert, a minority reported some identification with Judaism. Very few of the families expressed a desire to raise their children in a religion other than Judaism, and the percentage of children celebrating Christian rites of passage was

significantly lower than those experiencing Jewish rites. Most children of intermarriage are being raised without any ethnic or religious identification.

—Differences of religious background do not seem to contribute to estrangement from parents or to conflicts in family decision-making, including decisions about child-rearing. Relationships between both born-Jewish and born-Gentile respondents and their parents were consistently reported to be close and harmonious.

—The responses of mixed-marriage couples married by a rabbi suggested more Jewish practice than of those who were not (though still considerably less than in families where the born-Gentile spouse had converted), though there is no basis in the data for assuming that rabbinic participation was the cause, rather than the result of such greater commitment. In any event, the number of such couples in the sample was so small that any interpretation must be considered highly speculative.

General Implications

The findings summarized above tend to reinforce the fear that intermarriage represents a threat to Jewish continuity. Most non-Jewish spouses do not convert to Judaism; the level of Jewish content and practice in mixed marriages is low; only about one-third of the Jewish partners in such marriages view their children as Jewish; and most such children are exposed to little by way of Jewish culture or religion. Thus, despite the suggestions of some Jews that intermarriage may actually add to the Jewish population by bringing non-Jewish spouses and the children of such unions into the Jewish fold, this study—conducted with a sample that made optimistic conclusions more likely—does not support this hope. It does, however, suggest steps the Jewish community might take to ameliorate the assimilationist threat inherent in intermarriage.

One set of data—the findings on conversionary marriages—merits particular attention and discussion. Conversionary marriages compare favorably not only with mixed marriages, but with endogamous marriages as well. In the conversionary marriage, Jewish identity is not merely asserted; it is acted upon, particularly with respect to religious affiliation and observance. Thus, in some ways, there is more reason for optimism about Jewish continuity in families where the born-Gentile spouse has converted to Judaism than there is in the typical endogamous family.

Identity formation is too complex a process for anyone to conclude from these data how many, and to what degree, the children of conversionary marriages will remain Jewish. It seems clear, how-

ever, that where conversion takes place, the fact that one of the spouses was not born Jewish is no obstacle to a Jewish family life.

The concept of conversion is, of course, a matter of considerable controversy in the Jewish community. Many religious and communal leaders view it as a primarily Christian preoccupation, and regard conversions that accompany intermarriage as "conversions of convenience," from which little positive Judaism can be expected. Yet this study suggests that such conversions often provide a valuable reservoir of committed and involved Jews.

In mixed marriages, too, the study points to opportunities for the Jewish community to ponder. For while the findings document an absence of Jewish practice in such families, they also show that most born-Jewish spouses retain a sense of being Jewish and that as many as 20 percent of the families act on this identification in meaningful ways. Equally significant are the indications that the lack of Jewish involvement stems from the disinterest of the born-Jewish spouses rather than from opposition by the born-Gentile spouses, or the latter's desire to raise their children in another religion.

The not-insignificant minority of born-Gentile spouses—perhaps as many as 15 percent—who did not convert, but expressed some sense of identification with Judaism, may also point up a valuable potential for the Jewish community. Some of these born-Gentile spouses, particularly those who experience religious feelings, may be prepared to increase their connections to Judaism, either formally or informally, and to accept a more committed Jewish family life.

The changing role and position of women in America also merits attention in this regard. Traditionally, more Jewish men than women have intermarried; but there is evidence that the rate of intermarriage among Jewish women is rising. In this study, intermarried Jewish men have been more likely than Jewish women to infuse their family lives with Jewish content. If this is generally true (and there is conflicting data on the matter), it seems likely that a greater involvement of women in Jewish religious life would increase the Jewish component in intermarriage.

What must be kept in mind, in reviewing this and other studies of intermarriage, is that while the level of Jewish involvement and practice in mixed marriages is lower than in endogamous families, it is disturbingly low in the latter as well. If the decline of Jewish practice represents a threat to Jewish continuity, the threat cuts across exogamy-endogamy lines. A large minority of American Jews—perhaps even the majority—do little to express their Jewish identity and even less to pass that identity on to their children. Yet, in a free and open society, Jewish continuity can only be predicated on ongoing Jewish commitment and practice, and on the rediscovery by

many Jews of the bases of Jewish commitment.

While such a reacculturation is especially urgent for Jews who intermarry, and for their children, the question remains whether intermarriage is primarily a cause or a symptom of the general decline in Jewish identity, commitment and practice.

Certainly assimilation is not unique to the intermarried; nor can it be assumed that if the Jewish respondents in this study had married Jews, the Jewish quality of their family lives in all or even most cases would have differed significantly. (Undoubtedly, however, those who married spouses more Jewishly involved than themselves would have had a more Jewish influence in their homes.)

There are other relevant questions to be asked: To what extent does having two Jewish parents, rather than one, and an extended Jewish family, affect Jewish feelings in children? To what extent does having a Jewish spouse, *per se*, increase the likelihood that a previously uninvolved Jewish adult will intensify his or her Jewish involvement or that of their children? To what extent does the feeling and transmission of *dos pintele yid*—the Jewish spark—decline in the context of intermarriage? The answers are not at hand. But it seems safe to assume that intermarriage is both a cause and an effect of assimilation, and part of a much wider phenomenon. While it would be a mistake to ignore its dangers, it is equally wrong to try to deal with it apart from the broad context in which it occurs.

* * *

The policy responses to this study must, of course, evolve from broad discussion within and among all segments of the Jewish community. But certain implications appear self-evident.

Since intermarriage is likely to increase, rather than decrease, in the foreseeable future, the greatest counterbalance to the assimilationist thrust of such marriages, in the short run, would seem to be an increase in the conversion rate among born-Gentile spouses. Since the study suggests that more such spouses may be open to conversion than is generally assumed, and that a failure to convert before marriage does not necessarily close the door to such a move later, the Jewish community would do well to examine what steps it can take to encourage such moves.

However, since the majority of born-Gentile spouses are not likely to convert to Judaism, the development of a constructive response to mixed marriages must be high on the Jewish communal agenda. For though the study reveals little Jewish content in mixed marriages, it points to apathy, ignorance and confusion, rather than rejection or hostility. The Jewish community should provide the positive experiences and increased exposures that may lead to greater involvement.

The findings all seem to suggest the need for formal and informal programs of outreach to the intermarried by communal organizations and the Jewish community as a whole. They also suggest that the most important focus of such outreach must be education, directed not solely to the Jewish spouse, but to the couple and to their children. The goal should be to enable both Jewish and non-Jewish spouses to learn more about the Jewish religious and cultural tradition, and to help them to make their family life and the education of their children more Jewish-oriented.

Obviously, the spirit in which outreach is conducted is as important as its content. Our attitude toward the intermarried should be that of welcome, not only because they are our children, or because communal etiquette requires it, but because their Jewish feelings and connections are of value and importance to us.

Nor is the urgency of adult Jewish education and communal outreach limited to the intermarried. If it is important to encourage more conversions to Judaism among the intermarried, it is even more important for many who were born Jewish to experience a learning similar to conversion.

There is a crying need to strengthen Jewish experience and identity among American Jews, from early childhood on, and to continue those ties in both endogamous and exogamous marriage. In the long run, this is the only way to assure Jewish continuity and to provide for a meaningful Jewish future.

Additional copies may be obtained from

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE
Institute of Human Relations
165 East 56 Street New York, N.Y. 10022

February 1979

Single copy, \$1.50
Quantity prices on request





איחוד
ליהדות
מתקדמת
באמריקה

Noteworthy/New

books, source materials, film,
bibliographies, addresses, etc.

ADULT JEWISH STUDIES

UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS • 838 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021
DEPARTMENT OF ADULT JEWISH STUDIES • EDITH SAMUEL, DIRECTOR • (212) 249-0100

Date: WINTER, 1979

CONVERTS AND CONVERSION TO JUDAISM Some Study Questions and Resource Materials

On December 2, 1978, the President of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler, raised the important subject of converts to Judaism before the UAHC Board of Trustees. (If you wish a copy of his talk, write to the UAHC Program Department at the address above.) His remarks were well publicized, and subsequently, Reform Jews throughout the nation have begun to discuss various aspects of his proposals. Those proposals, briefly summarized, were:

1. To intensify formal and informal Jewish education within the Reform synagogue and the Reform movement;
2. To develop a sensitive program of welcoming and involving converts to Judaism;
3. To develop an effective outreach program by which the Reform synagogue can respond to the social and emotional stresses experienced by mixed marriage couples;
4. To plan a special program to bring the message of Judaism to those who wish to examine or embrace it; and
5. To appoint a special task force of members of the UAHC Board of Trustees to examine the recommendations for implementation by the movement.

The UAHC Board of Trustees adopted Rabbi Schindler's proposals. A task force is at work exploring them. All members of the Reform movement will be hearing more on this subject in the months ahead.

Discussion Questions

In the wake of this action, some congregations have already begun to inquire about resource materials so that they can arrange Adult Jewish Education programs on the subject of converts and conversion to Judaism. More specifically, they have asked for background information on such questions as:

- Is Judaism a missionary faith? Is it now, or has it ever been?
- Are converts full-fledged members of the Jewish people?
- What are our attitudes towards converts?

Rabbi Schindler's talk touched on some of these questions. To supplement his remarks, and to suggest additional resource materials bearing on each of the questions, the UAHC Department of Adult Jewish Studies is offering this new AJS item.

Some Resource Materials

Bamberger, Bernard. *Proselytism in the Talmudic Period*. Rev. ed., 1968. Order from KTAV Publishing Co., 75 Varriack St., New York, N.Y. 10013. \$15.00.

Eichhorn, David Max, ed. *Conversion to Judaism: A History and Analysis*. 1965. Order from KTAV, see address above. \$10.00.

Encyclopaedia Judaica. See article on "Proselytes." Vol. 13, pp. 1182-1194.

Gates of Mitzvah: A Guide to the Jewish Life Cycle. Central Conference of American Rabbis, 790 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10021. To be available approx. March, 1979; will contain some information on converts and the conversion process. Order from the CCAR or Sisterhood Judaica Shop. Hardcover, \$8.95; soft, \$4.95.

Greenberg, Hayim. Essay entitled "The Universalism of the Chosen People" in the book, *The Inner Eye*, vol. 1. Jewish Frontier Assn., New York, 1953. Also reprinted in paperback, *Hayim Greenberg Anthology*, Wayne State U. Press. Detroit, 1968. Note that both the hardcover and the paperback anthology are out of print. Your temple library may have a copy or your temple librarian may be able to borrow a copy on inter-library loan. The essay is extraordinary and well worth your efforts to obtain it.

Keeping Posted. Issue entitled "Is Judaism a Missionary Faith? Should Jews Proselytize?" Vol. xxi, no. 2 Nov., 1975. Order #840410, Regular student's edition: 75¢ each. Order #840412, Teacher's/Leader's edition, \$1.00 each. Order directly from Keeping Posted office, 838 Fifth Ave., New York, N. Y. 10021. Contents of issue: "Are We a Missionary Religion?" by Dr. Bernard Bamberger; "Let's Encourage Converts," by Rabbi Gilbert Kollin; and "A Jew by Choice" by Marcia Falconer. Teacher's/Leader's edition contains 8 pages of teaching material, discussion questions and bibliography.

Kukoff, Lydia. Article, "And the Stranger Who Dwells among You..." in *COMPASS* magazine, Fall/Winter, 1978. Order through UAHC Department of Education, 838 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10021. \$1.75.

Montefiore, C.G. & Loewe, H. *A Rabbinic Anthology*. Schocken paperback, 1974, \$7.50. See chapter xxx, "On Proselytes," and also Index for additional references. Order from Schocken Books, 200 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10016.

Rosenbloom, Joseph R. *Conversion to Judaism: From the Biblical Period to the Present*. Hebrew Union College Press, 1978. Distributed and sold by KTAV Publishing Co. (See full address above.) \$10.00.

Seltzer, Sanford. *Jews and Non-Jews Falling in Love*. UAHC Publications Department, 838 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10021. Order #164050. \$2.50 each.

NOTE: You will find additional bibliography in the KP Teacher's/Leader's edition, and also in Rosenbloom. The Seltzer pamphlet contains a number of appendices, including: CCAR Resolutions and Statements on Mixed Marriage, 1909, 1919; CCAR Resolution of the Committee on Mixed Marriage, 1973; CCAR Resolution on the status of children of a mixed marriage where father is Jewish and mother is not, 1947; and text of a Reform Marriage Ceremony. Appendix #7 lists the names and addresses of UAHC Councils and Federations where persons may obtain information regarding interfaith marriages and "Introduction to Judaism" programs.

Questions and Some Resources to Find Fuller Answers

1. *Is Judaism a missionary faith? Is it now, or has it ever been?*
 - A. In a word, Yes. We sought converts in the biblical and especially in the talmudic period, and we were highly successful in gaining new adherents. Consult resources listed on page 2, especially Encyclopaedia Judaica (EJ); Bamberger; Bamberger in Keeping Posted; and Rosenbloom.
2. *Who was the first convert and the first missionary?*
 - A. Abraham, according to our tradition. See Genesis 17:26-27. He was circumcised at the age of 99. All of his retainers and household servants, and his first son, Ishmael, were circumcised at the same time.
3. *What other biblical evidence exists?*
 - A. The most famous of all converts, next to Abraham, was Ruth, the Moabite woman who voluntarily declared to her mother-in-law, Naomi: "Your people shall be my people, and your God my God." (See the book of Ruth.) According to Bamberger in KP, the prophets Zechariah (8:23) and Isaiah (56:6-7) reached out to non-Jews.
4. *What were the attitudes of the Rabbis towards the proselyte during Talmudic times?*
 - A. According to Bamberger (p.169 of his book), the Rabbis were overwhelmingly favorable both to conversion and converts. According to the EJ, vol.13, p.1185, the attitude in the Talmud and the midrashim toward the proselyte "is usually positive," although some authorities were opposed to the concept of conversion and proselytes. The "deciding factors" in this opposition, "were usually contemporary conditions and the personal experiences of the rabbis." Rosenbloom discusses attitudes as well as history in his chaps. 6 and 7. See Rabbinic Anthology for examples of rabbinic thinking about converts.
5. *Under Christian or Muslim rule, Jews were forbidden to seek or accept converts. Were there no converts to Judaism after the fourth century?*
 - A. According to Bamberger in KP, "conversions to Judaism continued in virtually every country and every century." Rosenbloom discusses the medieval period at length in his chapters 11-15; also consult EJ.
6. *What is the best-known instance of mass conversion to Judaism?*
 - A. In 740, the pagan king of the Khazars and many of his nobles converted to Judaism. (See KP for a clear map of the Khazar kingdom.) Rosenbloom discusses this and other episodes of mass conversion to Judaism.

7. *When and why did the attitude of the rabbis and the Jewish community towards proselytes and conversion change?*

- A. Bamberger writes (in KP): "Beginning about 1600, there seems to have been a change of attitude among rabbis and among the rank and file of the Jewish community. They now became reluctant to accept converts and went far beyond the talmudic rule in discouraging them. The reasons are not entirely clear." The EJ states that in Poland and Lithuania in the 16th century, "the Jews increasingly withdrew from the outside world." The penalties for attempting to win converts were very harsh. Part of this withdrawal can be traced to fear and insecurity. The EJ then goes on to discuss how the Enlightenment reinforced the negative Jewish attitude on welcoming converts: "Emphasis on Jewish tolerance (of Christians) and abandonment of all active proselytizing became a fixed principle in modern Jewish apologetics. This apologetical attitude even influenced study of the past, and historical accounts tended to ignore that active Jewish proselytization had occurred, as if Judaism had never desired to make converts."

8. *Does Reform Judaism share the negative attitude on welcoming converts?*

- A. According to Eichhorn writing in the EJ, vol. 13, pp.1192-1193, "U.S. Reform Judaism has maintained that Jews have an obligation to teach their religion to all mankind and to attract like-minded non-Jews into the Jewish community." See Eichhorn's book; Bamberger in KP. Consult the new *Gates of Mitzvah* for some examples of the Reform Jewish approach.

9. *Shall we encourage converts?*

- A. Rabbi Schindler's affirmative point of view appears in his talk to the UAHF Board of Trustees. Bamberger and Kollin (both in KP) and also Rosenbloom answer affirmatively.

10. *Where do we find Jewish opposition to seeking converts?*

- A. Among Orthodox rabbis here and in Israel, who refuse to recognize the legitimacy of conversions performed by Reform or Conservative rabbis. Bamberger and Kollin describe Orthodox opposition in KP. Kollin goes further and also finds opposition among certain "liberal" Jews who believe -- according to Kollin -- that "it is improper, even unethical, to try to wean persons from the religion of their birth or choice. After all, if all religions are good, it is 'bad form' to suggest that yours is better." Kollin goes on to find a third group of opponents to conversion programs among "less Jewishly-educated Jews...who can't understand why anybody who doesn't have to be Jewish would want to become Jewish.... For Jews of this type, 'Jewish' is something you are, not something you can become."

11. *How is the Jewish reluctance to seek converts regarded by some non-Jews?*

- A. Kollin in KP describes an episode wherein a Black fundamentalist perceives our reluctance as arrogance. The essay by Hayim Greenberg listed on page 2 quotes George Bernard Shaw and H.G. Wells to the effect that we Jews are racist. Greenberg then goes on to refute those ugly charges. His refutation is first-rate.

12. *Where might we find potential converts to Judaism?*

- A. Schindler cites the non-Jewish spouses of mixed marriages, and also "those reared in non-Jewish homes... the seekers after truth... the alienated and rootless." Kollin in KP mentions "God-seekers, educated, mobile and often nominal Christians who are disaffiliated" for many reasons.

13. *What are some of the problems of potential converts to Judaism?*

- A. Kollin describes them graphically in KP: "They have to shop around for a rabbi or teacher... We generally conduct conversions quietly, almost as if this were a matter of shame.... The convert must be warned that some of his new-found Jewish brothers and sisters may reject him as a Jew; and further, that if he should opt for aliyah to Israel, he is virtually assured of rejection by the Orthodox rabbinate of Israel."

14. *What familial problems can arise in a mixed marriage?*

- A. See Sanford Seltzer's book listed on page 2. Seltzer cites a variety of difficulties that can arise between the couple and parents, between the husband and wife, and within the person who is embarking on a mixed marriage, with or without prior conversion to Judaism by the non-Jewish spouse. Schindler mentions the "ambivalences" felt by some non-Jewish spouses particularly on Christmas and Easter.

15. *How do converts define their greatest problem?*

- A. Schindler quotes a letter from a woman, "Jane," who resents being referred to as a convert ten years after the conversion process. This same complaint is voiced by Marcia Falconer in KP: "The most far-reaching and difficult problem the convert must face is the second-class status he is often given by the Jewish community. Many born Jews have trouble in thinking of the convert as a 'real' Jew.. Some converts feel that the word 'convert' is a stigma."

16. *How can "born Jews" assist the "Jews by choice"?*

- A. Kukoff advocates the formation of a chavurah for converts as a support system

for new Jews by choice. On the other hand, Falconer insists that "many born Jews are ignorant of the fact that converts do not want to be singled out for special help . . . We do not want a protected status, but only to be accepted and treated as equals." It would seem -- at the very minimum -- that "born Jews" must begin to alter their manner and attitudes towards these Jews-by-choice.

17. *What is the "naturalization" process?*

- A. Schindler notes that "those who choose to become Jews quickly learn that they have adopted something far more than a religion; they have adopted a people with its own history, its way of life." To history and folkways, we should also add Jewish values, outlook, way of prayer, rituals, vocabulary, and responsibilities to the community. All of this can be called "naturalization."

18. *Are converts full-fledged members of the Jewish people?*

- A. We regard them to be fully equal members of the synagogue family. Schindler quotes the reply of Moses Maimonides to a query from a convert.

19. *What does Judaism offer to a sincere seeker after God?*

- A. Schindler notes a number of points:
 Judaism offers life, not death.
 Judaism teaches free will, not surrender of body and soul to another human being.
 Judaism insists that man and society are perfectible.
 The Jew prays directly to God, not through an intermediary.
 Judaism is a religion of hope, not despair.

Kollin in KP adds to the list:

- Intellectual openness, with emphasis on continuing study and a great diversity of theological thought and discussion.
- A deeply rooted sense of history.
- Jewish family ties.
- A number of burning contemporary causes.
- A rich and growing ethnic culture.
- An appealing pattern of religious rites and ceremonials in the home.

What additional points would you add?

Some Suggestions for Discussion Groups

These questions and resources for answering them can be used by Adult Jewish study groups as a three-part discussion series, each session extending for at least two hours. The questions can be divided as follows:

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| Session I. | Is Judaism a Missionary Faith? (Questions #1-7) |
| Session II. | How Does Reform Regard Converts and Conversion? What are Some of the Problems Facing Converts? (Questions #8-14) |
| Session III. | How Can Born Jews Help Jews-by-Choice? What Does Judaism Offer to Potential Converts? (Questions #15-19.) |

The resource materials listed on page 2 ought to be assembled and distributed to all members of the discussion group for reading before the sessions are held.



D/3

Vol. XV, No. 3 May, 1979 HIGHLIGHTS:

District Doings	3
Circle of Service	9
D/3 Statement on Abortion	12
International Year of the Child	13
Interns for Peace	15
Changing Patterns	19

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF TEMPLE SISTERHOODS / 838 FIFTH AVENUE / NEW YORK, NY 10021 / (212) 249-0100

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT:

At our last D/3 convention, a new approach to Sisterhood programming was launched. D/3 has devised 4 "package programs" which are available to any D/3 Sisterhood for a regular monthly meeting, celebration of a holiday, membership orientation and involvement, or public affairs event. Each "package program" includes instructions to cover publicity, invitations, and hospitality, as well as preparation of the materials the program requires. A district person will work with you in advance and be with you on the day the program is presented. The minimum cost is \$35 per package.

Several programs have already been successfully presented. The program which highlights NFTS projects, "Close Encounters of the NFTS Kind", was presented to all Sisterhoods in the Northern Tier at their recent meeting in Toronto. The Binghamton Sisterhood also mounted a successful production of this program. We hope as a result of these programs to see greater awareness and interest in the NFTS Seminarium at Kibbutz Yahel as well as increased contributions to the YES Fund and sales of Uniongrams. World Union for Progressive Judaism, the Jewish Braille Institute and Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion can also be showcased in this presentation.

Also on package programs, a letter from Ellen Salth, President of the Sisterhood of Sinai Reform Temple, Bay Shore:

"...I am happy we used the package program on child abuse. We found it interesting and valuable and Carol (Lowenstein - D/3 V.P.) was a great moderator...The discussion was revealing as to what was going on in the community. The need for a day care center catering to middle income families became apparent. We are going to look into this...the program was very well received."

As Sisterhoods plan for the 1979-80 season we expect many more requests for "package programs". Remember 3 months advance notice is required so district has adequate time to assign personnel who will help present the program. Please refer to the orange brochure "D/3 Package Programming" which was mailed to all Sisterhood presidents in January. Descriptions of the programs mentioned above are in the brochure as well as the program for membership involvement, "We Shall Do - We Shall Share", and for study, "The Mezzuzah - A Link to the Land".

Judith Hertz

D/3, NFTS MEETINGS:

TORONTO CONFERENCE

In April, a most stimulating and successful 2-day meeting was held in Toronto for Upper New York State and Canadian Sisterhoods. Members learned about "The Multiple Woman" (You). They learned a different view of their potential, techniques of leadership and how to achieve effective action in their Sisterhoods.

This issue 'Highlights' several significant D/3 meetings to be held in the near future.

LONG ISLAND ZONE DAYS

May 24th, 1979

Temple Beth Torah, Dix Hills

June 11th, 1979

Temple Beth Am, Merrick

WESTCHESTER, ROCKLAND and CONNECTICUT ZONE DAY

June 7th, 1979

Larchmont Temple

NORTHERN TIER AREA MEETING

June 18th, 1979

Temple Gates of Heaven, Schenectady

Keynote speaker - Ellie Schwartz
Executive Director of NFTS

SUMMER PATTERNS

July 9th, 1979

Temple Beth Sholom, Flushing

The Feminine Critique"

"The Feminine Mystique 20 years Later"

1. Are women really free? Free for what?
2. Is there such a thing as womanpower?

Distinguished speakers will discuss the above and many other questions. More information will follow.

NORTHERN TIER ZONE DAY

October 30th, 1979

Temple Beth Zion, Buffalo



Please make the following corrections on your lists:

GEOGRAPHIC (blue sheet)

- Page 1: Temple Haborim, NYC
Delete: President Eva Jacoby
Add President: Mrs. Marion Lust
114 E. 84th Street
New York, NY 10028
- Page 2: Ellen Heffan, District Board
Correct address and phone no.:
30 Fleetwood Ave.
Mt. Vernon, NY 10552
(914) 699-3462
Temple Sinai, Mt. Vernon
- Page 2: Hebrew Tabernacle, NYC
Delete President: Mrs. Gusti Abraham
Add President: Mrs. Elsa F. Katz
630 Ft. Washington Avenue
New York, NY 10040
- Page 6: Temple Emanu-El, Long Beach
Delete: President Ellen Schneiweis
Add President: Sheila Kleinman
117 Regent Drive
Lido Beach, NY 11561
(516) 431-8738
- Page 7: Temple Emanu-El, East Meadow
Mrs. Anita Schoenbart
Change Phone No. to: (516)-794-8575
- Page 9: Larchmont Temple
Correct Phone No.: (914) 834-6120
- Page 13: Add Area Representative:
Myrna Potechin
2 Gerrilyn Ct.
Ottawa, Ontario K2J 1H4
(613) 825-4149

BOARD LIST (green sheet)

- Page 2: Shirley Schliederer
Correct: Shirley Schleiderer

PRESIDENT: JUDITH HERTZ
200 East 71st St.
New York, NY 10021

EDITOR: PEGGY BENNETT
312 Ronbru Drive
New Rochelle, NY 10804

Material for Sept. '79 NEWSLETTER
must be received by July 28, 1979

SUBSCRIPTION RATES FOR NEWSLETTER:
3 issues beginning Sept. '79: \$1.00
Mail to editor

WESTCHESTER, ROCKLAND and CONNECTICUT ZONE held an area day for Presidents in December. Out of that meeting came a suggestion by the Presidents to hold a day for their Vice-Presidents. D/3 V.P. Lois Braun followed through and after having to cancel for a snow storm, finally held a meeting for the area V.P.s at Temple Beth Abraham in Tarrytown. The Presidents, district leaders and consultants prepared a lovely luncheon for the V.P.s who spent the entire morning talking about problems and ways to go about solving them. Gerry Voit acted as facilitator and worked to elicit problems and seek solutions.

Everyone came together for lunch and a talk by Sandy Kelley and Polly Rothstein, discussing the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights and the problem in the NY State Legislature to cut off Medicaid Funds for abortion for poor women. They informed us of Sisterhood support of the Pro-Choice side and the need to lobby in Albany every Tuesday during March.

After a wrap-up the meeting was adjourned with plans underway for a Zone Day on June 7th at Larchmont Temple. The Presidents had discussed this while their V.P.s were meeting in the morning. The Zone Day will have workshops in the morning, followed by luncheon prepared by the hostess Sisterhood and in the afternoon a dialogue between Rabbi H. Leonard Poller and Rabbi Jack Stern Jr.

LIFT

LEADERS INTENSIVE FITNESS TRAINING

THURSDAY - May 24 - Temple Beth Torah, Dix Hills:

WORKING TOGETHER TO ACHIEVE ONE'S GOALS

Keynote Speaker - Cantor Sarah Sager
Temple Beth Am, Merrick

Workshops for large and small Sisterhoods in Social Action, Programming, Membership, Study and Fundraising.

MONDAY - JUNE 11 - Temple Beth Am, Merrick

SKILLS, TECHNIQUES & KNOWLEDGE TO BE A SUPERFIT LEADER

Training Sessions in Goals, Roles and Skills: Running a Meeting, Writing a Report, Making a Speech, Compiling Info., Changing Jobs, Working with other Committees and Organizations, Sharing Responsibility, Parliamentary Procedures, Valuing Your Worth.

A separate registration is required for each of the two days - \$2.50 per person - send to:

Mrs. Judith Lichtenstein, 284 N. Poplar St.
N. Massapequa, N.Y. 11758

DISTRICT DOINGS

PROGRAM

Sisterhood of Community Synagogue, Rye, sponsored a very stimulating program at an Open Meeting. Ms. Annette Daum spoke on "Do Women Want to Be More Than Equal?" In March they hosted two programs for the congregation; the first on Purim customs and the second, a program on Passover customs which was co-ordinated with a model Seder.

Beth Israel Sisterhood, Plattsburgh, had a unique opportunity to pledge on-going support for the continued growth of Progressive Judaism in Israel. One of their members was leaving to make aliyah and the Sisterhood President hosted a farewell party for her in honor of Kibbutz Yahel. The highlight of the afternoon was the film "Spring in the Desert." Sangria wine and cheeses were served.

Sisterhood of Temple Emanuel, New Hyde Park, held their Annual Uniongram Meeting in January. Rabbi David E. Powers reviewed the book "Short Friday" by Isaac Bashevis Singer. Admission was a \$2 packet of Uniongrams. In April Cantor Ephraim Steinhauer presented a film strip and narration on Kibbutz Yahel - he related his own experiences there.

Sisterhood of Solel Congregation, Mississauga, Ontario, in January wrote and presented a beautiful and moving 'candlelite service' honoring the opening of their new synagogue. At their monthly meeting they heard a geneticist who spoke about Jewish and other genetic diseases. In March, they met and talked with a consumer consultant.

Sisterhood of Temple Israel, Staten Island, started off their Fall season with an Israeli night - their guest artist was a cantorial student who entertained with Israeli, Yiddish and Hassidic Folk songs. The paid-up membership breakfast centered around a skit (role-played by Sisterhood members) entitled "Women, Ten Years Hence." The third program dealt with the "Abused Child" - a socio-action drama. The last program was a fund-raiser for Kibbutz Yahel with a guest speaker from NFTY who showed slides and discussed and answered questions regarding life on the Kibbutz. Monies were raised with a plant sale and \$1 from all who attended.

Women's Guild of Free Synagogue of Westchester, Mt. Vernon, at their January luncheon presented the noted art historian, Marlene Barasch, who lectured on "The Times of King Tut" with slides on both Egypt and the artifacts currently on exhibit at the Met. In March, there was a bus trip to the British Art Collection at Yale and a luncheon meeting featuring Art Lecturer Marvin Schwartz who spoke on "Discovering the World of Antiques." In May, Bill Schuster, the only authentic professional Shanty Man left in America, will entertain.

Sisterhood of Concord Temple, Binghamton, at an evening meeting heard Ronald Ferdie speak on the "Origins of the Jewish Calendar." The Continuing Education Committee presented an Educational Experience on 3 successive Sunday mornings in the form of a group dialogue led by Rabbi Elihu Schagrin - "Where We Are; Where We are Going as Reform Jews - A Centenary Perspective."

Sisterhood of Temple Israel, Jamaica, heard Rabbi Ronald Millstein speak on a topic chosen for its timeliness and thought-provoking qualities - "Test Tube Babies: Science Confronts Ethics." An open discussion followed the talk. At another luncheon meeting, a group of budding women writers offered selected readings of their own work. A writing workshop meets Thursday afternoons, free of charge to Sisterhood and Temple members. This group of enthusiastic women, novices at creative writing, have produced some remarkable and delightful pieces.

Women's Guild of Jewish Community Center, White Plains, at their January luncheon heard Jane Boutelle, author of "Lifetime Fitness for Women" present a lecture-demonstration. The Boutelle method combines her knowledge of movement education, body mechanics and dance. She teaches a program of Lifetime Fitness through natural actions. In March,

their Annual Scholarship Luncheon was held at Bergdorf-Goodman with fashions, flowers, a champagne lunch and music. For Sisterhood Sabbath, Rabbi Lynn Gottlieb, who serves 2 congregations for deaf people in NY, was their guest. They explored the Biblical stories of several women who lived during the period of the Exodus.

Sisterhood of Temple Beth-El, Chappaqua, heard Rabbi Chaim Stern speak on intermarriage in January. At their February luncheon meeting, Dianna Kleinman, from the Conway Diet Institute, spoke about "How To Stay On a Diet".

Sisterhood of Temple Avodah, Oceanside, meetings have included a Lunch and Learning Afternoon with a speaker on nutrition and health food, a night of aerobic dancing, a speaker from the Long Island Committee for Soviet Jewry and "Law for the Laywoman" which featured a panel of lawyers who discussed marital and criminal law, as well as estate planning. In April they sponsored a Health Fair for the entire congregation and community testing for various diseases.

Sisterhood of Temple Shaaray Tefila, Manhattan, has plans for two social and fund-raising functions. One is a tour of Lincoln Center followed by a tea in the lounge of Avery Fisher Hall. In June, there will be a bus trip to the Storm King Art Center.

Sisterhood of Temple Beth Emeth, Brooklyn, held a special Brunch meeting to which husbands and children were invited as guests. The program was a dialogue and slide presentation on "Tut-ank-amen" by Jeanette Bragin, of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and a Sisterhood member.

Sisterhood of Temple Beth El, Niagara Falls, at a luncheon meeting heard Mrs. Thomas Hooker, Chairman of Health Education Committee of the Niagara Falls Medical Center teach and demonstrate the Heimlich Method. In February, a film and program on Breast Cancer was presented by Temple Beth Israel.

Sisterhood of Temple Beth-El, Great Neck, held their 26th Annual joint Sisterhood meeting at Temple Emanuel. The use of a new format, gathering at 8 PM, was chosen with the hope that many working members, and women unable to leave children during the day would be encouraged to attend. The guest speaker was Bel Kaufman. In March, Libby Hillman, noted culinary expert and cookbook author, demonstrated her unique recipes in her most unique fashion. Regina Rosenfeld demonstrated how to transform "shopping basket produce" into treats for the eye and palate. Book reviews, by Rabbi Davidson and Rabbi Gelfand, included "Living with the Bible" by Moshe Dayan and "A Jew Today" by Elie Wiesel.

Sisterhood of Temple Israel, Lawrence, at their February luncheon heard Dr. Myron M. Teitelbaum speak on "The Changing Female Role and its effect on -- families, marriage, divorce, sexuality and child-rearing". Also in February, at the Annual Interfaith Luncheon, members representing the Five Towns' Churches and Synagogues, heard Rev. Judith Bennett and Sister Pat McGill on "Women of the Bible".

Sisterhood of Temple B'rith Kodesh, Rochester, AT THEIR Annual Interfaith Tea co-sponsored by the Women's Association of the Jewish Community Federation, heard a most interesting program - "A Bridge to Understanding". The panel included members of the Women's Interfaith Coalition Middle East Study Tour. The discussion focused on women in Egypt, Israel and Jordan.

Sisterhood of Vassar Temple, Poughkeepsie, at their January meeting heard Ruth Humphries on the subject of "Battered Wives". In April there was a panel discussion of the fascinating book "My Mother, Myself".

Sisterhood of Borough Park Progressive Synagogue, Brooklyn, in January heard Ms Gloria Title, a psychotherapist, speak on "Pressures and Strains as we Grow Old".

- more -

Sisterhood of Temple Sinai, Roslyn Heights, featured a Fashion Show, "Spring Fever" at their Annual Uniongram Luncheon. In February "Luncheon of the Nile" presented a lecture and slides of treasures from the old kingdoms.

STUDY

Sisterhood of Temple Emanu-El, Utica, has a "Morning with the Rabbi" series. In January the topic was an article printed in the Times, where Rabbi Schindler urged a program to convert seekers to Judaism. In March the subject was "Jews in Iran"

Women's Guild of Jewish Community Center, White Plains, under the guidance of Rhoda Kornreich, M.S. in Counseling, sponsored a workshop designed for women who would like to take a fresh comprehensive look at themselves and their lives, and decide how they relate to family, work, study, leisure, creativity, and friends, etc. Participants explored their own values, interests, needs, experiences and goals. With a new understanding one can choose freely a meaningful lifestyle and reaffirm her importance as an individual.

Sisterhood of Temple Emanuel, New Hyde Park, for their Sisterhood Sabbath presented a creative service written by the women in their Study Group. The subject was the contribution of Post Biblical Jewish Women: Beruiah, Celia Adler, Naomi Shemer, Lillian Wald, Gracia Mendes, Hannah Senesh, Emma Lazarus, Anna Rosenberg, Ernestine Ross and Edna Ferber.

Sisterhood of Community Synagogue, Rye, sponsored a four part seminar on the Holocaust given by Jack Polak, a Dutch survivor of Westerbork and Bergen-Belsen. They also attended a course on Judaism and Christianity given by Rabbi Robert Rothman.

Sisterhood of Temple Israel, Jamaica, is sponsoring a class where women are learning Hebrew. The culmination will be a mass Bat Mitzvah at Sisterhood Sabbath in May. Another class resumed is the Rabbi's Bible Class.

Women's Guild of Free Synagogue of Westchester, Mt. Vernon, presented a series of 6 lectures on "The Golden Age of the Jews in Spain". A Sisterhood member, Renee Hymes, provided a fascinating insight into this great chapter of Jewish life and history.

Sisterhood of Congregation Beth Emeth, Albany, held a Shabbat workshop to help families make the Shabbat into - day of joyous family living. There were "do-it-yourself" workshops in foods and crafts, buzz sessions and a Havdalah service. There were presentations by students of the Religious School and displays of Kiddush cups, candle holders, Challah trays, Havdalah sets, etc. to demonstrate the many ways the Shabbat can beautify the home. Buzz groups discussed the family-building values of the Sabbath.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Sisterhood of Temple Emanuel of Canarsie, Brooklyn, is helping in the education of newly arrived Russian Jewish immigrant families to introduce them to the English language, Jewish tradition and customs. They are given honorary membership in the Temple. In addition, the teenagers have volunteered remedial assistance to help their new friends adjust to a new and rewarding way of living.

Sisterhood of Temple Israel, Jamaica, is proud to announce that they have been selected by the JBI to organize a Pilot Project to lay the groundwork for a nationwide volunteer program. In December, a group of women spent a day at JBI and participated in a Workshop on "The Dynamics of Aging and Blindness: Problems and Attitudes". The new project, referred to as an "Outreach Program" will enable older, visually handicapped people to participate in community life. To keep them from withdrawing from life and activities, the Sisterhood will develop a list of activities available in the community, meet

with community representatives from other organizations, locate visually handicapped in the area and distribute information to them on activities and transportation. A very major undertaking and we wish them success.

Sisterhood of Congregation Beth Emeth, Albany, took part in the annual city-wide Women's Interfaith Observance at St. Sophia Greek Orthodox Church. After a musical interlude, Dr. Jean M. Stern, Professor of History at Siena College and regional Chairperson of UNICEF, spoke on "The Many Levels of IYC". Members of the Sisterhood Legislative Committee attended the Second Annual Family Planning Advocates Legislative Conference. They heard leaders of both parties commit themselves to the concept of reproductive freedom; that is, safe abortion and contraceptive services should be available to all regardless of age or economic circumstances.

Sisterhood of Temple Beth Am, Merrick, is busy all year with its efforts in behalf of social action and community and world affairs. They are represented in the Yokneam Israel Project which is attempting to offer assistance to a small Sephardic town. They are members of the Long Island Committee for Soviet Jewry and participate in their program of writing letters to Soviet Prisoners of Conscience and the Solidarity Day March. They also support the Hatzilu (Rescue) Program for the aid of elderly Jewish poor in NYC and the International Synagogue at Kennedy Airport. They are looking into adopting the family of a Soviet Refusnik and are once again planning an Inter-faith Seder with the Rosary Mothers Society of Cure of Ars.

Sisterhood of Temple B'Nai Israel, Elmont, is continuing its visits to Creedmore where they bring clothing, food and jewelry. In December, they held their first Oneg Shabbat which was received with warmth and appreciation. They also visit the Association for the Advancement of the Blind and Retarded and held a model Seder for 40 patients there. They have taped 65 job descriptions for the Industrial Home for the Blind Junior Out Patient Therapy Activity Dept of L.I. Jewish.



איחוד
ליהדות
מתקדמת
באמריקה

D/3 REACH-OUT TO COLLEGE AGE YOUTH

Would your Sisterhood be willing to extend holiday hospitality to college age youth in your area? Please let us know if the answer is "yes".

D/3 is joining forces with the UAHC College Education Department to keep touch with our young people after they leave home. Please ask your congregation to submit names and addresses of college students to Rabbi Ramie Arian, Associate Director, UAHC College Education Dept., 838 Fifth Ave., NY, NY 10021 (212-249-0100). They will be put on the National College Mailing list and will receive the National College Newsletter four times a year and the newspaper Reform Judaism monthly at no cost. The most important time to mount a drive to collect the information is NOW.

It has become apparent that young people away from home can more easily be reached when there is a campus organization. At this time, the colleges listed on Page 7 have chavurot (programming groups) and batim (residence units). More groups are being formed. It would be worthwhile to publish this list in Temple bulletins.

Pearl A. Rothman
Community Temple Beth Or, Brooklyn

Name of College Group name if any	Student Contact	Telephone
SUNY at Albany Chevurah-Sambatyon	Arnold Gluck SUNYA 1274 Central Ave. Albany, N.Y. 12205	(518) 459-3876
Amherst College	Lawrence Eichenfeld Box 1464 Amherst College Amherst, MA 01001	(413) 542-3044
University of Arizona	Lisa Hirsh SUPO 9534 Tucson, AZ 85720	(602) 792-9831
SUNY at Binghamton	Sara Glaser PO Box 1043 SUNY Binghamton, N.Y. 13903	(607) 729-4901
Boston University	David Wolfman 700 Commonwealth Ave. Box 1705-A Boston, MA 02215	(617) 353-8704
Brandeis University	Beth Kraus Box 1460 Brandeis University Waltham, MA 02154	(617) 647-4039
Brown University Downstairs Minyan	Rob Goldberg Box 1572 Brown University Providence, R.I. 02912	(401) 863-4597
University of Chicago The Bayit	David Cher 5458 So. Everett Chicago, IL 60615	(312) 752-2159
Columbia University Liberal Shabbat Minyan	Jim Schacter 809 McBain Hall New York, N.Y. 10027	(212) 280-7435
Cornell University	Renni Altman High Chaparral #34 114 Summit Ave. Ithaca, N.Y. 14850	(607) 277-0032
Emory University	Janet Tyroler Box 23994 Emory University Atlanta, GA 30322	(404) 633-2641
University of Florida	Beverly Engel 700-202 S.W. 16 Ave. Gainesville, FL 32601	(904) 377-2771
Harvard University	Jonathan Kraus Mather House Harvard University Cambridge, MA 02138	(617) 498-7348
University of Illinois Students for Progressive Judaism The Bayit	Robin Uchitelle 209 N. Goodwin Urbana, IL 61801	(217) 328-6935
University of Indiana	Jim Bennett MRC Box 235 Bloomington, IN 47401	(812) 337-5016
University of Maryland Jewish Community House	Lou Rosen 7712 Howett Lane Hyattsville, MD 20783	(301) 422-7683
Massachusetts Institute of Technology	Benson Margulies 48 Massachusetts Ave. #208 Cambridge, MA 02139	(617) 253-1000 ext. 59628

University of Miami (Florida)	David Federman 1100 Miller Drive Coral Gables, FL 33146	(305) 665-6949
University of Miami (Ohio) Student Union for Progressive Judaism	Hank Stern 110 Mary Lyon Hall Western Miami U. Oxford, OH 45056	(513) 529-2049
University of Michigan Student Union for Progressive Judaism	Andrea Fischer 1415 Markley-Little Ann Arbor, MI 48109	(313) 764-7791
Michigan State University	Larry Tisdale 425 North Wonders Michigan State University East Lansing, MI 48820	
[New York City -- Manhattan] Beytenu	Kit Goldfarb 305 Riverside Drive Apt. 1-B New York, N.Y. 10025	(212) 864-0029
[New York City -- Manhattan] L'hava	Jonathan Gould 326 W. 85th Street New York, N.Y. 10023	(212) 873-3364
Northwestern University	Steve Leder 2400 Sheridan Rd. #138 Evanston, IL 60205	
Northwood Institute	Steven Levine 5000 North Saginaw R.R. 3 Midland, MI 48640	
University of Pennsylvania Sambatyon	Joanne Fink 3909 Spruce Street P.O. Box 45 Philadelphia, PA 19104	(215) 382-2056
Princeton University	Ellen Chajson 112 Joline Hall Princeton, N.J. 08540	(609) 734-7633
University of Rochester Hitoreri	Shery Klein P.O. Box 6531 River Station Rochester, N.Y. 14627	(716) 275-6893
Rutgers University Sambatyon	Joyce Maged 69 Guilden Street New Brunswick, N.J. 08903	(201) 545-7518
University of Southern Florida	Marlyn Wolman University of So. Fla. #1133 Tampa, FL 33620	(813) 974-6560
Stanford University	Corby Kessler 208 Twain House Stern Hall -- Stanford Univ. Stanford, CA 94305	(415) 327-3248
SUNY at Stony Brook	George French 27 Spencer Lane Stony Brook, N.Y. 11790	(516) 751-2746
Tufts University	Mary Judith Block 430 Miller Hall Medford, MA 02155	
Yale University	Steve Masters 4575 Yale Station New Haven, CT 06520	(203) 432-1741

SONNET TO THE YES FUND

(with permission of Lillian Winton,
Holy Blossom Temple, Toronto)

UNIONGRAMS



I wonder what Elizabeth Barrett Browning would have done, if instead of writing the immortal "How Do I Love Thee?" (Sonnets from the Portuguese) she wrote instead, "How Do I Support the YES Fund?" She was sufficiently inspired by her feeling for Robert Browning to express in exquisite poetry to love him freely, purely, with passion through smiles and tears all the years of her life and to the level of every day's most quiet need, by sun and candlelight. BUT ... if she were a Sisterhood member she might say, "How Do I Support the YES Fund? Let me count the ways."

I support the YES Fund through the purchase of Uniongrams and Goldengrams (which are special Jewish message bearers for all occasions) and/or cash contributions.

I support the YES Fund to the "depth and breath and height my soul can reach" because of my belief in this on-going project of NFTS. Out of sight!

I support the YES Fund because I believe in:

YOUTH and the YES Fund provides grants to the UAHC toward the continuation and expansion of NFTY programs (the NFTS was the sponsor for the creation of NFTY some 38 years ago.) Their goals include the strengthening of our Jewish community, Jewish culture and Jewish learning among our youth.

EDUCATION and the YES Fund provides scholarships and Student-Aid at the HUC-JIR for eligible rabbinic students; a scholarship for a cantorial student at the Sacred School of Music and an annual NFTS cantorial prize.

Scholarships for rabbinic students overseas, who after ordination will serve congregations of WUPJ around the world.

SISTERHOOD and the YES Fund assists in the development of innovative, creative Sisterhood programs and projects.

And so, Elizabeth Barrett Browning might continue (if she were a Reform Jew) ... "if you support the YES Fund, let it be for naught except for love's sake only. Because I believe in sharing a part of myself with the children of our kinsmen throughout North America and the world, the depth, the scope, the understanding of the role of Reform Judaism helps to insure the future of Judaism."

Maybe Elizabeth will get Robert to make a contribution also and if he does she'll love him even better, after she catches her breath.

SUPPORT THE YES FUND

To realize the joy of wearing a Roll of Distinguished Service Ribbon at our Biennial in Toronto in December, remember that you must fill your YES Fund quota by October 31, 1979.

Buy a Sisterhood Art Calendar for personal use and several to give as gifts. This is an unique fundraiser and a valuable item for your Judaica Shop. The NFTS Art Calendar is a practical organizer for your busy life and a delightful way to introduce both your Sisterhood members and non-members to the NFTS.

THE HOW-TO'S - TO RAISE FUNDS FOR UNIONGRAMS

1. Uniongram lunch/tea
Ticket is purchase of
2 Uniongram packets
2. Happy events list:
25 names or more @.25 or
.35 per Bd members
3. Contributions to YES Fund
4. Bar or Bat Mitzvah invitations
5. Invitations to dinner and
cocktail parties
6. Welcome home messages
7. Bon voyage greetings
8. Singing Uniongram - send
message in mail
9. Valentine Day's message
10. Birth announcements
11. Birthday and anniversary messages
12. Uniongram Day message
13. New home announcement
14. Thank you notes
15. Meeting announcements
16. Recipes on Uniongrams for friends
17. Gift enclosures
18. Small Uniongrams used as labels
for jams, dills, etc.
19. Labels for glass/pottery jars
20. Place cards for dinner party
21. Welcome sign on door for guests
22. No Smoking signs
23. Bereavement messages
24. Graduation messages
25. Short personal notes
26. Retirement messages
27. Jewish New Year messages
28. Hanukkah messages
29. Purim messages
30. Confirmation messages
31. Goldengrams, newly designed, \$2 for
special occasions

CIRCLE OF SERVICE

Another significant on-going project of NFTS is the CIRCLE OF SERVICE. During this time of critical need for more funds to enable Sisterhood to meet its commitments, it allows the individual, in this increasingly depersonalized world, the right to feel that she herself is playing a direct role in maintaining Reform Judaism for the future.

The choice of an annual commitment is yours to make from four categories - \$25, \$50, \$100 or the Life-Line category of \$1,000 which may be paid all at once or over a four year period. The monies raised by every contributor constitutes a positive response to a rabbinic student's request for aid.

Each new member enrolling in any category receives a handsome book with a beautiful inscription page. Each year when NFTS receives your annual contribution to the Circle of Service, a new page is sent for insertion in your book which is personalized.

With inflation still unchecked, cost of educational and program services for our young people has risen. It is imperative that we expand membership in the Circle of Service to help the young man or woman whose dream it is to become a rabbi, or the child who joins a youth group, becomes active and goes to NFTY camp or institute. We know you care about the future of Reform Judaism.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OF HOW TO PLAN A CIRCLE OF SERVICE GATHERING

- First Commandment.....Plan today - DON'T WAIT
Second Commandment.....Set the date -check with Temple or Community Calendar
Third Commandment.....Format - coffee, tea, or luncheon
Fourth Commandment.....Call a friend or two - share your plans
Fifth Commandment.....Decide on menu and invitation (now you are a committee)
Sixth Commandment.....Location (your home, her house, the Temple?)
Seventh Commandment....Program (Moderator, Rabbi, Member of Youth group, guitar player)
Eighth Commandment.....Write NFTS for brochures and enrollment cards
Ninth Commandment.....ASK FOR HELP from an NFTS Bd member, District President or Officer
Tenth Commandment....."Whatsoever thy hand finds to do, do it with all thy might."

(Ecclesiastes)

PROGRAM SUGGESTIONS

Jews in Distant Lands - Ever wonder how Jews live in the Caribbean Islands? Iran? Mexico? Spain?. Why not order a copy of "Jews in Distant Lands" from the UAHC Publications Department, 838 Fifth Avenue, NY, NY 10021. The series makes a nice gift for friends going abroad; a basis for a Sisterhood study group or an item for your Judaica Shop. Each set of 10 newspapers with color illustrations is \$5.

DID YOU KNOW THAT?

NFTS is proud to announce publication of "The Jewish Woman: A Portrait in Her Own Words" by Marcia Cohn Spiegel, a recipient of the NFTS Centennial Prize awarded to a student of the HUC-JIR for a creative or study project related to subjects of concern to women of the Synagogue. It is a beautiful, dramatic reading, suitable for a Sisterhood program, to be incorporated in a Sisterhood Sabbath Service or to be used as the basis for a study program.

TAY-SACHS DISEASE - A SPECIAL PROBLEM FOR JEWISH PEOPLE

One in every 900 American Jewish couples runs the risk of having a baby with Tay-Sachs, an inherited genetic disorder carried most commonly in the genes of Jews of Eastern European descent.

Although there is no cure for this disease, it can be prevented. A simple blood test which can be given to anyone of reproductive age can identify carriers.

In order to reach all the people who should be tested, a concerted effort is needed. The test must be conducted under the auspices of a testing center, either at a hospital or at facility set up by the hospital.

Sisterhoods can, and do, conduct Tay-Sachs testing programs for their members and communities. If your Sisterhood is interested in performing this vital service, write to the National Tay-Sachs and Allied Diseases Association, Inc., 122 East 42nd Street, NY, NY 10017 or to NFTS for further information.

VISUAL ODYSSEY

- a lecture and guide service devoted to bringing art to those who recognize its importance as personal fulfillment, esthetic pleasure and investment value. Jewish related topics include: a definition of Jewish Art with an illustrated survey from antiquity to the present; Archeology in the Holy Land; Art in Israel Today; Chagall, Soutine, and Chaim Gross. For further information call: Susan Mayer (212) 781-7521.

DECEMBER 6 - 11, 1979 • 32ND BIENNIAL ASSEMBLY • TORONTO, CANADA



Mark the dates on your calendar and make certain to budget to send your full representation to the exciting city of Toronto. Official reservation blanks will be sent by NFTS in early Spring.

THE ONUS IS ON US

*There once was a woman with heart
Who thought she was doing her part
When she sighed and shed tears
For repressions and fears;
As for action, she never did start.*

Are you a hand-wringer? Do you view with alarm? You think you're "on the side of the angels"? That's good, but today it's not good enough! There's too much to do and too few to do it.

Among the many issues that concern and confront us as thinking Jewish women in Reform Sisterhoods:

STILL AT THE HEAD OF THE LIST ...Freedom of Choice in Abortion! We must work with RCAR (Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights) to which NFTS belongs. We must join in advocacy with those religious, health-related, sociological and family planning groups who work for MEDICAID benefits for the poor and minorities. We must besiege our legislators with mail demanding that they refuse to align themselves with so-called "right to life" activists whose religious beliefs must not dominate the majority's. Every woman should have control of her own reproduction! Pro or con abortion - - the right to choose is the imperative. ESSENTIAL; that we fight constantly against the convening of a Constitutional Convention whose stated goal is to strip women of their Constitutional right to an abortion. USE THIS AMMUNITION; launch a card -or letter-writing campaign (individual) to your Assemblymen and Congressmen. Make your position clear. And write to those who favor pro-choice to give them support and approval.

We've said it every time: Join RCAR, 3049 E. Genesee St., Syracuse, NY 13224 or 15 Rutherford Pl., NY, NY 10003 and NARAL (National Abortion Rights Action League) P.O.Box 52, NY, NY 10028. These hard-working, hard-fighting action groups are at the front of the battle, and need financial support to keep us informed while they work for the right to choose. Organizational memberships are \$25.

APPOINT A SOCIAL ACTION CHAIRWOMAN TO KEEP YOUR SISTERHOOD IN TOUCH AND IN ACTION! PLAN A PRO-ABORTION MEETING.

News from our Sisterhoods-in-Action: Sisterhood of Temple Society of Concord, Syracuse works on all upstate PRO-CHOICE and IYC projects. Lorraine Phillips is upstate abortion rights consultant and will help you. Sisterhood of Temple Emanu-El, East Meadow, L.I., ran a well-planned, well-attended Social Action Day focused on Child Abuse, Intermarriage and problems of Drugs and Alcoholism. Rabbi Stuart Gertman was the keynoter. Sisterhoods in Westchester County participated in discussions with their Coalition for Legal Abortion and studied ways and means of being heard. Sisterhood of Temple Sinai, Bayshore, L.I., ran the first D/3 Child Abuse Package Program event with other community groups, and looks forward to far-reaching results.

D/3 ran a day at the UN on IYC, with wide participation by our Sisterhoods; many ran special buses into New York. Thanks to Rose Trachtenberg, our UN consultant for the arrangements.

*So... please all be women of thought
Whose credo is "really, we ought";
While you follow your heart,
You can sure play your part
In the fights that demand to be fought.*

Read your newspapers and periodicals. Get angry! Fight!

D/3 HELPED TO DO IT!

We were a force! We were an effective pressure group! We acted in behalf of our beliefs. We stated our position and made it known where it counted.

All the above is a definition of social activism. The issue: retaining in the N.Y. State budget the necessary funding for Medicaid abortions. It was touch and go, and we knew it .. the conservative (plus "Right to Life" zealots) in our State Senate and Assembly were willing to sacrifice the needs of poor women, apparently more concerned with the so-called rights of the foetus than with the unwanted child's potential despair. And they totally ignored the right (U.S. Supreme Court, 1973) to freedom of individual choice.

So we went to work. Triggered by RCAR, to which NFTS belongs, we prepared the statement quoted below, and our Albany (Beth Emeth) Sisterhood women hand-delivered it to almost every available Senator and Assemblyman the first week in March.

Thereafter, more pressure was applied. We hot-lined all our Sisterhoods to initiate an individual postcard blitz. Medicaid funding squeaked through the Assembly but lost in the Senate in the first voting.

For a scary few days, the issue was at risk; then the Assembly position held, and a second Senate vote reversed the first -- the budget was passed with provision for Medicaid funding for abortion intact.

Saved by the bell! Saved till the next time, when in an election year more pressure will be applied to reverse the funding provision, and the "Right to Life" party will legitimately appear on the ballot. We must continue to make our State Senators and Assemblymen aware of our beliefs and their dependency on our votes. We must continue to be activists. The NFTS statement evoked supportive letters of reply from three Senators and three Assemblymen (as of April 7): Deputy Minority Leader Emanuel Gold, Marty Markowitz (Brooklyn) and Carol Berman (Lawrence), all of the Senate; Speaker Stanley Fink, William Finneran (Hastings-on Hudson) and Gerdi E. Lipschutz (Rockaway Park), of the Assembly. Their letters stated their positive reactions to our statement. Bill Finneran said "It is refreshing to receive a letter supporting this, as most of my correspondence expresses opinions to the contrary. Thank you for taking time to write." And all voted as they said they would.

We implore you to follow the leaders' lead! Care! Act! There are thrilling rewards in seeing the fruits of one's labor. Everyone, every act counts. Don't leave it all to the other gal; she "may grow weary...women do get weary..."but we must not, dare not.

Carol Lowenstein
D/3 Vice President

D/3 STATEMENT

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF TEMPLE SISTERHOODS strongly favors unrestricted Freedom of Choice in Abortion Rights and repeatedly has so resolved in national and regional conventions.

We are appalled at the proliferation of attempts to weaken the mandate of the Supreme Court decision of January, 1973. We call to your attention the plight of the young, the poor and the ignorant, whose rights are seriously limited and dangerously impaired by legislative acts depriving them of government funding for abortion.

We further emphasize that no limited, special group should impose its will and its religious convictions upon the majority through legislative action, and that legislators, whether pro or con abortion, have an obligation to their constituencies to support Freedom of Individual Choice in Abortion.

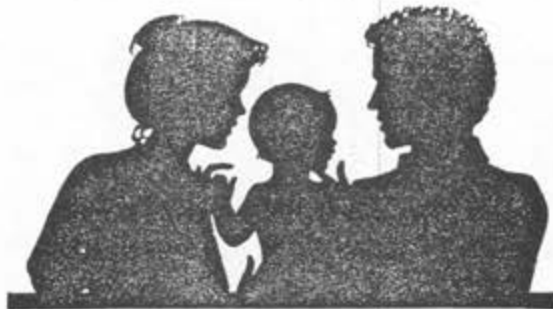
INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE CHILD (IYC)

IYC is a year of celebration, action, advocacy and education. The U.N. General Assembly passed a resolution proclaiming 1979 the IYC and NFTS will be an active participant in IYC programs on the international, national and local levels. Norma U. Levitt, on behalf of NFTS, is chairing the IYC Committee of the Leadership Conference of National Jewish Women's Organizations with NFTS serving as co-ordinator. D/3 has prepared (and is ready to help your Sisterhood present) a Package Program on Child Abuse, tied to IYC.

Why not consider these activities in observance of IYC:

1. Appoint a Sisterhood IYC Chairwoman and Committee, involving young people from the Temple Youth Group as well.
2. Plan programs around the needs of the children in your community.
3. Use the D/3 Child Abuse program for a meeting or special event, to dramatize your observance of IYC.
4. Meet with other organizations, Jewish and non-Jewish, to plan activities and focus attention on this important issue.
5. Urge new legislation on behalf of the children on local and national levels.
6. Educate your members about children here and abroad.
7. Support UNICEF.
8. Celebrate childhood!

Write to NFTS for the program kit, with additional information and suggestions, on the IYC, and read the report by Elaine Harris "TODAY'S CHILD - TOMORROW'S ADULT: Meeting the Challenge of IYC." Refer to your orange-covered D/3 Package Programming book for details on ordering Child Abuse program.



OR AMI AWARDS FOR SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENT

The NFTS Or Ami - "Light of the People" Awards were established to express appreciation and to honor those Sisterhoods undertaking special programs or projects of service or education of such unusual character and vital meaning that they are truly a "Light of the People."

If you have an innovative or unusual, highly significant program or project of services or education, initiated within the Biennial period, it is eligible for submission. Guidelines have been sent to the Sisterhoods informing them how to apply and reminding them of the deadline - October 5, 1979.



As a speaker for NFTS, I have been sent to many parts of North America, and have been consistently concerned with the lack of knowledge, both in our Sisterhoods and congregations, about the World Union - what it is, what it does, for whom and by whom.

Although its purpose and accomplishments are well-known in the 25 countries it supports with rabbis, educational materials and organizational skills, in this part of the world many are ill-informed. For this reason, the North American Board is forming a Speakers' Bureau to spread information throughout the regions, to suggest programs of education and to encourage participation. There is also a new up-dated Directory available at the North American office (838 Fifth Ave., NY, NY, 10021) defining addresses, times of services, etc. in countries you might be visiting.

With its international office in Jerusalem, the World Union is involved with congregations world-wide, whether they be called Reform, Liberal or Progressive. In England, for instance, there are 2 organizations, the Reform Synagogues of Great Britain and the Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues, with many congregations in each - all affiliated with the World Union. They are closely in contact with the European Board of the Progressive Movement, which has expanded so much recently to now require a European director. For the first time, the Governing Body will meet this summer in Geneva instead of London, and at that time will welcome its newest congregation in Zurich.

The Australian and New Zealand Union for Progressive Judaism has advanced considerably in the last few years, and now has produced the first Progressive Day School outside of North America and Israel. When our Study Mission attended its dedication last year and its Union Convention, we who were privileged to be there, realized how important it is for them to keep a personal contact with those of us in the main-stream of Jewish life. In spite of their lack of rabbinic leadership, the congregational life is stimulating and encouraging.

The South African Union for Progressive Judaism, aside from losing its congregation in Rhodesia, which joined with the few Jews remaining there, seems to be healthy and effective, involved as it is, with human rights in helping to resolve the problems of a divided government. At every Conference these congregations are well-represented, gathering strength and hope from their fellow delegates.

Israel, where the next International Conference will take place early in 1980, has increased congregationally, and has impressed everyone with its expanded youth programs, student exchange growth and especially its success with Kibbutz Yahel.

Latin America, with its many political problems, is still increasing its membership, particularly in its youth division, due to the dedicated rabbinic leadership no doubt, and to the fact that gradually their own native-born rabbis are returning to serve them.

Sisterhoods in D/3 who require guidance regarding World Union programs should contact either me, or the WUPJ office in NYC for further information.

*Rita Eisendrath
Consultant on WUPJ for D/3*

"Interns for Peace" to Serve in Israeli Arab Villages

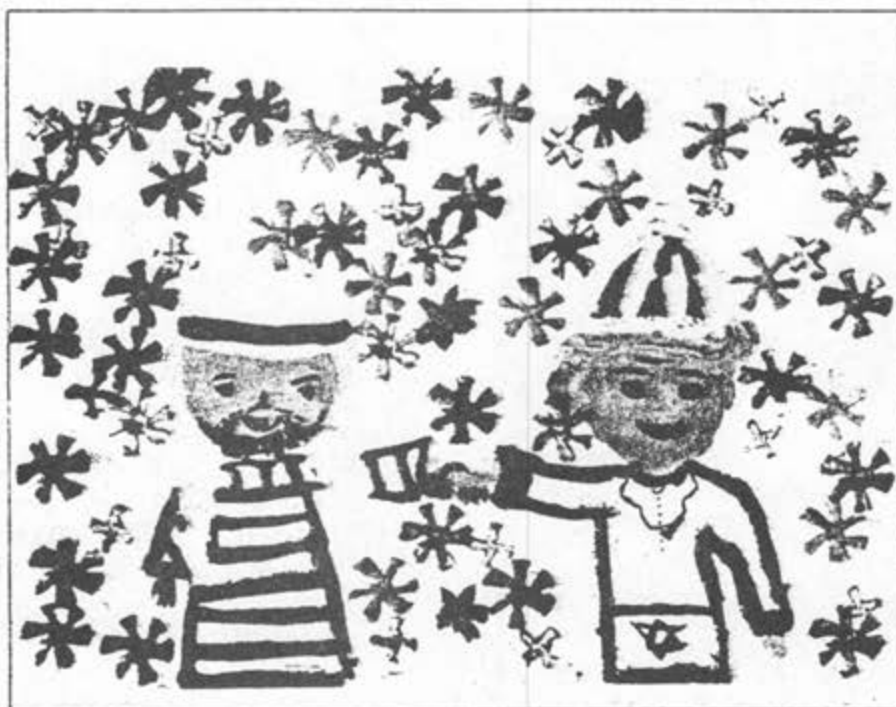
"Interns for Peace" has been established in the United States as a new Jewish-Zionist program for fostering Arab-Jewish relations in Israel. After a 6 month orientation period at Kibbutz Barkai, the first group of volunteers began two years of community work in five Arab villages, in the Galilee and the Triangle.

The program is financed by philanthropists and organizations in the U.S., among them NFTS. It also receives support from Haifa University and from the Kibbutz Artzi movement. It is directed by Rabbi Bruce Cohen, who stressed that Interns for Peace is non-political. Volunteers were sought among Jewish college graduates with a working knowledge of Hebrew and at least one year's previous stay in Israel, and with training in education, health and youth work.

The work of the interns will reach out to neighboring kibbutzim, moshavim and developing towns. It is hoped the program will help break down the barriers between Arab and Jew and also provide research material for promoting practical solutions to similar conflicts between communities in other parts of the world.

The volunteers will be expected to learn Arabic and familiarize themselves with Arab culture and traditions. The project organization hopes that the North Americans will remain in Israel after their internship, becoming permanent Israeli citizens.

If you are interested in a speaker about "Interns for Peace" please write to NFTS and they will refer your request to the proper group. Should you care to make a contribution (approximately \$10) to help the work, please make your checks payable to NFTS and they will be transmitted to them on your behalf. NFTS is deeply interested in the work of this group and has encouraged and sponsored them in their efforts.



FOR ISRAEL LOVERS - The Jerusalem Post - the only Israeli newspaper written in English.

Want to be more knowledgeable about current events in Israel and the Middle East? You will be up-to-date on the top political, cultural, and military news. The International Edition also includes religious and scientific developments, business opportunities - the latest in sports, coins, fashions, archeology and tourism.

For
Israel
Lovers™

Keep in touch " with the heartbeat of life inside Israel."

For a subscription (52 issues for \$30) write:

The Jerusalem Post (International Edition)
110 East 59th St, NYC, NY 10022

LINK - LEADER'S INFORMATION NETWORK FOR KNOWLEDGE

Link

LINK is also a network of women - District women who are ready to help you strengthen your Sisterhood.

Are you aware that this network includes those leaders shown on the five-page, yellow Departmental Consultants list, as well as Members-at-large, Past Presidents, and officers of D/3?

Look at the lists, and ask LINK to aid you in selecting a speaker for your meetings. Whatever may be your particular concern, there is a knowledgeable D/3 leader who would like to visit your Sisterhood.

Sylvia Lindner
LINK Chairwoman



DO YOU

- have a Temple Library?
- use it for meetings and study groups?
- take advantage of this facility?
- NEED ADVICE OR INFORMATION?

CONTACT

Lauretta Sack
3261 Bayfield Blvd
Oceanside, NY 11572
516-764-1399

Mary Meyer
6 Bryson St
Larchmont, NY 10538
914-834-1987

LIBRARY CONSULTANTS

I spent the last few days completely disheartened after listening to the news broadcasts from Israel. It was stated that no planes arrived or departed Monday because President Carter's plane was preparing to disembark. A light in the dark -- my phone rang! It was a call from my Sisterhood to pick up my Purim flowers that arrived from Israel that day. The beautiful chrysanthemums are similar to the flowers grown at Kibbutz Yahel for export. Can you imagine that the flowers of Israel continue to reach our homes in spite of the chaos in this world?

Last December I visited Israel and one of the highlights of my trip was a brief visit to Kibbutz Yahel. As a member of the NFTS Board of Directors and the Task Force on Kibbutz Yahel, I was interested in seeing the growth of the new Reform Kibbutz. I believe that Kibbutz Yahel is a vital link in building a Reform Progressive Liberal community in Israel.

On a bright warm morning during Chanukah we drove from Eilat traveling north on the Arava Road 65 kilometers (40 miles) to Kibbutz Yahel. We passed the fabled King Solomon mines, a large dairy farm owned by a Kibbutz, a few small Kibbutzim and a large Guest House and gas station owned by another Kibbutz and always to our right the forbidding mountains of Jordan less than a mile away.

We arrived at Kibbutz Yahel at lunchtime and were greeted by Naomi Salant, an old friend who attended D/3 Convention last October. We also met some members of the Kibbutz who originally came from neighboring Long Island Temples. Lunch included some of the crops grown on the Kibbutz; tomatoes, cucumbers, onions and green peppers.

Naomi accompanied us on a tour of the Kibbutz. We saw their living quarters, the members' lounge which is also being used as a synagogue, a small factory and the gardens. We also saw the ever-present bomb shelters. Many projects are in various stages of construction; a swimming pool and a water reservoir are almost completed. As there are already a number of families and married couples, they are planning a kindergarten and toddlers' house.

The ground has been cleared for MA'AYAN BA MIDBAR "Spring in the Desert" our NFTS Study Center. Construction will start shortly.

We visited the green houses and Naomi explained how a very sophisticated electronic system of lighting works every 25 minutes for 5 minutes to help harvest the flowers in less time. We saw the vegetables and fruit growing right up to the Jordan border.

In carrying out Tzedekah a group of disadvantaged children are brought to Yahel to play and receive their meals once a week. Plans are being formulated to establish and develop youth groups in Eilat.

As this was vacation time for many of our college age youth, there were many NFTY members and a large youth group from Holland visiting Kibbutz Yahel.

It is almost hard to believe that in two short years out of a barren desert, we now have green fields bursting with flowers, fruit and vegetables and the Kibbutz overcrowded with committed Reform Pioneers.

We left the Kibbutz promising to return for the dedication of the Seminar.

Ruth Kaplan

If your Sisterhood has not sent in a contribution to KIBBUTZ YAHEL, please do so at once. The deadline for contributions is Nov. 1, 1979 and we still need \$160,000.

Dear Friends:

In November of 1977, we were given a plan of action for the raising of funds for our new NFTS project, the Study Center at Kibbutz Yahel. We were to raise \$320,000 by November 30, 1979.

We were convinced we had a great deal of time and some of you went ahead with your plans for you a/o your Sisterhoods to become Builders or Benefactors for which NFTS is very grateful. However, some of you are still convinced that there is plenty of time.

Look at the calendar, my friends. Time is slipping away at a most rapid pace and Ma'Ayan Ba Midbar has only about \$170,000 in its coffers.

I am writing this letter to urge you to step up your efforts to complete the task of building a Study Center at Kibbutz Yahel. Remember that all women who give \$50 or more as an individual will have their names inscribed in the Book of the Heart which will be on permanent display in our Ma'Ayan Ba Midbar.

It has been clearly indicated that our Reform Kibbutz is appealing to the Israelis. There is a great need for a study center where the youth can go and learn about Reform Judaism. What a way for us to help the young who search for a rewarding way to live!

February 1980 will see the dedication of our Ma'Ayan Ba Midbar at the Kibbutz Yahel. Let us all be a part of this miracle - the shining light that is Kibbutz Yahel and the spring that is Ma' Ayan Ba Midbar.

Fondly,

Betty Goldstein, D/3 VP



. To ADD FULFILLMENT To YOUR SUMMER DAYS

For a number of years, many of our Sisterhoods have entertained JASA senior citizen groups from the 'Center City' by providing an outing one day in the spring or summer.

The JASA Outings to the Suburbs program, now in its sixth year, has served more than 5,500 senior citizens to date. In our District many Sisterhoods have participated: Temple Israel, New Rochelle; Temple Israel, Staten Island; Temple Sinai, Roslyn; Larchmont Temple; Westchester Reform, Scarsdale; Temple Emanuel, East Meadow; Jewish Community Center, White Plains, Jewish Community Center, West Hempstead; Temple B'nai Israel, Elmont and Temple Beth-El, Dix Hills.

The unqualified success of these programs is due in large measure to women with enthusiasm; involved and committed members of Sisterhoods who have hosted the outings. A "Day in the Country" is a truly rewarding experience. The only cost to your Sisterhood is a simple luncheon - the dividend returned is much greater - the smile on the faces of the elderly as they enjoy the country air and a change from their daily routine.

If you wish more information contact Phyllis Silber, 212-243-3117 or call JASA directly: Anne Kelemen, 212-677-2530. CALL - AND MAKE A DATE!

CHANGING PATTERNS!

The first session of D/3, NFTS exciting and provocative learning series, Changing Patterns, was held January 10, 1979 at Central Synagogue in NYC. Approximately 200 women from all parts of D/3 came to hear about "Values in Conflict." "How Deeply Is Intermarriage Affecting our Jewish Survival?"

After an opening prayer by Audrey Edelstein, president of the Sisterhood of Central Synagogue and remarks by Judy Hertz, president of D/3, Flo Haar, Patterns Chairwoman, introduced the three speakers.

Dr. Egon Mayer, Assoc. Professor of Sociology, Brooklyn College, stated that intermarriage is a serious threat to Jewish survival and the chief enemy of the Jewish community. He emphasized that all institutions must act together to fight intermarriage but not the intermarrieds.

In a project for the American Jewish Committee 450 intermarried couples from large cities across the country were interviewed with the following general findings:

1. The man was the usual Jewish partner.
2. Both were college educated, professionals, upwardly mobile.
3. Little formal Jewish education.
4. Equal numbers from Orthodox, Conservative, Reform.
5. 70% belonged to a Temple.
6. 65% reported they had religious parents who observed holidays and traditions.
7. Before marriage 65-68% were attached to their Jewish values so rebellion is not indicated.

Rabbi Michael Robinson, Temple Israel of Northern Westchester, began by stating that there is no vaccine against intermarriage. Most Jews don't want to see 5,000 years of a people disappear even though some see it as an answer to anti-Semitism. We want our children to marry Jews so that they and their mates can share our background and so we can have "machitenisters" and not in-laws. He feels that parents must be reassured that they haven't failed when intermarriage occurs as they are not omnipotent and their children choose mates in a free country.

Rabbi Robinson said that synagogues should welcome the intermarrieds and involve them and their children. Parents must welcome them, too - they must make an attempt to bring them into their home for holidays and ceremonies and accept them warmly. He feels that conversion as a ticket to marriage is an insult to that person's integrity - it should be done only for a person seriously committed to Judaism. He concluded by saying that Jewish indifference is the real threat to a continuing Jewish people rather than intermarriage or a low birth rate.

Rabbi Rosenberg, Community Synagogue, Port Washington, began by saying that intermarriage results from a pluralistic society and being in the Diaspora. Intermarriage is not the main enemy to Judaism but its not good for the Jews or for the survival of the Jewish people and as he is a surrogate for the Jewish people he will not perform a mixed marriage.

Formal education is not the only answer. Practice, commitment and a climate of Jewish living are very important in order to establish a Jewish World for our youngsters.

At lunch time hypothetical problems were given and discussed. The questions raised as a result of these discussions were brought back to the speakers in the afternoon session.

At the conclusion of the question and answer period, Flo Haar made some closing remarks. "You can now understand that there are no easy answers or solutions. In fact, we probably have raised more questions than we have answered. There are no panaceas, educational or otherwise, for the problem of intermarriage. Intermarriage is a fact of life and will persist as a phenomenon of a free and open society. Its everpresent possibility though, should elicit among us a creative response, making us look to the quality of our family relationship, and our Jewish institutions. Possibly we can help stem the tide.

Our job, as leaders in sisterhoods and congregations is to confront the issue and take some positive steps. We must be influential in improving the quality of Jewish education, in the home as well as in the synagogue, not only for our children, but especially for the parents. We must demonstrate that Judaism has emotional wealth as well as a rich intellectual heritage. For the data we have heard suggests that the degree of Jewish involvement and practice among intermarried couples is primarily a function of the degree of Jewish commitment brought to the marriage by the Jewish spouse. We must also develop an outreach program in our synagogues and communities to welcome these intermarried couples and bring them, and hopefully their children, into the Jewish community. For the Mishnah reminds us, 'He who saves a single person in Israel is as though he saved the entire world' "

Phyllis Zuchman
Temple Israel, New Rochelle

D/3 Shabbat Experience - "VALUES IN CONFLICT" - March 24, 1979

Rabbi Eugene Lipman - "Values in Conflict: Self and Society"
Who Am I? Who are We? Is the emphasis
on self in conflict with the Jewish
community? Are life cycle events private
or community celebrations?

In today's world, the "I" is a strong individual with an even stronger sense of will and need for decision making. Individuals must decide what constitutes a "mitzvah" in life. Also, that individual is a part of a "people" (Israel) with a commonality and destiny. However, we are now having tensions with "I" versus "community" (they). We rely on our institutions and crises in Israel to give us our identity and communality.

The new generation of young Jewish adults are World War II babies and high-schoolers, who share an identity problem. They are a part of our mechanized and "individuality-crushing" society which is an extremely homogenized group. Their Jewish identity problems stem from a poor knowledge of Jewish life with their only profound interest in life cycle events. The younger high-school age person appears to be non-controversial, peaceful, non-argumentative and "proud" to be Jewish.

There appear to be four positive influences on the American Jewish scene today. They are:

1. The Day Schools - an expensive but apparently very positive force.
2. Departments of Jewish studies springing up in colleges and universities across the country.
3. Israel
4. The synagogues - to some degree bringing about more study by adults and "happier" religious schools.

In our great desire to have stronger Jewish identity, our task is to have the synagogue become the place for the individual to develop that identity. And, only through small groups within the synagogue (Havarat) can a sense of identity and communality become real. Within such small groups, life cycle events (Bar/Bat Mitzvah, births, weddings and deaths) in individual instances may become communalized.

Marge Kurcias

Temple Beth-El, Great Neck

After our discussions at the tables concerning the life cycle events Rabbi Lipman went around the room and answered questions on each of the topics.

He started off with Brith by saying he didn't want to get into a discussion of Halacha but did stress that the Brith should be held on the 8th day after birth so long as the child is healthy. The same holds true for having a ceremony for girls. Although doctors recently publicized arguments questioning the value of circumcision Rabbi Lipman stated Jews don't do it for medical reasons, they do it for covenantal reasons. We need a covenant for action! He went on to say that we want equality in all things but we haven't found it yet for girls. We are trying to find ritual actions which convey emotions - words aren't enough. Bar and Bat Mitzvah in the Reform Movement has equalized boys and girls.

Regarding marriage, Rabbi Lipman's feeling is that the bride and groom should make their own statement about getting married. They can do their own ceremony since it is a celebration of their marriage and he encourages them to do that.

During the morning session Rabbi Lipman had described how 4 synagogues in the Washington, D.C. area combined to form a consortium to deal with funerals and burials. He elaborated a bit more at this session when asked if funerals should be held in the synagogue. His feeling is that the synagogue is a communal space to share with the community. The community is what is sacred not the room. The synagogue is a room that lives therefore funerals should take place there. After all, death is part of life! He encourages the family to write the service for any life cycle event and encourages the congregation to participate in the funeral service at the synagogue rather than at the graveside because it's uncomfortable there and people can't hear the eulogy. He also feels the ride (or better still, the walk) to the cemetery is a good thing.

He went on to talk about "sanctity" and said the Torah is not a holy scroll in and of itself - it can be read like any other book for learning purposes - only when a sacred congregation takes it as a religious sacred action is it a holy book. All books are treated with respect, not holiness. Sanctity is created by sacred action. Today, we take ordinary life and move sanctity into it by saying a borucha.

Rabbi Lipman explained that Temple means a place set apart - sanctuary is a place you run away to. Therefore, in ancient times you got sanctuary at the Temple. Today, that's not what that room is about. He prefers to call it a synagogue or shul since it is a place where Jews come together to achieve sacred purposes. He feels the sin of the Reform Movement is centralizing the Rabbi as a priesthood and making us too passive at services. Davaning is a Jewish skill and we should do what we're supposed to. By using the mincha service Friday night to celebrate significant life cycle events as a congregation we can bring those moments of community inside the synagogue. What we are looking for is more of those moments to welcome and warm each other!

*Elaine Merians,
Larchmont Temple*



SAVE THE DATE

Tuesday, October 30, 1979

At last D/3 is offering a provocative
learning experience for

THE NORTHERN TIER SISTERHOODS

A distinguished panel will discuss the controversial question:

WILL JUDAISM SURVIVE?

Temple Beth Zion
805 Delaware Ave.
Buffalo, New York



FOR EVERYONE WHO BELIEVES THAT HUMAN SURVIVAL DEPENDS ON
INFORMED, REASONED, EFFECTIVE SOCIAL ACTION,

CHAI/IMPACT

PROVIDES A MEANS TO CHOOSE LIFE FOR ALL HUMANITY

CHAI/IMPACT has been established as an attempt to enhance the quickness, quality and quantity of our response to crucial social issues.... it is a grass-roots network of committed Jews across the country who, on the basis of religious conviction, seek to enhance the quality of life in America and the world.

Chai/Impact Network is a voice of hope and affirmation. It gives you the tools you need to say "yes" to social justice, to express your own continuing commitment to the prophetic vision. It provides accurate, factual information and specific Jewish perspectives on key issues in Washington, in the nation and abroad. It sends mailings directly to you in time for thought and action. It tells you how to be effective in registering your concerns.

-----Tear off coupon and mail today-----

CHAI/IMPACT, UAHC, 2027 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20036

YES - I want to be kept up-to-date and I want to be heard! Send my mailings to:

Name: _____

Street Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone: _____ Business Phone: _____

Congregation/Organization _____
(specify Sisterhood or other affiliate)

Annual Subscription \$18 (Students \$10). Check enclosed _____