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MS-630: Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler Digital Collection, 1953-1996.
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Outreach [Pacific Southwest], 1979-1993.

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

October 11, 1993
26 Tishri 5754

Ms. Xenia Amsdel
3356 Barnard Way
Santa Monica, CA 90405

Dear Ms. Amsdel:

This response to your deeply touching letter has been delayed far too long and I hope you will forgive me. Do not think for one moment that I ignored you. Quite the contrary, your comments have been with me since I received your letter. Unfortunately, my schedule has been frenetic what with the Jewish holidays (and I do serve a congregation for the High Holy Days) and preparations for the UAHC's major Biennial convention in San Francisco less than two weeks hence. I have barely been at my office for I have been researching and writing my President's Message which is to be given at that convention.

The fact of the matter is that I was profoundly effected by what you had to say; so much so that it is my intention to make reference to it in my Biennial address. It was also shared with the editor of REFORM JUDAISM, the UAHC magazine, and if you have not already heard from him you will be receiving a letter shortly.

Your story and others which are similar are precisely the kinds of unfortunate experiences which point to the injustice of it all. Indeed, that is why I was impelled me to press for Reform Judaism's adoption of a resolution on patrilineal descent which embraces as Jews children born to either a Jewish father or mother.

For your perusal, I enclose herewith some of my writings on this critical and sensitive subject which I believe will interest you. I do hope I will meet you personally before too long, perhaps during one of my visits to the Los Angeles area. Do you ever travel to New York? If so, you might let me know in advance so we might arrange to meet. I would welcome such an opportunity. With warm good wishes, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

For SW
Outreach

October 11, 1993

From: Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler

TO: Rabbi Lennard R. Thal

The enclosed is self-explanatory. She reads RJ so may be a member of one of our congregations. Before I seek a meeting, I thought you might seek to get me a line on this woman. Her letter is touching.

Many thanks.

Thal
To Cal
for
A

Rabbi Alexander Schindler
Pres. of
Union of Am. Hebrew Congregations
3077 University Ave
Los Angeles, Ca. 90007.

In reaction
to press release
on my participation
Source -
could we use a
part of this
powerful
letter in
speed?

Sept. 1

Dear Rabbi Schindler:

The encl. article motivates me to write to you. I am the child
of a Jewish father and a non-Jewish mother in Vienna, Austria.
I lost my father in Buchenwald. I had to hide, excluded from
schools and work, in fear of the Gestapo, for seven years.

In 145 in postwar Europe I was starving, freezing (living in a
ruin) destitute, trying desperately to stay a student at U of Vienna
(Medizin). I applied for a p.t. job at a home of survivors
from Theresienstadt (Terezin), run by the joint Jewish distribution
Committee - just for a meal a day. I was shamed and re-
jected, because I did not know the story of Terezin! Not having
been raised by a Jewish mother!!

I received no support at all from Jewish agencies to survive
- I was "only" half a Jew!!! Having survived a hell for 7
years meant nothing to them - it meant enough for me!
I was never told, I could go to Israel. I survived the Post-Hitler
years by cleaning toilet's as a cleaning woman in a Hospital
in Basel, so I could have food and a warm room to sleep.... It
was the only work-visa to Switzerland at that time.

I had to give up my goal to become a psychiatrist - I had
no support system. Although I was anxious to learn about
the religion of my fathers, no door was open in Europe at that
time.

Hitler persecuted people for having "Jewish blood", but then

(2)

Jews discriminate people for having "non Jewish-blood" - what grim irony!

So - I had to go it alone, in a sort of no-man's-land. Gradually I awakened to an understanding that it was not my deficit but an abysmal lack in Jews who rejected me! Gradually I started to see my strength, my gifts, my own humanity....

Now I am 70 years old - and they still squabble in Israel over children with a Jewish father: 50 years after the Holocaust the "Nuerenberg law" is still in force: one Jewish grandparent, two Jewish grandparents... etc. Too sad. What could be more important than to lovingly accept children with Jewish blood? Is there something more important than to be "a mensch"? Not for me, not for me!

Sincerely,

Xenia Auschke M.F.C.C.

3356 Barnard Way

Santa Monica, Ca. 90405.

Substantive Pac SW

May 6, 1987
7 Iyar 5747

Rabbi Frank Stern
2625 N. Tustin Avenue
Santa Ana, CA. 92705

Dear Frank:

Thank you for your letter of April 9 and your letter to your congregants. I am grateful to you for sharing your decision with me. I respect the earnestness of your approach.

With thanks and every good wish, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

RABBI FRANK STERN
2625 N. TUSTIN AVENUE
SANTA ANA, CALIFORNIA 92705

April 9, 1987


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

Dear Alexander,

I have changed my position about officiating at a wedding ceremony in which either the bride or groom technically is not Jewish at the time of the wedding. Where there is a commitment to establish a Jewish family and to rear their children as Jews, I am now willing to officiate at such ceremonies.

I recently explained my new position to the members of my synagogue. I thought you might be interested in reading the letter which I sent to each of them.

Cordially,


Rabbi Frank Stern

RFS/ns

*I thank you
for following
up on showing
your decision with
me. I respect
the earnestness
of your
approach.*

Temple Beth Sholom of Orange County

March 26, 1987



Dear Congregant:

At the Board Meeting on March 25, 1987, Rabbi Stern shared with the Board of Directors his struggle regarding his officiating at marriages where both the bride and the groom are committed to establishing a Jewish home, but where one of them technically may not be Jewish at the time of the wedding. And he shared with us his decision now to officiate at such marriages.

The Board of Directors unanimously endorsed Rabbi Stern's position on this subject and praised him for his willingness to reconsider his ideas in the light of changed circumstances.

I asked Rabbi Stern to enclose this letter with his own, so that you might know that the Temple Board wholeheartedly endorses his decision.

Sincerely,

Susan G. Katz
President

SGK/ns

RABBI FRANK STERN

2625 N. TUSTIN AVENUE
SANTA ANA, CALIFORNIA 92705

March 26, 1987

Dear Friends:

Times change. Often more rapidly than ever we would have imagined. Who would have thought just fifty years ago that almost half the Jews in the world would be living in the United States? Who would have thought that almost 40% of Jewish marriages in America would end in divorce? Who would have imagined that in America one in every three Jews marries a non-Jew?

Times change. And we -- rabbis, educators, committed and caring Jewish leaders -- we must somehow change with them or be swept aside as irrelevant.

We are fighting against all the inducements and conveniences of modern living to preserve an ancient heritage, to maintain in our own lives and to transmit to our children our ancient patterns and traditions. It is clear to me now more than ever that we must wage that battle with even greater energy and determination if our traditions are to survive. We ought to intensify our efforts in Jewish education. We ought to increase our support of Jewish causes and institutions. We ought to make more time in our lives for Jewish observances.

Yet we should not close the door on those who are not so committed, on those who are uncertain, on those who stray. One out of every three Jews in America marries a non-Jew. And I anticipate that the proportion will continue to increase. If we don't try to keep these people attached to Judaism somehow, a generation from now the Jewish community in America will be decimated. I am pleased with our congregation's efforts to reach out to the non-Jewish spouses of temple members, to make them feel welcome and to involve them in synagogue life. I am pleased also with the Introduction to Judaism program housed at our temple and with our congregation's support of new converts to Judaism.

But more is needed.

Throughout my rabbinic career, I have officiated only in marriages where both the bride and groom were Jewish at the time of the wedding. In this regard (as in many others), I have been a traditionalist. Like the vast majority of Reform rabbis, I believed that Jewish tradition would be better preserved if I did not officiate in mixed marriages.

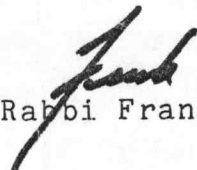
I've changed my mind. After agonizing over the issue alone and with congregants, after sharing with them their difficulties and disappointments, I now perceive things differently. I believe that Jewish tradition will be better preserved and the Jewish community better served if I officiate at marriages where the bride and the groom evidence a strong commitment to Judaism, even though one of them technically may not be Jewish at the time of the wedding.

I hope they will remain attached to Jewish tradition. I hope they will enroll in the Introduction to Judaism class. I hope they will rear their children as Jews. In mixed marriages, statistics have shown that the religion of the family generally follows the spouse that is most committed to his/her religion. I want to work on their Jewish commitments.

Most of the weddings at which I officiate involve members of the temple. I don't do many non-member weddings. I'm busy enough just serving the members of our congregation. And I anticipate that the pattern will continue. I don't plan to respond any more fully than I do now to requests from non-members for my services.

Times change, and we must change with them. My decision to change feel right and is justified by current and projected conditions in American Jewish life, but it marks a significant turning point in the life of our congregation -- and all turning points are a bit unsettling. We will need to support and encourage each other. In the long run, however, I feel certain that we and our children will be better for it.

Cordially,


Rabbi Frank Stern

RFS/ns

Outreach Pac SW

December 23, 1987
22 Tevt 5748

Ms. Betty F. Levy
11442 Culver Park Drive
Culver City, CA 90230

Dear Ms. Levy:

Your letter of December 15 has just reached me and I hasten to reply. It pleased me to hear from you and to have you share with me your thoughts and concerns on intermarriage.

My original statement was a bit different from the quote you share in your letter. What I have said is that because we reject intermarriage we do not need to reject, indeed we should stand ready to accept the intermarried.

Rejecting intermarriage does not mean that the non-Jewish partner is to be rejected as a person, as a human being. What one has to make clear is that even when a clergy person will not conduct an interfaith marriage ceremony that in itself is not rejection of the couple. Non-performance of such a ceremony is based on the individual conscience of the rabbi. How the rabbi says "NO" to a couple makes a great difference in their feeling of rejection. The rabbi should still counsel the couple, explain the reason for non-performance of such wedding ceremonies and make it known to the couple that they are not being rejected. I have known of instances where a couple felt turned-off and rejected by a member of the clergy who performs interfaith weddings and the bride and groom determined to be wed by a Judge. There are ways to say Yes and No which communicate either openness or rejection and I have urged my colleagues to be very careful in dealing with couples of different faith and certainly to make certain they are not turned away by a telephone operator or member of the temple staff. The rabbi should be the one to respond to such calls.

The UAHC and our Outreach Department are making great strides in our work with new Jews as well as interfaith couples and their children. We are aware of the many problems which present themselves and we are striving to respond to the problems on every level and to provide as much aid and counsel, as well as warmth in welcoming these families into our midst, as is possible given our modest resources.

Ms. Betty F. Levy
December 23, 1987
Page -2-

If you are interested in obtaining some of our Outreach materials or in chatting with a member of the Outreach staff, you might want to contact our Outreach office in Los Angeles (213-653-9962). Our national director of Outreach, Lydia Kukoff, is based in Los Angeles and I am certain she will provide information and help should you seek either.

With warm good wishes, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schiddler

Have her
look to Lydea
or write "how
to ceremony
to matters!"

11442 Culver Park Drive
Culver City, CA 90230
December 15, 1987

der Schindler
rican Hebrew Congregations
venue
Y. 10021

chindler,

the liberty of writing to you, something I have
been wanting to do since last year when I was reading an
article by Dr. Louis L. Kaplan that appeared in the Jewish
Spectator, Summer 1986 issue.

In his article* "The Coming of Age of North American Jewry"
Dr. Kaplan states the following: "Rabbi Alexander Schindler
has stated that the appropriate stance is to reject inter-
marriage, but to accept the intermarried." Doesn't rejection
of the non-Jewish partner before the marriage cause sufficient
hurt and/or hatred within this partner that affects a healthy
relationship with the "parents-in-law"? In other words, a
certain amount of damage is done.

I have been groping with intermarriage in our Jewish Community
in general these past many years; and, now on a more personal
level, I am grappling with it as a parent ("unbelievable", as
many of us say), aunt, and friend to other parents in this
same situation. Recently I have been trying to accept the
"response to intermarriage...to outreach"*** even though
inwardly I am not coping.

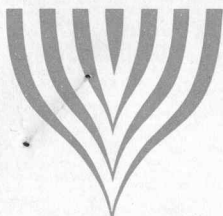
Thank you so much for your understanding.

Respectfully yours,

Betty F. Levy
Betty F. Levy

* Actually this is a print of a paper Dr. Kaplan presented
at the 1985 General Assembly of the Council of Jewish
Federations and Welfare Boards.

** "From Outrage to Outreach" by Dr. Egon Mayer, Women's
League Outlook, Fall Issue 1987, p. 28.



איחוד
ליהדות
מתקדמת
באמריקה

Commission on Reform Jewish Outreach

UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS - CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN RABBIS
6300 WILSHIRE BOULEVARD, SUITE 1475, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90048 (213) 653-9962

December 9, 1986
7 Kislev 5747

Handwritten signature: No further

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

Dear Alex,

I thought that the Board Meeting was absolutely terrific. I returned home late Sunday night and by the time I got to the office Monday morning I already had several calls from Regional Directors who had Board members return and call them immediately to say what a fabulous Board Meeting it had been and how much they loved the film and were eager to obtain a copy. So many good things happened that it will take me a while to assimilate them all but I am grateful to you for giving Outreach the opportunity to be the subject of a Board Meeting.

As I looked at the mail that had accumulated in my absence, I found the enclosed and I wanted to share with you some of the *nachas* I felt. Kandy Larkey was a participant in our first "Times and Seasons" group. She had never known Jews as she grew up and she was the person who did not even know that her husband-to-be was Jewish. In fact, when she brought him home to meet her mother, her mother asked whether he was Jewish. Kandy replied that she did not know. They participated in the group and found it very helpful. Shortly after the group Kandy became pregnant and had Jacob. Kandy and Charles divorced shortly after and she found herself alone with a baby. We have never lost contact with her and have been very supportive to her. She has been doing a super job of raising her child and trying to maintain some sense of Judaism in the home. When she moved from the immediate Los Angeles area, her first phone call was to us to find where the temple was and where a good Jewish pre-school was in her new community. When we got the enclosed card we *kvelled*. Kandy is a most remarkable woman, beautiful in all senses of the word. She is highly intelligent and very deep. We have now put her in touch with a rabbi with whom we know she will enjoy working toward her conversion. Another success story for "Times and Seasons"; another person who would never have been reached without this terrific program.

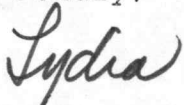
Chairman
David W. Belin
Co-Chairman
Rabbi Steven Foster
Director
Lydia Kukoff
Los Angeles
Assistant Director
Rabbi Nina Mizrahi
838 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10021
(212) 249-0100

more...

It was especially fitting that I saw this almost first on top of my stack of mail.

I hope that you and Rhea had a marvelous time in Israel and I will look forward to seeing you soon.

Fondly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Lydia".

Lydia Kukoff
Director

LK/mf

enc.



Dear Lydia & Mackey,

May the spirit
of this holiday season
lighten your lives
and bring you joy.

Love, KANDIS and JACOB Larkey

We are both fine -
We are planning to convert
to Judaism just before the
high holy days - I'll keep
you posted.

Dec. 8 —

Dear Lydia,

It was great being
with you and seeing you
"in action" - you're a gem!

Love always,

Jocelyn.

Alex,

I just received this from Jocelyn
Rudner. Maybe we can clone her!
She really is too wonderful,

S.

From the Desk of —

Lydia Kukoff

Outreach

Ally —

cc to
Loray
10/22/86
Bever

An example of Outreach
in action, again to unaffiliated
intermarried couples. Also
an example of the good
work done by our Outreach
staff as they serve our
congregations.

Love,
Lydia

MEMORANDUM

From ARLENE CHERNOW
To RABBI THAL, RABBI BRIDGE AND LYDIA KUKOFF
Copies
Subject VISIT TO TUSCON AND PHOENIX, SEPTEMBER 28TH AND 29TH

Date OCTOBER 9, 1986

My visit to Tuscon and Phoenix was very productive. The day I spent in Tucson opened some doors to Outreach that had been previously closed. It was a day that will live for a long time in my memory.

My first stop in Tucson was a meeting sponsored by Congregation Chaverim. The meeting was planned to explain Outreach to Chaverim members, and to raise the awareness of the community about Chaverim. Chaverim had gone to great effort to contact intermarried couples. Somewhere between 60-75 people attended.

Now we get to the memorable part of the meeting. I described Outreach with a special emphasis on welcoming intermarried couples. The time that had been allotted for questions and answers became a sharing of experiences, with each one being more painful than the one before.

A typical story was "I didn't think that having Jewish children was important to me until I became pregnant. The only person that would talk to us was my husband's priest." This story came from a Chaverim member. A great deal of anger was also expressed. It became very important to let the couples express their feelings. My responses to their questions were: this meeting is a beginning, I suggested that non-members look at what Chaverim was saying to them and that there are segments of the community that we cannot change, but that should not be the cause of denying their family a Jewish experience.

The couples may have entered angry, but that was not the way they left. In fact, they almost did not leave at all. The Chaverim members who were present approached each couple. One hour after the formal part of the meeting many of the families were still talking to Chaverim members. I also made contact with every couple who had spoken. By 9:00 that evening Chaverim had received six phone calls from families interested in membership.

Chaverim will need to provide support groups if the intermarried couples do join. I think that the leadership has both the awareness of the need and the talent to provide the groups.



Union of American Hebrew Congregations

6300 WILSHIRE BLVD., SUITE 1475, LOS ANGELES, CA 90048 (213) 653 9962

From the Chaverim meeting, I went to the home of Trudy Aaron the program director of Temple Emanu-El. Trudy and I spent an hour and a half talking before dinner.

Trudy had invited Temple leaders to dinner including Burt Landau, Meryl Schoolman and active intermarried couples who are not on the board. The first part of the evening involved a general discussion of what Outreach is all about, and dealing with the feelings of the people in the room. Once that was finished, we were able to discuss the program.

Burt and Meryl think that Temple Emanu-El is now ready to become more involved in Outreach. At this point they offer a holiday workshop for every holiday. They offer one year of participation in religious school without requiring membership for intermarried couples. They seemed to have a clear understanding of their problems names: older membership, personality of the Rabbi and the need for growth among the young intermarried couples in Tucson.

They also felt that the professional support staff that had been recently hired would be effective in dealing with the problems. They were very receptive to all of my suggestions. They would like me to speak to their membership. They also suggested a meeting in Casa Grande of Temple leadership from Tucson and Phoenix to discuss Outreach.

I think that Trudy is outstanding and interested in bringing Outreach to Temple Emanu-El. I would like to discuss a return visit to Tucson and the Casa Grande suggestion with you.

The day in Phoenix was very routine by comparison to Tucson. In the morning I met with Rabbi Bell and his educator, Wendy Robinson. They were very appreciative of my visit and suggestions. We found a sample program that Rabbi Bell really liked and felt would work for them. He is currently working with fifteen couples whose wedding ceremonies he will be doing in the next year. He requires Temple membership as a sign of the couples commitment. When I pointed out that fifteen young couples sounded to me like a natural support group or havurah, he and Wendy agreed. They even had a Temple member in mind to lead the group. He is going to go to his board to get funding for the program and the support group leader.

My appointment at Beth Israel was cancelled, but Rabbi Herring and I will talk again after Sukkot.

I met Rabbi Pinkwasser and a leader of his congregation for dinner. She is married to a Jew-by-choice who converted after ten years of marriage. Temple is becoming increasingly Jewish. Rabbi Pinkwasser is very warm and has many intermarried couples involved in Temple leadership. He also sees that many of his new members are intermarried couples. We discussed program at dinner. The day ended with a warm meeting of the congregation, again to answer the questions "What is Outreach, Why Outreach?"

MEMORANDUM

file

From Lennard R. Thal

Date 3/20/86

To Alexander M. Schindler

Attached you will find a copy of the Synagogue Funding proposal entitled Kindred Spirits. Our "hearing" before the Committee will take place April 17 although we will not know the results until June.

Lydia Kukoff, Rabbi Laura Geller and Mark Levy will join me in making the presentation.

We will keep you posted.

Outreach
Bar S W
Amuse



Union of American Hebrew Congregations

6300 WILSHIRE BLVD., SUITE 1475, LOS ANGELES, CA. 90048 (213) 653-9962

איחוד
קהילות
יהודיות
אמריקאיות
באמריקה

COMPATIMATES COMPATIMATES

An introduction and dating service for Jewish singles.

WHAT IS COMPATIMATES?

COMPATIMATES is a confidential service designed to offer you an innovative approach to meeting new people based on a time-honored tradition. Through a selective and personal interview process, you will be introduced to compatible Jewish singles who share your interests and aspirations.

WHO SPONSORS IT?

COMPATIMATES is a service sponsored by The Educational Alliance and funded by Federation of Jewish Philanthropies. For nearly a century The Educational Alliance has provided cultural, educational and recreational programs to New York's Jewish community.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

COMPATIMATES offers membership to individuals who are single, Jewish, over 21 years of age, and are genuinely seeking to form serious meaningful relationships.

COMPATIMATES reserves the right to accept members based upon our professional judgement of whether this service is appropriate.

HOW DOES IT WORK FOR YOU?

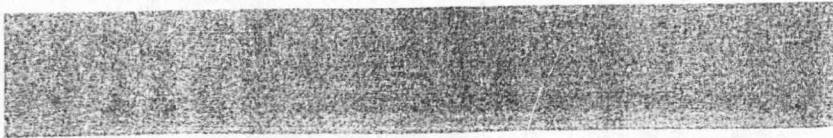
We send you a confidential application. Your completed application plus a non-refundable \$25.00 registration fee is returned to Educational Alliance West. A private, relaxed interview is then set up for the purpose of determining what it is you are looking for and how we can best respond to your desires.

Our interviewers are sensitively trained professionals committed to serving singles who seek permanent relationships. At the time of your interview a membership fee of \$150.00 will be required. In addition, we will verify the information you have supplied to us. If accepted you will begin to receive names of people to call. Invitations to small gatherings and special events which you can attend at your discretion, at minimum additional cost, will also be a part of our service.

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

Your non-refundable registration fee is \$25.00. Your one year membership fee is \$150.00

Renée Rosenberg, Program Director, COMPATIMATES



An introduction and dating service for Jewish singles.

COMPATIMATES

It takes people to meet people.

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Educational Alliance West
51 East 10 Street
New York City 10003
(212) 982-8196

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Yes, I am interested in the services of COMPATIMATES.
Please send me a confidential application.

COMPATIMATES is a project of Educational Alliance West

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COMPATIMATES

An introduction and dating service for Jewish singles

SINGLE ADULT PROFILE

Please complete all information below—All information will be kept confidential
*If available, please enclose a small recent photograph of yourself for office use only.

1. Name _____
2. Address _____
3. Telephone: Home _____ Business _____
4. Current Living Arrangements: a) Live alone _____ b) Share _____
c) Live with Family _____
5. Age _____ 6. Date of Birth _____ 7. Sex _____
8. Height _____ 9. Weight _____
10. Education: a) High School _____
Name, date graduated & diploma
b) College _____
Name, date, degree, field of study
c) Post Graduate _____
Name, date, degree, field of study
11. Current occupation or profession: _____
Present place of employment _____
How long at present place of employment _____
12. Marital Status: a) Never married _____ b) Divorced _____ How Long? _____
c) Separated _____ d) Widowed _____ How Long? _____
13. Dependent children: a) living with me _____ b) living elsewhere _____
c) none _____ d) how many _____
e) ages _____
14. Present income: a) under \$20,000 _____ b) \$20-30,000 _____
c) \$30-40,000 _____ d) \$40-50,000 _____
e) \$50-100,000 _____ f) over \$100,000 _____
15. How do you express your Jewishness/Jewish identity?
a) Culturally _____ b) Religiously _____ c) Israel _____
d) Morally/Social Conscience _____ e) Not at all _____
16. Are you a Synagogue member? a) yes _____ b) no _____
17. If yes, do you attend a) Regularly? _____ b) Frequently? _____
c) Occasionally? _____ d) High Holidays only? _____
18. Do you consider yourself to be a) Orthodox? _____ b) Conservative? _____ c) Reform? _____
d) Reconstructionist? _____ e) Unaffiliated? _____
19. Is it important to you to meet someone of similar Judaic background?
a) yes _____ b) no _____
20. Are you a member of any Jewish organizations?
a) yes _____ b) no _____ if yes which ones? _____

21. Check off below the major activities/interests which you have. Use XX to indicate a strong or major interest.

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. _____ Tennis | 20. _____ Bridge | 39. _____ Creative Writing |
| 2. _____ Racketball | 21. _____ Parties | 40. _____ Lectures |
| 3. _____ Golf | 22. _____ Computers | 41. _____ Foreign Films |
| 4. _____ Paddleball | 23. _____ Adult Education Courses | 42. _____ Galleries/Museums |
| 5. _____ Skating | 24. _____ Long Talks | 43. _____ Concerts |
| 6. _____ Skiing | 25. _____ Entertaining | 44. _____ Movies |
| 7. _____ Swimming | 26. _____ Sun and Surf | 45. _____ Ballet |
| 8. _____ Cycling | 27. _____ Picnics | 46. _____ Theater |
| 9. _____ Running | 28. _____ Traveling | 47. _____ Opera |
| 10. _____ Sailing | 29. _____ Dining Out | 48. _____ Country Music |
| 11. _____ Exercising/health clubs | 30. _____ Japanese Food | 49. _____ Latin Music |
| 12. _____ Yoga | 31. _____ Mexican Food | 50. _____ Classical Music |
| 13. _____ Taking Walks | 32. _____ Health Food | 51. _____ Jazz |
| 14. _____ Camping/hiking | 33. _____ Gourmet Cooking | 52. _____ Popular Music |
| 15. _____ Spectator Sports | 34. _____ Home-Cooked Meals | 53. _____ Disco Music |
| 16. _____ Flying | 35. _____ Literature | 54. _____ Politics |
| 17. _____ Painting | 36. _____ Poetry | 55. _____ Business |
| 18. _____ Playing Trivial Pursuit | 37. _____ Science Fiction | 56. _____ Community Affairs |
| 19. _____ Country Jaunts | 38. _____ Mysteries | 57. _____ Other _____ |

22. Please list attributes in order of priority of the person whom you would like to meet.

23. Please list attributes of individuals that would make them unacceptable.

24. List 3 references whom you wish us to contact. ~~At least two must be~~ other than family members. *one business two persona*

1) Name _____
 Address _____
 Tele: _____ Relationship _____

2) Name _____
 Address _____
 Tele: _____ Relationship _____

3) Name _____
 Address _____
 Tele: _____ Relationship _____

25. Do you have friends who you feel would be interested in receiving our brochure?

1) Name _____ 2) Name _____
 Address _____ Address _____
 Tele: _____ Tele: _____

I authorize COMPATIMATES to contact any persons listed above for purposes of verifying the information given by me.

Signature

date



COMPATIMATES is a project of Educational Alliance West, 51 East 10 Street, New York City 10003, 212 • 982 • 8196

COMPATIMATES

A Project of Educational Alliance West
51 EAST 10TH STREET NEW YORK CITY NY 10003

Dear Applicant:

WELCOME TO COMPATIMATES. We would like to clarify our acceptance policies and membership procedures. Please read all information carefully. We suggest you discuss any questions with your interviewer.

ACCEPTANCE POLICIES

Our Membership Committee reviews all applications. Acceptance into the service will be determined by our ability to respond to your expressed interests and preferences. If we feel we will be unable to make suitable introductions for you, we will return your \$150. check and application promptly.

MEMBERSHIP POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

If accepted, your membership begins on the day of your interview. Extensions will be granted only to those members who request their applications be placed on hold because they are seriously dating another member of Compatimates. The Director must approve all extensions of membership. We will make every effort to take your expressed interests and preferences into consideration during matching. As you are aware, it is not always possible to meet all of your expectations. However, all introductions will be carefully selected to include criteria common to both applicants such as educational background, age, Jewish identity, etc.

It may take six months to fulfill our obligation of four (4) introductions.

The verifying of references takes time. It is done discreetly and confidentially. Your application to a dating service is never discussed.

Please allow at least 4-6 weeks before you begin to receive introductions in the mail. You will be given one to three (1-3) names and telephone numbers to start when appropriate matches become available.

We cannot assume responsibility for the outcome of the introductions, and whether or not the contact was a telephone call or in person.

Our experience has shown the value of an in-person contact; therefore, we strongly advise you not to limit contact to a telephone call.

We will enclose feedback forms along with your list of names. You are encouraged to give us positive as well as negative feedback. In order for us to follow-up with more introductions, you must mail in the completed form. Please be assured that the feedback information is not shared or discussed with any other Compatimate participant. The purpose of the feedback is for future matching only!

All information will be kept confidential and is accessible to Compatimates' staff only.

COMPATIMATES AGREEMENT
AN INTRODUCTION AND DATING SERVICE FOR JEWISH SINGLES

COMPATIMATES is a project of
Educational Alliance West

51 East 10th Street
New York, New York 10003
Phone: 982-8196

Ronni Mann, Program Director

Name Mr.
 Miss
 Ms.
 Mrs.

Application Date:

Interview Date:

Last

First

Address _____

Home Phone _____

Work Phone _____

Best time to call _____

Fees _____

Initial _____

Renewal _____

-
1. PURPOSE: Compatimates is a service which offers an innovative approach to meeting compatible Jewish singles.
 2. SERVICES: Compatimates agrees to use its best efforts to facilitate introductions for applicants. In this regard, Compatimates provides the following services:
 - a. Actively solicit participation of new clients in the program.
 - b. Interview all applicants and maintain profile questionnaires.
 - c. Recommend potential compatible introductions to participants and recommend participants to others, where appropriate.
 3. MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES: Applicant agrees to the following:
 - a. To pay the full fee prior to above listed interview date.
 - b. To complete promptly the Profile Questionnaire, provide a current photograph, and participate in a personal interview.
 - c. Keep all information obtained from Compatimates in strict confidence.
 - d. Treat all other members with dignity and respect.

4. REPRESENTATIONS: Applicant represents that s/he is Jewish and single or divorced (provided this status is clearly stated on the profile), and that all information provided in the Profile Questionnaire is accurate, and that any changes that occur will be immediately reported to Compatimates.
5. TERMINATION: The applicant's agreement shall terminate without refund in the event that representations in Paragraph 4 hereof are determined to be false or misleading.
6. RELEASE: The undersigned hereby expressly assumes full and complete responsibility for and accepts all risks of any kind, nature or description, including, without limitation, risks of personal injury, property damage or other loss, that may occur as a result of his/her participation in (the dating service). The undersigned expressly acknowledges that neither the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies ("Federation") nor The Educational Alliance, Inc. (the "Alliance") is a guarantor of the accuracy, correctness or truthfulness of information contained in an application for membership in Compatimates.

The undersigned for himself, herself, his/her heirs, executors and assignees hereby releases Federation, the Alliance, and any other agency of Federation, its successors, assigns, officers, directors, employees and agents and their heirs, executors and administrators from any and all claims he/she has, had or may ever have arising out of, resulting from or incident to his/her participation in Compatimates whether caused by negligence, fault or otherwise.

COMPATIMATES

MEMBER

Compatimates Interviewer

(Signature)

Date: _____

Date: _____

COMPATIMATES, a project of Educational Alliance West, is a Beneficiary of the UJA/Federation Joint Campaign.

KINDRED SPIRITS

PROPOSAL SUBMITTED TO

THE SYNAGOGUE FUNDING COMMITTEE

COMMISSION ON SYNAGOGUE AFFAIRS

COUNCIL ON JEWISH LIFE

OF

GREATER LOS ANGELES

Submitted by the Pacific Southwest Council
Union of American Hebrew Congregations

Edward R. London, Regional President
Lennard R. Thal, Regional Director

KINDRED SPIRITS

A. INTRODUCTION

Application for funding from the Council on Jewish Life is being submitted by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (Pacific Southwest Council). The UAHC is the umbrella organization of the Reform Movement with its regional office located in Los Angeles. Of the sixty-four (64) congregations constituting the Pacific Southwest Council, twenty-eight (28) are located within the area served by the Jewish Federation-Council of Los Angeles. The applicant respectfully suggests that its overall purposes, goals and programs are well known to and understood by the Commission of Synagogue Affairs and its Committee on Synagogue Funding. Activities undertaken in conjunction with those purposes, goals and programs are, for the most part, of direct benefit to the applicant's constituents. Those constituents include the congregational entities referred to above, the lay and professional leadership of those congregations and the "rank and file" membership of the congregations as well.

B. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Various Jewish demographic research reports suggest very clearly that Jews, as well as other American groups, have experienced a phenomenon whereby young adults have been deferring marriage. Various factors have contributed to this phenomenon. These include a higher rate of students attending graduate school, growing numbers of women wishing to establish themselves in various professions, etc.

Considerable anecdotal evidence suggests that once such people feel that they are ready to seek out a marriage partner, the search is more difficult than might have been assumed. This phenomenon is particularly noticeable among Jewish women in the age range of 25-40. Some years ago, William Novak wrote an article for Moment Magazine in which he discussed the various reasons for the "shortage" of Jewish men. Some of the reasons suggested by Novak and others include:

1. The higher percentage of Jewish men who are involved in intermarriages.
2. The higher percentage of men who are homosexual.
3. The preference of some women to marry older men (and vice versa) especially when combined with the larger numbers in "the Baby Boom" generation (people currently 30-40) and the smaller numbers in the generations just ahead of and behind "the Baby Boomers."

To the extent that there is a real or perceived shortage of potential marriage partners for Jewish women, more and more of them may be drawn to the possibility of considering intermarriage in preference to indefinite singleness. Further, many young women speak rather freely of their concern about the expiration of their biological "time clocks" and express dismay at the thought of not bearing children. As a result, some may be all the more receptive to marrying a non-Jew. Currently, many Jewish organizations have committed substantial program resources to address the problems created by a rising rate of intermarriage. Yet, while one important factor that contributes to increased intermarriage is the difficulty experienced by Jewish men and women in finding marriage partners from within the Jewish community, none of these "outreach" programs address this issue.

During the 1970's the popular literature suggested that many young people had made a conscious choice to remain single, and therefore probably would not marry during their lifetimes. However, in the 1980's it has become clear that for many of these people, marriages simply had been deferred. The shared experiences of various Reform Jewish professionals and lay leaders suggests that many such folks are very eager to get married. Nonetheless, the stories told by these people suggest that it is not very easy to meet Jews of the opposite sex who are genuinely interested in a permanent relationship. This includes many men as well as women.

As further evidence of the problem described above, one need only consult the materials used in programs established to assist Jewish singles in meeting each other in cities such as Boston, New York and Vancouver (see Appendices A, B, and C). In each case, those programs have established a personal introduction service which directly addresses the need described above. In each instance, those who have developed the programs have created a modern application of the old Jewish practice of shadchanut. To state the obvious, the problem is not peculiar to Los Angeles. However, to date, the Los Angeles Jewish community has failed to develop the kind of program which is specifically designed to introduce 25-40 year old Jews who have expressed a readiness for a permanent relationship to other Jews who are potential marriage partners.

C. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

It is the intention of those planning this program to reach a somewhat limited target population consisting of men and women aged 25-40 (although some exceptions may be made to the outer limits of this age range). Further, it is our intention to serve an equivalent number of men and women. The primary purpose is to create opportunities, based on the conclusions of a social worker functioning as a contemporary shadchan and working half-time, for those in the target audience to meet and date people whom they otherwise might never know.

Unlike some programs, especially those which constitute for-profit enterprises, we are not interested in recruiting large numbers of participants until the program is well established. At the outset, we are most eager to identify, recruit and serve those whose loss to the Jewish community might be most keenly felt.

It is not our intention to supplant singles programs offered currently by various synagogues; they may fulfill an important function. However, for individuals whose consciously felt need is marriage, they may not suffice.

D. METHODS

Recruiting participants

It is not our intention to engage in a widespread publicity campaign in an effort to identify and attract participants. Rather, we plan to recruit participation through referrals. For that purpose, we will turn to congregational rabbis, Hillel rabbis, congregational program directors and key staff at various other Jewish organizations. We will outline the kind of program we plan to mount to those from whom we would request referrals, indicating very specifically what they should consider in identifying the potential participants.

Staffing

It is our intention to engage a trained social worker (or another professional with

similar skills), preferably in the same general age range as those we wish to attract. This person would function on a half-time basis. The social worker, who would be supervised by Rabbi Daniel Bridge, the Assistant Regional-Director of the UAHC, would compile, or oversee the compilation of, an appropriate questionnaire and then would meet with each participant for a personal consultation. No computerization is planned. Rather, following the personal interview model developed in Boston, New York and Vancouver, the staff person will use his/her good judgment and intuition to suggest potentially appropriate dating partners. The social worker then would conduct follow-up contact and consultation. Much thought will be given to the selection of the social worker since we believe that that person's sensitivity and care will constitute the most important factor in establishing this program successfully. Further, it is our conviction that the fact that this is a not-for-profit program will reassure the participants that their interests are the paramount concern of the social worker and the UAHC.

It should be noted further that the social worker will provide supervision to the volunteer coordinator of a series of evenings described below.

Volunteer Coordinator of "At-Homes"

It is our intention to hold a series of evening gatherings at the homes of married couples who are Reform temple members and who are in the same general age range as the program participants. Sixteen-twenty of the participants (divided equally by gender) will be invited to each "at-home" evening. Each gathering will be programmed around a different theme (for example, a discussion on nuclear disarmament, a presentation about the hosts' art collections, a brief talk on some film clips focusing on a particular topic, etc.

In doing so, we will provide additional opportunities for participants to meet each other (over and beyond the introductions that flow from the social worker's intuition and judgment). At the same time, we hope that these evenings also will prompt the host couples (selected by the Volunteer Coordinator) to stimulate further interest in Kindred Spirits on the part of their congregations and their rabbis.

We anticipate no significant problem in finding a volunteer who would coordinate such gatherings while working in conjunction with the social worker since our experiences reveal many people who are interested in the problem addressed by this proposal. The volunteer would need to be in touch with congregational leadership to identify potential hosts, establish a schedule, recruit speakers where appropriate, etc.

Advisory Committee

It is our intention to create an Advisory Committee that will function informally as a source of assistance and as a "sounding board" for the social worker. The Advisory Committee would include several lay people including those in the age range of the population to be served as well as 2-3 from the age range of the parents of that population. In addition, it will include the four professionals who have designed this proposal (Rabbi Laura Geller, U.S.C. Hillel Director, Ms. Lydia Kukoff the Director of the Commission on Reform Jewish Outreach, and Rabbis Lennard R. Thal and Daniel E. Bridge, Director and Assistant Director of the UAHC Pacific Southwest Council).

E. EVALUATION

Our evaluation will be comprised of the following components:

1. Written and oral reports of participants after several matches.
2. Oral reports of "at-home" hosts.
3. Written or oral reports of "at-home" coordinator.
4. written and oral reports of staff person to the Advisory Committee and to the supervisor (Rabbi Bridge). These will include both quantifiable evidence (the level of participation in evening gatherings, the number of dates made, etc.) and impressionistic responses.

It is not clear to us whether the objectives, using the methods described above, can be met and evaluated appropriately in one year's time. By January, 1987, we will know whether or not we wish to continue the program beyond June 30, 1987. If so, we will return to the Synagogue Funding Committee and ask for an extension of the grant into the second and third years.

In addition, we would be open to taking counsel with those who have implemented somewhat similar programs in other cities as to which methods of evaluation they have employed.

F. ADDITIONAL AND FUTURE FUNDING

If this Grant application is not successful, the UAHC simply will be unable to initiate the program in 1986/1987. As is indicated in the budget format (attached) the UAHC will absorb in its operating budget the cost of office space, equipment usage and consumable supplies.

At the outset, we are reluctant to charge a fee even while being fully aware of the widely held notion that people tend to be more committed to something if they have paid for it. On the one hand, we are not at all convinced that that notion obtains if the fee is set at a symbolic or token level (e.g. \$25.00). On the other hand, we are reluctant to establish the kind of fee which, while assuring the participants' ongoing commitment through his or her sense of investment, may act as a deterrent to some of those people we are most eager to attract. Once the program is well established and widely known in this community, it may be the case that a substantial fee would not be a deterrent.

With respect to future funding, especially to compensate for the automatic reduction in the size of a second and third year grant, we see two possible sources. As noted just above, after one year it may well be possible to establish a significant fee for the participants. In addition, if the program demonstrates some success and promise by the end of the first year, we believe it would be a rather easy matter to raise funds for its continuation.

G. QUESTIONS: SCREENING COMMITTEE

1. What is the relationship between this program and other singles programs throughout the city?

As noted in the body of the application narrative, there are other programs offered by various institutions in the Jewish community. Some are intended to provide ample compensation for the entrepreneur(s). Some are intended to reach the widest possible audience and rely on computerized matchmaking with little, if any, personal consultation. Some are simply social opportunities, frequently

held in a synagogue setting, for singles to meet each other (usually without any special measure taken to ensure a balanced male/female ratio). As indicated above, it would be our intention that the social worker would make himself/herself available to consult with those responsible for singles programs in individual Reform congregations to see what mutual benefits might inhere in the sharing of ideas and experiences.

2. What evidence is there that the Union of American Hebrew Congregations as a synagogue movement is better equipped to offer this program than other individual synagogue programs?

It is our impression that individual synagogue programs essentially reach out to the limited audience of singles affiliated with that particular congregation or singles known to other members (whether single or married). Utilizing the resources of an umbrella organization such as the UAHC, it is our belief that we could reach those singles known to the leadership of all twenty-eight (28) Reform congregations in the Greater Los Angeles area as well as to rabbis serving in Hillel positions who may have contacts with graduate students and others in the appropriate age range. Moreover, by conducting a unified program that serves this large constituency, the size and diversity of the pool of potential dating partners is increased significantly.

3. Which parts of the program will you offer if you do not receive the \$16,000 requested?

The key component is the identification and recruitment of an outstanding social worker. That is by far the largest expense item in the budget. We are convinced that we are not asking for an excessive sum with respect to that person's compensation on a half-time basis. Also, we are requesting an additional sum (\$2000) to cover anticipated postage and telephone costs while the UAHC will absorb the other expenses.

4. What is meant by the word "appealing" in your project?

The term has been eliminated in the final draft of the proposal.

BUDGET FORMAT

The budget format should clearly delineate anticipated expenses and income for the entire program. The budget format required by the Jewish Community Foundation is presented below.

AGENCY Union Of American Hebrew Congregations

I. <u>EXPENSES</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
A. <u>Personnel</u>	
1. Salary and Wages *	\$ 14,000
2. Fringe Benefits **	0
3. Consultant and Contract Service	0
B. <u>Non Personnel</u>	
1. Space Costs (including rental, maintenance and utilities)	2,000
2. Rental, Lease, and Purchase of Equipment	0
3. Postage	1,000
4. Telephone	1,000
5. Travel	
Local	250
Out of town	0
6. Consumable Supplies	750
7. Printing, Duplication	0
8. Other costs, e.g. insurance	0
TOTAL EXPENSE	\$ 19,000
II. <u>INCOME</u>	
A. Amount requested from Jewish Community Foundation	\$ 16,000
B. Other Grant Support (please identify source)	0
C. Program Service Fees	0
D. Fundraising/Donations	0
E. Other Sources of Revenue (please identify) from UAHC	3,000
TOTAL INCOME	\$ 19,000

* In the Salary and Wages Section, list all full and part-time staff. Include the number of persons in each position, title, monthly salary, percentage of time on project, number of months to be employed. For example, (1) Executive Director at \$1,000 per month (100% time) x 12 mos. = \$12,000.

** In the Fringe Benefits Section, list all the fringe benefits your employees will be receiving and the dollar cost of these benefits.

B'NAI B'RITH HILLEL
UNIV. OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
VANCOUVER, CANADA

Eliezer at the Well: Interview Form

Interviewee # Man # Woman #

Date of Interview Interviewer

Name: Phone (h)

Address: (w)

Birthdate: Age:

Employer/School:

Form of Employment/Major:

Birthplace:

Other Places Lived:

Began Living in Vancouver:

Reason(s) for coming here:

Please describe your education and work experience:

How did you learn about this service?

Is your mother Jewish?

Where do your parents live?

How often do you see them?

How do you get along with them?

Are there any particular moments/events/experiences from your time with your parents that made a special impact on you?

How have you coped with them or adjusted to them?

Do you have any brothers and sisters?

Where do they live and how often do you see them?

Have you been married before?

If yes, was (is) your spouse Jewish?

Are you now divorced? separated? widow(er)?

If divorced, is there a get?

Where does your (former) spouse live?

Why do you think the marriage didn't work out?

What did you learn from the experience?

Do you have any children?

If yes, boy or girl and ages:

Do you see (more) children included in your life plan?

If so, how much and in what ways do you see yourself involved in raising them?

What is a good balance between house and career work for you?

What parts of housework do you most like?

most dislike?

What inner qualities do you look for in someone you want to be close with?

How important is physical appearance? Does it matter if s/he smokes?

What age person are you looking for?

What do you think is most important for a successful marriage?

Is there anything unusual about your personal schedule?

Generally speaking, how is your health? Do you keep to any special diet? Do you smoke? Exercise?

Do you have any regular activities or hobbies?

What are your best qualities?

What do you want to change most about yourself?

What do you see yourself doing in 5 years? 10 years?

Where do you see yourself living? Are you willing to move?

Describe your Jewish upbringing:

How does being a Jew currently affect your life? What Jewish practices do you observe now?

Are you interested in developing your Jewishness further and, if so, in what direction(s)?

What about you has been left out of this interview that you think would be useful for us to know in order to help you?

Is there anyone in particular you would not want us to introduce you to?

Do you have any comments about the interview? Suggestions?

Introduced to:

Interviewee #

Outcome:

Post Interview Form

Date of Interview:

Interviewer:

Interviewee #
Name

Man #

Woman #

Rate 1-5

Self Concept.....
Goal Orientation.....
Time/Thing Orientation.....
Self direction/Motivation.....
Activity Level.....
Quality of Family Experience.....
Adjustment to Family Experience.....
Importance of Family Relationships.....
Openness.....
Jewish Commitment/Involvement.....
Priority of Children in Future Family Life.....
Flexibility.....
General Physical Appearance.....
Desire to Share Household Responsibilities.....
Desire to Share Childcare.....
Desire to Share Financial Obligations.....

Potential Mate: Important Qualities (Rate 1-5)

Active

Outgoing

Emotional

Sensitive

Independent

Intellectual

Warm

Quiet

Adventurous

Open

Goal Oriented

Creative

Artsy

Serious

Comments:

		RATE			YOUR		PARTNER	
RESERVED	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	OUTGOING
EMOTIONAL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	RATIONAL
INTUITIVE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	LOGICAL
CONCRETE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	ABSTRACT
SUBMISSIVE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DOMINANT
SERIOUS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	LIGHT
EXPEDIENT	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	CONSCIENTIOUS
CAUTIOUS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	ADVENTUROUS
TOUGH-MINDED	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	SENSITIVE
TRUSTING	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	SUSPICIOUS
PRACTICAL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	IMAGINATIVE
SELF-ASSURED	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	APPREHENSIVE
CONSERVATIVE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	EXPERIMENTAL
OPEN	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	CLOSED
RELAXED	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	TENSE
SPONTANEOUS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DISCIPLINED
STRONG	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	WEAK
CAREFREE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	TIDY
DEPENDENT	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	INDEPENDENT

RATE YOURSELF

RESERVED	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	OUTGOING
EMOTIONAL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	RATIONAL
INTUITIVE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	LOGICAL
CONCRETE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	ABSTRACT
SUBMISSIVE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DOMINANT
SERIOUS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	LIGHT
EXPEDIENT	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	CONSCIENTIOUS
CAUTIOUS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	ADVENTUROUS
TOUGH-MINDED	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	SENSITIVE
TRUSTING	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	SUSPICIOUS
PRACTICAL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	IMAGINATIVE
SELF-ASSURED	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	APPREHENSIVE
CONSERVATIVE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	EXPERIMENTAL
OPEN	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	CLOSED
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STRONG	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	WEAK
CAREFREE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	TIDY
DEPENDENT	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	INDEPENDENT



Boston's Personal Jewish Introduction Service

743 Washington Street, Newtonville, Massachusetts 02160

Telephone (617) 969-2234

Dear Friend,

The Holidays are here again. Are you looking for someone special to share the New Year with?

If the answer is Yes, you're in good company. Like many professional men in the Boston area, you already know that it's not always easy to meet women who are warm, attractive, and accomplished. And if you're a Jewish man who, in his heart, prefers to be with a Jewish woman, it's that much harder.

Our clients tell us that bars, health clubs and singles events just don't work for them. The challenge, they say, is not meeting people, but meeting the right person.

Studies have shown — and our clients confirm this — that the most efficient and comfortable way to meet other single people is through third-party introductions. Last year alone, New Possibilities consulted with over 300 single men and women. We think that our personal approach and our expertise account for our impressive success rate.

We recently asked our friends, colleagues, and contacts for the names and addresses of interesting men who might appreciate a small adventure. That's why we're sending you this letter, together with the enclosed literature to tell you a little more about us.

We hope you'll consider New Possibilities, and we're going to make it easy for you to do just that. If you call us for an appointment during September or October, you can have a six month membership for only \$150. (Our regular six-month membership is now \$275, so you can see how much you're saving.) We can't extend this offer to everyone, so please mention this letter when you call.

Some clients have told us: "It's worth \$150 just to get my mother/neighbor/daughter/ex-wife [choose one] off my back." We can think of better reasons for joining New Possibilities, but we'll leave that to you.

Whatever your reasons, we look forward to meeting you.

Sincerely,

Linda and Bill Novak

HOW TO JOIN

New
Possibilities



CALL US. After a brief conversation, we can decide together whether NEW POSSIBILITIES makes sense for you.

WE WILL GIVE YOU all the information you need about how we operate. Please feel free to ask questions.

MAKE AN APPOINTMENT to visit our Newton office for a free initial interview. It's as simple as that!

You're only a phone call away from putting NEW POSSIBILITIES into **your** social life.

Call NEW POSSIBILITIES: (617) 969-2234



WHO WE ARE

Linda Novak is a licensed independent clinical social worker. She has a special knack for getting to the heart of a person and helping them focus on their social needs and preferences. Linda is highly intuitive and perceptive, and she communicates with both warmth and authority.

William Novak is a nationally-known writer and speaker. His recent book *The Great American Man Shortage and Other Roadblocks to Romance* provides an insightful look at the realities of single life today. Bill is also the co-author of *The Big Book of Jewish Humor* and of the new autobiography of Lee Iacocca.

"As far as I'm concerned, there are two urgent social problems in our society right now, and whoever can solve them deserves a Nobel Prize. The first challenge is to find a cure for baldness. The second is to come up with an effective and dignified way for single people to meet each other."

—David, 42, a lawyer

New
Possibilities



Boston's Personal
Jewish Introduction Service

*If your social life just isn't as successful
or fulfilling as your professional life,
then NEW POSSIBILITIES is for you.*

CONSIDER THESE ADVANTAGES

The personal interview

We make matches the old-fashioned way—based on our personal judgment and intuition.

Follow-up

We make it a point to remain in close touch with our clients. We don't want you to fade away after your interview.

Jewish orientation

Your expanded social life will involve special people like yourself whose Jewish background and identity are compatible with yours.

Free optional consultations

We believe that making introductions is the easy part. We're available to talk with you and to offer helpful advice **after** the introduction is made.

Confidential and Discreet

We check with both parties before each introduction to protect our clients from awkward or uncomfortable situations.

New possibilities



Boston's Personal
Jewish Introduction Service

**What
NEW POSSIBILITIES
Can Mean
For You**

NEW POSSIBILITIES lets you get more out of the time and energy you invest in your social life;

NEW POSSIBILITIES makes it easier to lead an active professional life and still meet the people you want to meet;

NEW POSSIBILITIES offers you an ever-growing pool of carefully screened and selected professional Jewish singles.

**New
possibilities** (617) 969-2234

You're only a phone call away.

PROFILE QUESTIONNAIRE

Name _____ Sex _____ Age _____ Birthdate _____

Address _____

Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____ Okay to phone at work? _____

Occupation _____ Employer _____

How long employed there? _____ Social Security Number _____

Height _____ Weight _____ Color eyes _____ Color hair _____

Marital Status:

Never married _____

Separated _____ Date _____ Years married _____

Divorced _____ Date divorce final _____

Years married _____ Do you have a get? _____

Widowed _____ Date _____ Years married _____

Children and ages _____

Living with me _____ Living elsewhere (where?) _____

Educational background _____

Jewish educational background _____

Ever been convicted of a felony? no _____ yes _____

Explain _____

Has abuse of alcohol or narcotics ever caused need of counsel, loss of license, position or home?

no _____ yes _____ Explain _____

Briefly describe how you see yourself _____

The best thing about me is _____

The worst thing about me is _____

The most important qualities I seek in a partner _____

Qualities I would not accept in a partner _____

Interests and hobbies I want to have in common with my partner _____

What kinds of books do you enjoy? _____

What kinds of music do you enjoy? _____

What is the age range of the people you'd like to meet? _____

Do you smoke tobacco? _____ Would you date a smoker? _____

What drugs do you use (including alcohol) and how often? _____

Will you date someone who is divorced? _____ With children? _____

Do you have any impairments? _____

Will you date a person with impairments? _____

Describe your dietary habits (e.g., kosher, vegetarian, etc.) _____

Dietary habits I seek in my partner _____

Are both of your parents Jewish? _____ If not, please specify _____

If your mother is not Jewish, have you converted to Judaism? _____

Will you date somebody whose mother is not Jewish and who has not converted? _____

Briefly describe your level or style of Jewish observance _____

What level or style of Jewish observance are you seeking in a partner? _____

Do any of the following Jewish affiliations currently apply to you?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reform | <input type="checkbox"/> Political action group |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservative | <input type="checkbox"/> Jewish Young Adult Center |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reconstructionist | <input type="checkbox"/> CJP Young Professionals |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Orthodox | <input type="checkbox"/> Jewish Community Center |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Havurah-style group | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

Do any of the following Israel affiliations apply to you?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Never been there | <input type="checkbox"/> Lived there (how long?) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Visited briefly | <input type="checkbox"/> Would consider living there |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Visited more than once | |

I am interested in:

- ☐ A serious committed relationship
- ☐ Expanding my social network
- ☐ Casual dating
- ☐ Other _____

I am usually most alert in the

- ☐ morning ☐ afternoon ☐ early evening ☐ late evening

Are you considered attractive?

- ☐ yes, very ☐ usually ☐ sometimes ☐ no

What kind of parties do you enjoy?

- ☐ loud and lively ☐ small and quiet ☐ all ☐ none

Which of the following goals is **most** important to you?

- | | | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> wealth | <input type="checkbox"/> love | <input type="checkbox"/> fame | <input type="checkbox"/> serenity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> knowledge | <input type="checkbox"/> power | <input type="checkbox"/> respectability | <input type="checkbox"/> self-fulfillment |

What types of TV programs do you watch regularly?

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> educational | <input type="checkbox"/> comedies | <input type="checkbox"/> movies | <input type="checkbox"/> talk |
| <input type="checkbox"/> adventure | <input type="checkbox"/> variety | <input type="checkbox"/> serials | <input type="checkbox"/> quiz |
| <input type="checkbox"/> westerns | <input type="checkbox"/> specials | <input type="checkbox"/> health | <input type="checkbox"/> news |
| <input type="checkbox"/> musicals | <input type="checkbox"/> drama | <input type="checkbox"/> sports | <input type="checkbox"/> none |

How often do you read newspapers?

☐ daily

☐ several times a week

☐ weekly

☐ seldom

How intelligent do you consider yourself?

☐ exceptionally bright

☐ above average

☐ about average

☐ below average

When going to an appointment I am usually

☐ late

☐ on time

☐ early

Keeping my house or apartment neat and orderly is

☐ very important

☐ somewhat important

☐ not important at all

Where do you like to go when you date? (check all that apply)

☐ movies

☐ pubs and clubs

☐ concerts and plays

☐ dancing

☐ weekend trips

☐ driving around

☐ dinner

☐ sports events

☐ each other's home

☐ museums

☐ long walks

☐ outdoor activities

Is there anything we haven't asked that you would like us to know?

How did you hear of New Possibilities?

Outreach

✓

January 2, 1988

Mrs. Joseph Klein
1761 Pomona
Las Cruces, NM 88001

Dear Rose:

It was good of you to bring this young lady's sermon to my attention.
I am grateful to you for having done so and I ask that you see that
the enclosed note gets to Becky.

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

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

January 2, 1985

Ms. Rebecca Taylor
c/o Mrs. Joseph Klein
1761 Pomona
Las Cruces, NM 88001

Dear Becky:

I had an opportunity to read the sermon you delivered at a Youth service at Temple Beth El. Mrs. Rose Klein was kind enough to send me a copy and I am truly grateful to her.

I appreciated your talk, it was well-thought out, put together beautifully and according to Mrs. Klein you delivered it splendidly. You have reason to be pleased and proud and I congratulate you on a job well done.

Mazal tov and every goodwvish.

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

① Write Bechy
how much I
appreciated her
talk sent to me
by Rose Klein etc
well thought out, well put.

② send it c/o

Rose Klein

w/ note thanking

Rose

December 25, 1984

Dear Alex,

Hope this finds you and your dear family happy and in the best of health.

I thought you might be interested in reading Rebecca Taylor's sermon which she gave at a youth service. Several topics were given to her by Ellen Goldsmith (Rabbi Leibson's wife) and she chose to speak on the necessity of ritual. She and her parents converted to Judaism about 3 years ago.

Since it is a copy you need not send it back to me.

Sincerely,

Rose Klein

Nov., 1984

Becky Taylor ①

Our religion, Judaism, is based upon laws & traditions that have been growing & developing for over four thousand years.

In general we have two kinds of laws, the moral laws such as "honor thy father and thy mother," "thou shalt not steal" and so on.

We also have the ritual laws ~~and~~ concerning the types of food we are allowed to eat, the requirements for sacrifices and offerings and other laws of a purely ritual nature.

The purpose of the moral laws is ~~to~~ to give us rules for living with our fellow man. Most of us accept the need for moral laws because these laws hold society together.

(2)

The main reason we have ritual laws is stated in Ch. 20 in the book of Leviticus, where God tells us that we are to be set apart from the other peoples of the earth. Set apart so that we may preserve the Torah & so that we may become holy as God is holy. This doesn't mean that we are the only people who can become holy, for the Talmud tells us that the righteous of all nations shall have a place in the world to come.

One of the problems Jews over the ages have faced & especially face today, is determining which ritual laws & traditions we are still obligated to follow.

For the Orthodox Jew the choice is not so difficult, he or she simply follows all of the ritual laws without ~~questioning~~ questioning

~~and~~ them.

However, the reform view is that God gave us reason so that we might decide for ourselves which ritual laws are still valid and which ones we no longer need to ~~follow~~ observe.

There are some laws which we no longer observe or enforce because the state has taken over the responsibility for enforcing them.

These are mostly laws concerning damaged property or injury to another person.

We cannot follow laws, such as the ones dealing with ^{sacrifices} agriculture, because our historical conditions have changed. Most of us don't live in an agricultural society and we stopped offering animal sacrifices 2,000 yrs ago when the Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed.

Yet there are still many ritual laws & traditions that we can still follow.

For example: observing the Sabbath or keeping certain of ^{the laws of} Kashrut. Each of us must choose which laws he or she feels are important.

It seems to me that ~~the~~ ritual laws & traditions such as these are important because without them we would have nothing left of Judaism except an empty, meaningless religion.

I also believe that by not following, or at least ~~by~~ attempting to follow the ritual laws & traditions we are breaking the covenant between God and our forefathers.

Whatever the reasons we use for following some ritual commandments and choosing not to follow others,

we should be ~~be consistent~~ consistent. We should use the same guidelines all the time. To use one set standards on one occasion, and a different set of standards on another occasion, not only makes a mockery of our religion, but also shows no respect for the ~~the~~ covenant upon which Judaism is founded.

This is why it is important for every generation to study and learn about our laws & traditions, so that we may understand them & learn to make the right choices.

That is why the Youth Group is here tonight so that we may be prepared to teach the generation that will follow us, and thereby keep Jewish culture and religion alive.

The End

MRS. J. KLEIN
1761 POMONA
LAS CRUCES, NM 88001



Rabbi Alexander Schindler
Union of American Hebrew Congs.
838 Fifth Ave.
New York, New York. 10021

Outreach

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler

March 14, 1984

David W. Belin, Esq.; Lydia Kukoff

The enclosed will interest you.

Trude is Orthodox but she has been consistently supportive of us in Outreach as well as Patrilineal descent. It might be a good idea to send her a letter giving an up-date on how far we have come along. It might inspire her to write another column and this time refer to us.

Dr. Trude Weiss-Rosmarin
P.O. Box 2016
Santa Monica, CA 90406

Regards.

FROM: Richard Cohen

TO:

1.

2.

3.

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5.

6.

7.

8.

Please return ()
Your action ()
Your files ()
For your info ()
Let's discuss ()

Remarks:

DO Box 2016
S. Mover
90406

Viewpoint

More 'Jews by Choice'

Viewpoint contributions express the views of the author and do not necessarily reflect the view and/or policies of Israel Today. Editor

TRUDE WEISS-ROSMARIN

Conviction and the urge to convert are inseparable — and the firmer the conviction the stronger is the desire to share it. In the case of religious beliefs, the urge to share them is especially intense. When God commanded Abram, "Get out of your country, and from your kinfolk, and from your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation." He climaxed the promise with the pledge: "And in you shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

The hope that eventually all mankind will know and worship the One God recurs in many forms throughout the Hebrew Bible. Isaiah "saw" that "in the end of the days, the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established at the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many peoples shall go and say: 'Come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths. For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem'."

In the same spirit the Psalmist proclaimed:

"O sing unto the Lord a new song;

Sing unto the Lord, all the earth ...

Declare His glory among the nations,

His marvelous works among all the peoples ...

Say among the nations: 'The Lord reigns'."

The call to *all the earth* to know that the Lord is God is the message of the Hebrew Bible.

We do not know whether the author of the scroll of "Ruth" intended it to be a missionary tract. However this concise book of four chapters, read as part of the Synagogue service on Shevuoth, makes the point that a Moabite woman is not only fully qualified to enter the household of Israel but is worthy of becoming an ancestress of David and, thus, of the Messiah of the house of David.

The notion that it is not in the nature of Judaism to seek converts is not borne out by Talmudic evidence. It can be vindicated by only one isolated statement of Rabbi Helbo that "proselytes are as burdensome to Israel as leprosy." But this opinion of one Sage is unrepresentative. Hillel's condensation of the teachings of Judaism into "do not unto your neighbor what you would not want him to do unto you," for the benefit of a would-be convert, and the Rabbis' attempts to facilitate conversion even for those whom Biblical law excludes from entering the assembly of the Lord, prove that the Sages were not averse to proselyting. Thus, arguing that Sennacherib's military campaigns and deportations "mixed up all nations," Rabbi Joshua convinced his colleagues that an Ammonite convert to Judaism should be permitted to marry a Jewish girl. Earlier generations of Rabbis had already relaxed the Biblical ruling as applying Ammonite and Moabite women converts because, they pointed out, the Bible excludes Ammonite and Moabite *men* — but not Ammonite and Moabite *women*.

The Sages held that no one was by birth disqualified from becoming a Jew. They had the tradition that Jeremiah and Ezekiel were descended from Rahab, the prostitute of Jericho who, after helping Joshua to conquer the city, became his wife. Even the descendants of Haman, the personification of evil, were not excluded from the assembly of the Lord. According to the Talmud, Haman's descendants were studying and teaching at Bnei Berak. And Rabbi Akiba was said to be a descendant of Haman.

The Talmud is eloquent in praise of proselytes and of the pious merit that accrues to those who bring non-Jews under the wings of the *Shekhinah* — the Divine Presence. According to Rabbi Eleazar Ben Pedat (3rd Century), God exiled Israel and scattered them over the face of the earth, so that they should win converts.

Those who maintain that it is not in the nature of Judaism to seek converts argue that the Sages discouraged would-be converts. They inquired carefully about motives for conversion.

wal Doesn't Depend Washington — Shamir

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"forever," Shamir said, Israel would like to imple-
ment its agreement with "the legitimate government
of Lebanon." Failing that, he said, "We are going to
get it through cooperation with local forces or other
Lebanese forces."

This was an apparent reference to local militias that
the Israelis have been trying to recruit among the
inhabitants of south Lebanon mainly through the
militia of the late Lebanese Christian leader, Maj.
Saad Haddad, but also among Lebanese Shia
Moslems who constitute the vast majority of the pop-
ulation in the south.

The prime minister accused the Syrians of being the
spoilers in obtaining a political settlement in Lebanon
because of what he called the Syrian desire to "con-
trol all of Lebanon."

"It would be very easy to get a reconciliation of all
the Lebanese communities if the Syrians didn't do
everything not to enable it," Shamir said.

But he said that "the United States and its allies
have to make all the necessary effort to save
Lebanon."

"If they leave Lebanon without getting any solution
in this direction, it would mean the failure of any
effort to save Lebanon," he said.

G. Jefferson Price III writes for the Baltimore
Sun.

Diets? Jewish Inmates or Kosher Menus

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be transferred to maximum-security prisons. They
would be taken away from their families and
synagogues."

Helen Parmley writes for the Dallas Morning
News.

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'Jews by Choice'

(Continued from page 5)

were "troubled, oppressed, despised and subject to endless
tribulations." They stressed the difficulties of living
as a Jew and of observing the laws of the Torah. All
this, however, does not prove that the Sages were
averse to accepting sincere converts. Eventually con-
version was made difficult and discouraged because
during the Hadrianic persecutions, in the second cen-
tury, and, in the Middle Ages, Christian legislations
made conversion to Judaism a capital crime.

Judaism has not carried its message abroad with the
missionary zeal of its daughter religions, Christianity
and Islam. Still, it has eclipsed them in proselyting
force. The Jewish God idea and the Jewish ethics
epitomized in the Ten Commandments are the core of
Christian teachings and of the foundation of the
democratic idea. Spiritually, ideationally and re-
ligiously, Christians and Muslims live, pray and hope
by concepts and ideas grown in Jewish soil.

Judaism teaches that deed is more important than
creed: "The righteous of all nations will share in the
world to come." Jewish efforts to win converts do not
aim at "saving souls" but strive to recruit co-workers
for the Jewish program-and-task of perfecting this
world according to the blue-print of God's kingdom.
Judaism neither abets nor provides room for the
vainglorious boast that one religion holds the keys to
salvation. There are many ways leading to God,
although we hold that the Jewish way is best. This is
self-pride, but it is not a claim to exclusive possession
of the truth.

Jews who are convinced that their way is right have
the obligation to invite others to join them. Conviction
and the urge to convert are inseparable. Exile and per-
secution which resulted in many unnatural dichoto-
mies and splits also led to the separation of Jewish
conviction and the urge to convert.

Edith J. Miller

*Outreach
Doc SW*

June 29, 1983

Rabbi Lennard R. Thal

Rabbi Leonard A. Schoolman

INTERFAITH COUPLES PROGRAM

Sorry, I didn't realize you are keeping the accounts on the recent program for interfaith couples held in Los Angeles.

On June 14 I sent Josh Dwork a check for \$650. from NFTS which they earmarked to cover the "shortfall" on the L.A. program. I trust he has credited this check accordingly.

You should also know that the NFTS Executive authorized an expenditure not to exceed \$1,500. (\$750 for each of two conferences) for two additional Interfaith Married Couples Programs to be jointly sponsored by the UAHC and NFTS.

Fond regards.

June 20, 1983

Dear David:

You will be pleased to know that NFTS has provided the UAHC with \$650. to cover the "shortfall" on the experimental program with Interfaith Married Couples in Los Angeles. This is a boon and I am also happy to advise that NFTS is so taken with the program they are underwriting two additional conferences for interfaith couples! They will provide us with \$750. per program for they feel this is a vital and very meaningful project.

They have also offered to assist with direct financial aid for programmatic materials available for these interfaith programs. I have shared this offer with Lydia and she will be in touch with NFTS to look into the matter in greater detail.

With warm regards, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

Mr. David W. Belin
2000 Financial Center
Des Moines, IOWA 50309

June 20, 1983

Mrs. Constance Kreshtool
President, NFTS
711 Coverly Road
Wilmington, DE 19802

Dear Connie:

I'm truly sorry you couldn't remain with us for the entire UAHC Board meeting. Lil reported for NFTS and needless to note all of us were delighted with the continued support and sustenance pledged by NFTS! You truly strengthen us in all of our endeavors.

Your letter of June 13 with its wonderful enclosures have been received and I hasten to express my appreciation. The \$21,000. allocation of the YES Fund has been forwarded for crediting to the Youth Department, with instructions in regard to college activities as per your letter.

The check to cover the "shortfall" of \$650. on the recent Interfaith Married Couples Program in Los Angeles is deeply appreciated. This is a very worthy undertaking and all of us involved in Outreach are very grateful to NFTS for the pledge to underwrite two more such weekends, at \$750. each. Many, many thanks.

We want to help NFTS by making Outreach materials available and I have asked Lydia Kukoff to make special note of your request. I am certain she will be in touch with you and/or Ellie.

In regard to REFORM Judaism, there, too, I have contacted the staff involved and I hope we have a response to your query without undue delay.

With fond regards and all good wishes for a restful and rewarding summer,
I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

ERS

nfts

**NATIONAL FEDERATION
OF TEMPLE SISTERHOODS**
838 FIFTH AVENUE • NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

CONSTANCE S. KRESHTOOL

June 13, 1983

Rabbi Alexander Schindler
President
UAHC
838 Fifth Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10021

Mr. Donald S. Day
Chairman of the Board
UAHC
56 Devonshire Road
Kenmore, N.Y. 14223

Dear Alex and Don:

I am very pleased to formally tell you of some actions by the NFTS Executive Committee, which met on June 8 & 9, that have relationship to programs and projects of the UAHC.

First, I am pleased to enclose a check in the amount of \$21,000 which represents an additional allocation of the Youth, Education and Sisterhood (YES) Fund to further the work of the UAHC Youth Department. \$10,000 of this sum is earmarked for college activities, the Ma aser project which is of special concern to NFTS.

With this contribution, in addition to the already transmitted budgeted commitment, NFTS has provided \$71,000 (a slight increase over last year) for the UAHC fiscal year which concludes June 30, 1983.

The second matter relates to Outreach and it is a pleasure to enclose a check for \$650. It represents an NFTS gift to cover the "shortfall" incurred by the Union for its recent Interfaith Married Couples Program in Los Angeles. Since local Sisterhoods were the traditional passageway to intergrate Jews by Choice into the religious community, and local Sisterhoods still are the major activists in this area, you can well understand our interest and concern with the Outreach Program.

The NFTS Executive Committee also authorized an expenditure not to exceed \$1,500 (\$750 for each of two conferences) that would be available to the UAHC for two additional Interfaith Married Couples Programs, to be jointly sponsored by the UAHC and NFTS. When these events are planned you can count on us for assistance. We would also like to implement this direct financial assistance with making some programmatic materials available for these conferences, which we believe would be most helpful. One idea would be an NFTS Jewish Art Calendar (if we have available stock) and perhaps some of our self-study materials.

The third area relates to Reform Judaism, our institutional publication. Our leadership was eager to re-establish what had been the organizational partnership between the UAHC and NFTS relating to the major publication of the UAHC.

NFTS is the women's agency for Reform Judaism, an affiliate of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the World Union for Progressive Judaism, works on behalf of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, and is the founder of the Jewish Braille Institute of America, Inc.

15 Countries • 600 Sisterhoods • 13 District Federations • 100,000 + Members

*Thank Council
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Fidgully
Zakoff*

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qualify for
booklet -
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Cron
would like their
reaction.*

Rabbi Alexander Schindler
Mr. Donald S. Day
June 13, 1983
Page -2-

Although there has been a lapse of several years, NFTS previously had made budget commitments for this type of publication and served on the editorial board. If we can reinstate the relationship, NFTS is prepared to budget \$5,000 a year towards the publication of Reform Judaism.

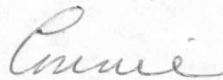
Since these last two items do imply formalized relationships I would be most appreciative of your reactions and response.

The Executive Committee Meeting was a very productive one with many decisions that invoke long-term program and project possibilities for Sisterhood. But one of the special results of our annual Executive Committee Meeting is reflected in particular programs and projects for the larger family of Reform Judaism which NFTS is able to provide from special funds. I think you will be interested that included in these actions were:

1. Rabbinic education -- continued support of the rabbinic scholarship program for the HUC-JIR; expanded scholarship assistance for rabbinic students on behalf of the World Union for Progressive Judaism, with a possible additional student from Holland and a new Israeli student.
2. Jewish educational opportunities for pre-schoolers including authorization to co-publish with the UAHC the Jewish Baby Book; the support of the co-operative nursery school on the Cincinnati Campus (HUC-JIR) a role model projects for Sisterhood sponsored day care centers; seed money for a similar project for Or Hadash Congregation in Haifa.
3. Support for the Women's Rabbinic Network to provide representation from womens students at their annual conference.
4. Subsidized representation from our overseas constituents at our coming Biennial Convention in Houston.

In a sense the actions of the NFTS Executive Committee, although frequently expressed in terms of financial support, are a reflection of the women of Reform Judaism meeting their responsibilities to strengthen the educational and spiritual life of our movement.

Sincerely,



President

CK:bn

Encs. \$21,000 check
\$650 check

Edith J. Miller

June 14, 1983

Joshua M. Dwork

NFTS GIFTS TO UAHC

Enclosed herewith are two checks from NFTS, special contributions to the work of the UAHC:

1/ \$650. to be used to cover the "shortfall" on the recent Los Angeles Outreach program for interfaith couples.

2/ \$21,000. from the YES Fund of NFTS FOR Youth work - NFTS notes \$10,000. of this sum is earmarked for College activities, the Ma'aser program which is of special concern to them

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler

June 16, 1983

Albert Vorspan and Aron Hirt-Manheimer

Please let me have your reaction to the following comments received from Connie Kreshtool in behalf of NFTS:

"The third area relates to Reform Judaism, our institutional publication. Our leadership was eager to re-establish what had been the organizational partnership between the UAHC and NFTS relating to the major publication of the UAHC. Although there has been a lapse of several years, NFTS previously had made budget commitments for this type of publication and served on the editorial board. If we can reinstate the relationship, NFTS is prepared to budget \$5,000 a year towards the publication of Reform Judaism."

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler

June 16, 1983

Lydia Kukoff

Rabbi Daniel B. Syme

Please note the enclosed quote from a recent letter I received from Connie Kreshtool in behalf of NFTS:

"The NFTS Executive Committee also authorized an expenditure not to exceed \$1,500 (\$750 for each of two conferences) that would be available to the UAHC for two additional Interfaith Married Couples Programs, to be jointly sponsored by the UAHC and NFTS. When these events are planned you can count on us for assistance. We would also like to implement this direct financial assistance with making some programmatic materials available for these conferences, which we believe would be most helpful. One idea would be an NFTS Jewish Art Calendar (if we have available stock) and perhaps some of our self-study materials."

We have already received a check to cover the "shortfall" incurred in the Interfaith Married Couples Program in Los Angeles.

MEMORANDUM

Date March 14, 1983

*cc to Don S.
LAF
Joh. B.*

From Eleanor Schwartz *ms*

To Rabbi Alexander Schindler

Copy for information of Constance Kreshtool

Subject _____

Thank you for your memo of March 7 giving NFTS further information about the Interfaith Married Couples program in Los Angeles. A copy of your memo is enroute to Connie (who is presently out of town). Connie did express interest in this program when I mentioned it to her, and I believe we will want to discuss this with our leadership.

As you know, the NFTS Executive Committee will be meeting in early June and they would normally consider this request at that time. However, Connie may feel that we could consider at least some aspect of assistance at an earlier date. We will let you know.

ERS:bn



Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler

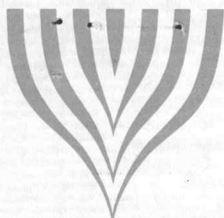
March 7, 1983

Miss Eleanor R. Schwartz

I am exceedingly grateful for your interest in our Interfaith Married Couples program in Los Angeles. As I indicated, I had the privilege of being able to participate in a session a few weeks ago when I was in Los Angeles. My impression there and from reports prior and since my visit have indicated that this is indeed a breakthrough.

The teachers report a good response and the likelihood that a majority of the participants will ultimately affiliate with Judaism and with a synagogue and will rear their children as Jews. Lenny Thal and Lydia Kukoff intend to refine this program, repeat it in the Spring and then replicate it in several other communities.

In our conversation you indicated that you might be able to help provide the resources we require to help us in this venture. The first Los Angeles experiment had a \$650. shortfall and I imagine that the two or three like programs which we are projecting will cost us a like amount. If there is anything at all that NFTS can do we will be deeply grateful.



איחוד
ליהדות
מתקדמת
באמריקה

Union of American Hebrew Congregations

PATRON OF HEBREW UNION COLLEGE—JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION
6300 WILSHIRE BOULEVARD, SUITE 1475, LOS ANGELES, CA. 90048 (213) 653-9962

PACIFIC SOUTHWEST COUNCIL

Rabbi Lennard R. Thal
Director

July 15, 1983

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler
UAHC
838 Fifth Ave.
New York, N.Y. 10021

Dear Alex:

I am writing to you from our lovely new office high (nearly) atop the Ticor Building. We are really enjoying the change. I hope you and Rhea had a wonderful trip and are duly pasta-ed out.

I wanted to give you a brief update on the Mixed-Married pilot. Participants from both groups met at a "reunion" bar-b- que this past Sunday night. Attendance was excellent and there was a lovely warm feeling in the group. In addition to the two who have decided to convert, we have one more who has decided and who, with his wife, has enrolled in the Introduction to Judaism class. In addition, the one unmarried couple in the group has announced their engagement and wedding date (October 2). They will be married by Joel Oseran. The bride-to-be, Lisa Mitchell will convert on August 26 along with Stacy Baron. They have decided on a shared conversion ceremony, a decision which grew out of the friendship they forged during the group meetings. Two group members are pregnant. One of them has already enrolled in the Jewish Lamze program and the other has decided she wants her baby converted at birth.

After dinner, we shmoozed a bit. Group members were all anxious to receive the year's free temple membership we offered and were looking forward to the high Holy Days and to increased involvement in the Jewish community. They were eager to know what else was going on Jewishly. They especially wanted to set another meeting and not to lose contact with each other and with us. We made a date to have a special tour of the Skirball Museum early in September and I will have them over to my Sukkah.

I only wish you could have been there to see their enthusiasm and especially to hear them speak of how much this program has

more.....

Chairman
Donald S. Day
President
Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler
OFFICERS 1983-85
Council President
Allan B. Goldman
Vice Presidents
Joseph Baron
Aaron Katz
Edward London
Myron Rosenthal
Esther Saritzky
Evely Laser Shlensky

Doni:
This is follow up
on mixed married
project.
Alex

Thurs Alex
H

file

has meant to them and how much they appreciate our efforts on their behalf. It was a very rewarding evening and you would have kvelled had you been there.

By the way, our new group began Tuesday night. We have six couples registered.

I'll keep you informed as we progress. Ben joins me in sending love to Rhea and to you.

See you soon,

Lydia

LK/mf

*Outreach
Ma*

May 3, 1983

Rabbi Joel D. Oseran
University Synagogue
11960 Sunset Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90049

Dear Joel:

It was thoughtful of you to write your progress report on the outreach for mixed-married couples. I thank you not only for your letter but for the extraordinary job you are doing with this group. I have had reports of your role and I am truly grateful for all that you have been doing and will continue to do.

With warmest regards, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

University Synagogue

A Reform Congregation

11960 Sunset Boulevard • Los Angeles, California 90049 • 472-1255 • 272-3650

Joel D. Oseran, Rabbi/Educator

April 26, 1983

Rabbi Alexander Schindler
President, UAHC
838 Fifth Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10021

Dear Rabbi Schindler,

We last met at the progress report meeting at Stephen S. Wise congregation for the UAHC's outreach class for mixed-married couples. You will remember that I served as one of the instructors for the class. Now that the first eight week course has concluded, I wanted to share with you a few personal feelings about the project and about Lydia and Len.

I feel most strongly that the movement is providing an invaluable service to mixed-married couples by sponsoring this type of project. During my class I came to appreciate the inner turmoil and searching on the part of those participating. These lovely young couples are adrift out there; not only not connected to the Jewish community but often feeling rejected by us as well.

The aspect of the class most satisfying to my couples was the opportunity to explore their feelings about the differences within their marriage while in a supportive Jewish environment. We showed the couple that the Jewish community cared about them and their future as a family without the prerequisite of converting to Judaism. The door was held open to these couples to discuss their future as a Jewish family, yet no pressure of any kind was directed at the non Jewish partner to convert.

And now, two of my students have chosen to become Jewish. I cannot claim this as a direct result of the class, but I do know that the class facilitated both these people in making a decision with which they are ultimately at peace.

I must share with you my esteem for Lydia and Len and the commitment they have shown for this project. You know very well I'm sure their talents and professionalism. As someone joining this project from the outside, I can tell you that their devotion to making it work has inspired everyone coming into contact with them. The Union and our movement are fortunate to have them.

*Thank you
not only for letter
but for
4 hoodpurg job
we did -*

*Shore letter
of L.A.S.
Dm S.
Sandy S.*

(2)

I am pleased to have had a share in the program up til now and look forward to its development and enrichment for many couples in the future.

Shalom,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joel".

JD0/b

Rabbi Joel D. Oseran

*Outback Motel
Merced*

February 28, 1983

Mrs. Daniel Jaffe
17409 Superior Street
Northridge, CA 91325

Dear Carol:

Thank you for writing me, although there is no need to thank me for attending the meeting. As a matter of fact, I must thank you for your efforts in this realm.

From the sound of it, the experiment was successful. I hope that it is, for the work is very important.

I also share your views concerning the need for a central registry and I am presently asking some knowledgeable people to give me an estimate of what it would take to establish and to maintain such a program. Hopefully I'll be able to find the money for its implementation.

Again, my heartfelt thanks.

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

#1

2-23-83
17409 Superior Street
Northridge, Calif 91325

Dear Rabbi Schindler,

I must tell you that I was deeply impressed that you took the time to meet with the "mentor" families for Jewish outreach last night. I thank you - I feel that what Lydia is doing is certainly necessary and very important.

I have been in Jewish Education in one form or another for the past 27 years. (I started when I was in college) I have taught little ones and adults. I have a great concern over the disappearance of the newly married - the young Jew married to another Jew or non-Jew - Many of them (Two Jewish parents) are so uninformed that

CAROL JAFFE

they are not able to teach their children or create a Jewish home.

I taught a class at the Jewish center this year. Six Jewish mothers - Five of them had never heard of the "Shema". None of them were aware that they could attend Shabbat services at any Temple in the community. I am terribly distressed over this.

I would suggest that when a Rabbi performs a marriage, names and addresses be placed in a central file and that somehow we connect with these people. If postage is a problem, perhaps Rabbi's could include a \$25⁰⁰ additional fee to cover future meetings. Perhaps Synagogues ^{could} add these names to their mailing lists for a period of time. There is so much to do and so much that we can do -

CAROL JAFFE

-3-

I remain yours —

Sincerely —

Carol Jaffe

CAROL JAFFE

Outman

June 14, 1982

Rabbi Philip M. Posner
Temple Beth El
2675 Central Avenue
Riverside, CA 92506

Dear Phil:

It was thoughtful of you to share with me the article from the Press-Enterprise. I am sharing a copy with our chairman, David Belin as well as Sandy Seltzer.

With warmest regards, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

TEMPLE BETH EL

2675 CENTRAL AVENUE RIVERSIDE CALIFORNIA 92506 PHONE 684-4511

PHILIP M. POSNER, *Rabbi*

June 8, 1982

Rabbi Alexander Schindler
838 Fifth Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10021

Dear Alex:

I thought you might like to see this article. Except for the last two lines, we were pleased with it. Interestingly, though really not surprisingly, it did prompt calls from a few wanting to know more about Judaism, or encouraged some to call.

Have a lovely summer.

Sincerely,

Philip M. Posner
Philip M. Posner

PMP:hn

Enc.

*cc. Belin
Seltzer*



"The Spirit of Man is the Lamp of The Lord"

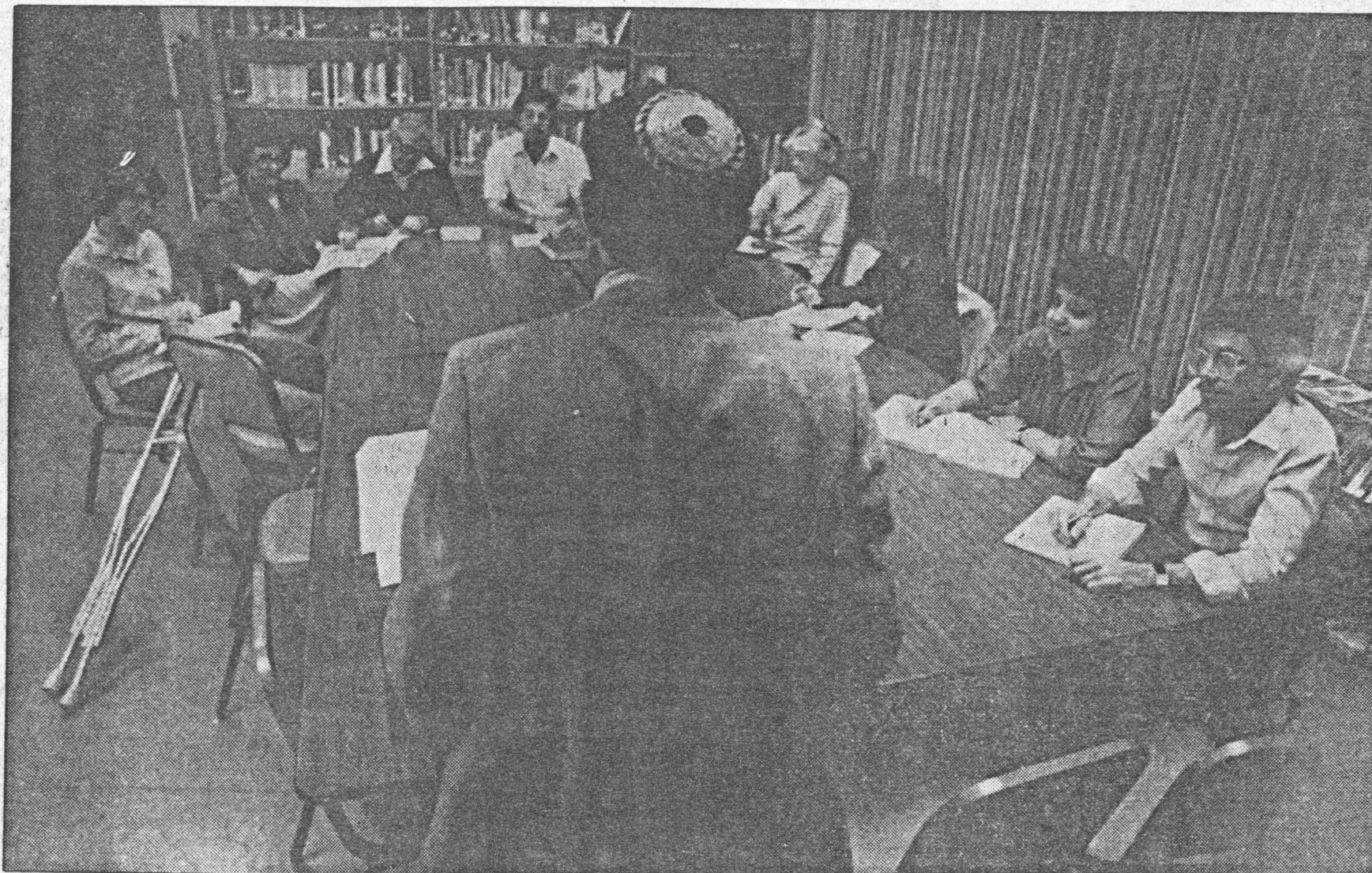
Sidelight

Press-Enterprise

SECTION

G

Friday, May 21, 1982



Rabbi Phillip Posner speaking to a conversion class at Temple Beth El in Riverside.

Staff photo by Marilyn Odello

Judaism opening its doors to converts

By DAVID HALDANE
Press-Enterprise Staff Writer

It's 8 p.m. on a Wednesday and at Riverside's Temple Beth El, 11 people are seated around a large table.

Rabbi Philip Posner is telling them about the 18th century, a period, he says, which saw the "breaking down of ghetto walls" for European Jews.

"Jews who previously spoke only Yiddish," says Posner, began to learn other languages and for the first time identified with the national aspirations of their non-Jewish countrymen. "It was the beginning of Jewish emancipation," says the rabbi.

If that was the beginning, some Jews believe, then future historians may well regard gatherings such as this as the next major step. For the people around the table are potential converts. And as recently as five years ago, many of them wouldn't have been here.

According to Posner, Judaism's new emphasis on conversion began in 1978 with a speech by Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler, president

of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. Although Jews had always accepted a trickle of converts to their ranks, conversion had long been discouraged and certainly not sought in at least 2,000 years. But in 1978, Schindler — head of Judaism's liberal Reform movement to which an estimated 34 percent of American Jews belong — urged that a Jewish "outreach program" be launched, aimed at "all Americans who are unchurched and who are seeking roots in religion."

It was the first time in modern history that an established Jewish organization had on its agenda active promotion of the faith to those not born into it. Alarmed by the loss of six million Jews during the Holocaust of World War II combined with declining birthrates and a high rate of intermarriage, Reform Judaism had decided to open its doors to outsiders.

One who responded was Velva Hakim, 33, a Riverside mother who was raised a Catholic but married a Jew.

"I felt I had finally come home," she says of her introduction

to Judaism two years ago. "I found the people I belonged with."

But like many converts to Judaism, Hakim had to contend with opposition from her still-Christian family. Shortly after the conversion, in fact, her mother — a devout Catholic — showed up at her doorstep one yuletide with a fully decorated Christmas tree because "she felt the kids should have Christmas."

"I stood up to her," Hakim remembers of the incident. "We ended up taking the tree together to another family."

And today, she says, her relatives are more tolerant of her new religious beliefs.

Barbara Sultan of Riverside, who converted 10 years ago before the new openness began, solved the Christmas tree problem by celebrating both Christmas and Hanukkah. "My 22-year-old daughter who was in college said, 'You quit having Christmas and I'll quit coming home,'" reports Sultan, who was brought up in the Church of Christ. "I guess I wouldn't want the rabbi to drive

down my street and see my Christmas tree."

But despite that lingering green symbol of her Christian background (two of her seven children, she says, are "little Jews" and five still "have their own decisions to make"), there is no doubt about her own present religious affiliation. "Judaism is a lovely religion," says Sultan, who has served as president of Temple Beth El's sisterhood and teaches third grade in the temple's religious school. "I must have been Jewish in a previous life."

For centuries, of course, Judaism has been considered a racial identity as well as a religion, a fact that greatly complicates the efforts of Reform Jews to attract converts. Of the five to 10 Riverside gentiles who join his flock each year, says Posner, about three-fourths are people who have married, or are planning to marry, Jews. The rest come for a variety of reasons, he says, often encouraged by the new openness of the Reform movement.

Nance E. Gruttman's attraction

(See JUDAISM, Page 2)

Judaism opening its doors to converts . . .

(From Page 1)

was based on the fact that Judaism seemed "like an intellectual religion."

"I have always had a great admiration for Jewish philosophy and ideology and it was sad to think that it might be closed to outsiders," says Gruttman, 36, of Lake Elsinore. A former Lutheran and later a born-again Baptist, Gruttman says she toyed with the idea of converting to Judaism several years ago but was discouraged by Jewish friends whose attitude was that "it was sort of a closed group."

Recently, however, struck by the fact that "all the writers I like seem to be Jewish," she attended a Jewish worship service for the first time and found the attitude much changed.

"People were very open and friendly," says Gruttman, a graduate student in comparative literature at the University of California, Riverside. "I loved the singing. It wasn't so much singing in praise, as just being joyful together."

After assuring himself of a potential convert's sincerity, Posner requires the person to attend a four-month course on the history, beliefs, practices and culture

of Judaism. Although the course is open to virtually anyone interested in learning more about the faith regardless of the level of their personal involvement in it, all eight non-Jewish students attending a recent class meeting said they intended to convert. At Temple Beth El, the actual conversion ritual consists of a simple candle-lighting ceremony performed at the temple after the convert has signed a pledge renouncing his former faith, vowing loyalty to Judaism and promising to bring up his or her children as Jews.

"In light of the Holocaust, we especially emphasize the loyalty pledge," says Posner. "We want them to understand the seriousness of the step they are taking. A person who converts to Judaism is a Jew in every respect."

But despite the obvious dedication of people like Hakim and Sultan to their new religion, there are Jews who would not consider them true members of the flock.

Rabbi Yonason Denebeim, 25, is an Orthodox Hassidic rabbi and spiritual leader of a small congregation in Palm Springs. Denebeim wears a yarmulka, or skull cap, at all times, speaks only Yid-

dish to his children and keeps a kosher home. And as far as he is concerned, there are only two ways to become a Jew: be born of a Jewish mother, or be converted by an Orthodox rabbi according to Orthodox Jewish law.

What that law says is that a man desirous of becoming a Jew must be circumcised — or if he is already circumcised, undergo a special ceremony in which a drop of blood is drawn from the circumcised area — and that both men and women must undergo a separate ritual immersion ceremony called a *mikvah*. Neither of these ceremonies, says the rabbi, should be performed before the would-be convert has undergone a minimum of one year of diligent study.

"I discourage conversion," says Denebeim, who has never performed a conversion ceremony. "It's not an easy business, being a Jew. I personally would not take the responsibility of converting anyone."

Rabbi Joseph M. Hurwitz, trained in the Conservative tradition that is philosophically somewhere midway between the Orthodox and the Reform, doesn't discourage conversion but requires the

same rituals for its completion Denebeim.

"We used to discourage it, I've adopted an entirely different attitude," says Hurwitz, leader of Isaiah in Palm Springs. "You get a little wiser . . ."

Hurwitz says he performs *mikvahs* each year, double the number a decade ago.

"For me, it's worked out nicely," says Carol Frankel, 35, Springs resident who married a man and converted three years ago. "I raise her children in the faith. I'm happy with it, it's a very logical thing."

Inevitably, though, the ongoing debate over what constitutes a "real" Jew, coupled with the racial/ethnic still clung to by many older members of the group, sometimes translates into subtle snubs to converts.

"I still hear *shiksa* a lot," says Frankel, referring to a Yiddish term sometimes used to describe a non-Jewish woman in a disparaging tone. "Among the younger people there's no prob-

Outreach
PAC SW

February 26, 1982

Mr. Norman Schlosberg
22246 Victory Blvd.
Woodland Hills, CA 91367

Dear Mr. Schlosberg:

It was good hearing from you and I thank you for your comments in regard to our Outreach program.

Thank you also for sharing with me the pamphlet published by the Unitarian Universalists. I appreciate your suggestion and your kindness in bringing this brochure to our attention.

With every good wish, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

...by virtue of his
baptism, ... Christian, a member of
the household of faith, a servant of
the servants of god.

And a courageous Christian at
that.

Jewish Policy on Converts Assailed

NEW YORK (AP)—The head of the National Council of Young Israel, an Orthodox Jewish organization, has assailed a decision by Reform Judaism to seek converts, but not among those already religiously affiliated.

Harold N. Jacobs says Jews who have embraced other faiths are "our brethren in bondage" who have "strayed out of ignorance" and "we must attempt to win them back for their own sakes as well as ours."

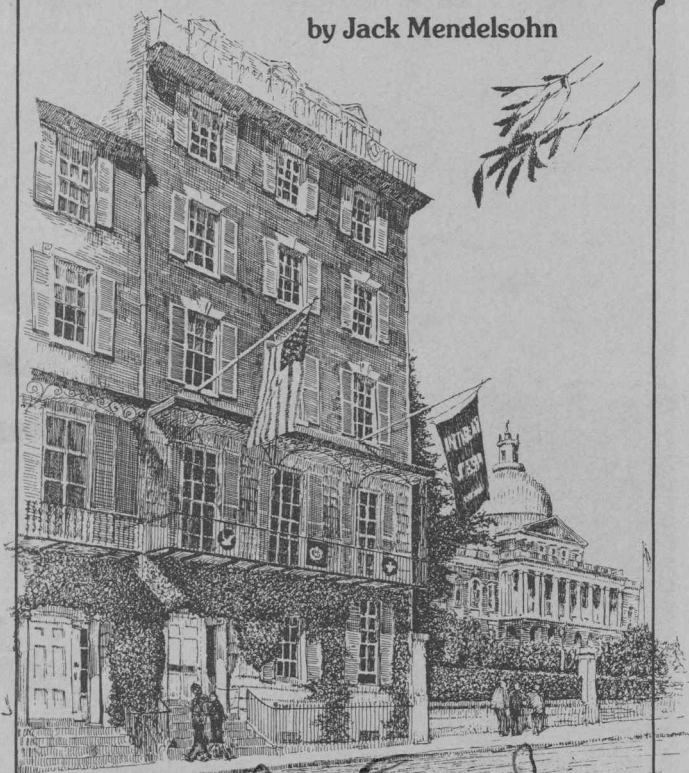
EARL DR. ROY B. McKEOWN

Chairman, President of World Opportunities Int'l

WORLD

Meet the Unitarian Universalists

by Jack Mendelsohn



*How about us Jews
educate?
We too have our
story to tell.*

Meet the Unitarian Universalists

The Unitarian Universalist movement has been called

A refuge for rebels

A haven for heretics

A shelter for skeptics

AND IT'S ALL OF THAT!

But here is much more than a refuge, or a haven, or a shelter.

Above all, it is a positive, reasonable, enthusiastic, religious *way of life*.

It has a long and exciting history with a thrilling tradition of heroes and achievements.

It has strong churches, church schools, and youth groups.

By means of this pamphlet we hope to acquaint you with . . .

The beliefs and affirmations of Unitarian Universalists

The purposes and methods of our religious education for children

Our world-wide outreach

The saga of Unitarian and Universalist history

Our churches and fellowships

The reasons why there may well be a place for you in a Unitarian Universalist congregation.

PART ONE

Meet the Unitarian Universalists

There's an old anecdote about some of us of liberal persuasion coming to a fork in the road. On one sign are the words: "To Heaven." On the other: "To a Discussion about Heaven." Without hesitation the Unitarian Universalists choose their course. They wouldn't think of missing a discussion!

Like most stories, this one has its element of truth. We are full of ideas and characteristically anxious to express them. Whether the subject is immortality, prayer, God or science, there may be as many ideas as there are people present; yet there will be one unifying principle: namely, the right of every person to make up his own mind about what he believes.

Seeing this process in action, people frequently say: "I have been a Unitarian Universalist for years without knowing it!" It may be true for you, but how can you tell?

As a beginning you can see if any of these questions have a familiar, personal ring:

— I cannot accept religious beliefs just on faith. Is there a church for me?

— I believe in many things: human dignity, human effort, the constant search for truth, the need for more human community; but I cannot bind my beliefs to a creedal test. What church would want me?

— Churches seem to insist that religious truth is revealed and complete. Does any church welcome the idea that truth is a growing, not a finished, thing?

— A child should be allowed to discover religion in his own unfolding life, not through a process of indoctrination. What church practices this?

— Can a church be effective, and still encourage each member to be his free, individual self?

— There is beauty and truth in many of the world's religious faiths. Is there a church anywhere that does not claim to have all the answers?

— Where is there a religion that honestly encourages the fullest possible use of reason?

— Can persons from any religious background—Christian, Jewish, Buddhist, Muslim, etc.—find one church where all are welcome without "conversion" or "renunciation"?

— I want to be free to wonder about—even

doubt—the existence of God, the nature of God, the effectiveness of prayer, the value of the Bible, the possibility of immortality, and still be religious. Where can I find a church that calls no honest doubt “heresy” and where heretics are welcome?

If you find something of your own thought, experience and searching in these questions, there is probably an exciting place for you in Unitarian Universalism.

We cherish wide differences of religious opinion and belief within our ranks, yet there is a sustaining bond of union on such matters as:

Serious concern with religious living

Belief in the importance of individual thinking

Respect for the personalities and convictions of others

Faith in human dignity and potentiality

Aversion to sanctimony and all forms of bigotry

Hearty enjoyment of life and people

Confidence in the true harmony of science and religion

Faith in the principle of love

Quest for a broad and encompassing religion: spiritual yet practical, personal yet universal

PART TWO

What Do Unitarian Universalists Believe?

The heart of Unitarian Universalist religion is a positive faith in working *principles* rather than doctrines. The distinguished international scholar and Unitarian historian, Earl Morse Wilbur, wrote: “When the Unitarian movement began, the marks of true religion were commonly thought to be belief in the creeds, membership in the church and participation in its rites and sacraments. To the Unitarian of today the marks of true religion are spiritual freedom, enlightened reason, broad and tolerant sympathy, upright character and unselfish service. These things, which go to the very heart of life, best express the meaning of Unitarian history.”

Because we find the essence of religion in character and conduct rather than in doctrines, creeds, dogmas, and catechisms, those who customarily think of

religion as a series of theological definitions sometimes have difficulty understanding the liberal religious position.

We are believers, but our beliefs are centered in a *method*, a process of the religious life, rather than in closed articles of faith.

“But what do Unitarian Universalists believe?” we are asked. “What is your creed?”

We have no creed. On matters normally frozen into creedal statements, we are expected to follow the dictates of reason, conscience and experience. Our churches make no official pronouncements on God, the Bible, Jesus, immortality, or any of the other theological questions generally answered with unabashed finality by the more traditional religious groups.

To us, creating a religious way of life is far too important to be left to the propounders of creeds and dogmas.

We become Unitarian Universalists not by substituting one confession of faith for another, but by opening our minds to receive truth and inspiration from every possible source.

The most fundamental of all our principles, then, is *individual freedom of religious belief*—the principle of the free mind.

Most religious beliefs are based on some outside authority. The prophet or priest dictates, the Bible dictates, or the creed dictates what must be believed. For those who have no special urge to do their own thinking, this is an effective and logical approach. But what of those who have an intense need to think independently?

For us the most vital fact is this: in order to advance, humans must be free. There is no area of life in which it is more important to be free than in religion.

Those who differ with us argue that we must be directed by infallible religious guides, or else our frailties will corrupt and destroy us. But when we begin to examine closely the “infallible” religious guides, what do we discover? The church which claims authority to dictate beliefs is a human institution, and its “final truths” are no more than the conclusions arrived at by earlier human leaders.

The same statement is true of the Bible. It was written by mortals.

No creed exists that was not originally composed by human beings like ourselves.

Churches, Bibles and creeds are the creations of those who once exercised their freedom to create. Is there any reason why we should expect to do less?

Thus the distinctive characteristic of the Unitarian Universalist is our insistence that we will not bind our present and future in religion to the tutelage of the past. We will attempt to learn all that the past can teach us, *but we will do our own thinking about current matters of faith and belief.*

In the words of John P. Marquand, Pulitzer Prize author, "As Democracy is man's freest form of social life so is Unitarianism the freest religious life, and like Democracy, the Unitarian religion depends upon the separate thinking of every Unitarian to give it significance and vitality."

In one of our congregations an agnostic may sit beside one who believes in a personal God; at the after-service coffee hour a believer in personal immortality may stand chatting with one who accepts "utter extinction." Such are our wide diversities of individual belief.

We are *together* in our devotion to freedom; each living by a thought-out covenant with himself and with life as a whole; each understanding that his beliefs may change as insights deepen and experiences broaden.

You can see how boundless the opportunities are for an earnest, thoughtful person in this "open" approach to religion and the spiritual life.

Second only to the free mind is our belief in *reason and responsibility*. Freedom requires responsibility. We must accept responsibility for our acts. We believe that this sense of responsibility reflects the teaching of the great Biblical prophets, from Amos to Jesus. We believe also that it is the essence of one of our noblest achievements, the scientific method. In brief, we believe that our religious concept of ethical responsibility is much more in tune with reality, much more productive of good, than the traditional doctrine of man's inherent depravity through "original sin."

How do we cultivate responsible behavior? For us a chief resource is *human reason*. Reason holds the place that is ordinarily accorded to revelation in orthodox religions. That person is likely to behave best who exercises reason most.

This does not mean that we are unmindful of the limitations of human reason, nor that we look upon it

as an infallible guide. In our way of life there are *no* infallible guides. Dr. E. Burdette Backus described our faith in reason as follows: "... the intelligence of man is an instrument which has developed in the process of his evolution to enable him to satisfy his needs more adequately. It had originally a very earthy and practical purpose, namely that of solving the problems that pressed in upon him in daily life. Although it continues this immediately pressing function it has far outsoared it and seeks to penetrate beyond the stars to find an answer to the riddle of the universe. Our reason makes many mistakes; it is frequently taken captive by our desires, so that we believe things not because they are true but because we want to believe them. It cannot give us absolute and final certainty, but it has established a substantial body of verified truth; it is steadily increasing the amount of that truth. For all its limitations it serves us very well, and those who advocate its abandonment are simply telling a man who is groping his way through the dark by the light of a candle to blow out the light."

Unitarian Universalism, then, is an ethical rather than a doctrinal religion, with individual freedom as its method and reason as its guide.

The path of logic leads from freedom, through reason, to a third fundamental principle: *a generous and tolerant understanding of differing views and practices.*

UNITY WITH DIVERSITY

Unitarian Universalists believe that people can work together for the betterment of character and the advancement of humanity without conforming to a set pattern of theological doctrines. In fact we go well beyond this to express our conviction that differing theological views are natural and healthy, and that attempts to enforce religious conformity are deadening and potentially destructive. History is witness to the horrors of religious intolerance.

The atmosphere of one of our churches encourages all persons to make their best contribution to the group's enrichment. The emphasis is on sharing the results of personal thought and evaluation. Truth is vast and many sided. Why should we all have the same theology? It is a vital part of our faith that people of widely differing religious backgrounds and views can work cheerfully and productively together under

the same church roof, strengthening each other in the great tasks of making human life more splendid, more precious and more secure upon this earth.

When conscientious seekers ask what we believe, they must make an effort to lay aside the theological definitions employed to describe most churches. Ours is very definitely a *different kind* of church, and it requires a different kind of definition. Yet let there be no mistake about the fact that we enjoy a purposeful, positive religious movement, dedicated to the moral progress of human life. It welcomes all who catch the vision of placing principles of freedom, responsibility, reason and tolerance above uniform theological doctrines.

PART THREE

Our Work with Children

Nothing in the Unitarian Universalist religion is more exciting than its methods and principles of religious education. A new kind of church school has come into being in our movement in which the *individual child*, rather than the Bible or catechism, is the center of the program.

We teach Bible courses as part of our program, but only as they contribute to our comprehensive aim of introducing children to the moral, social and religious ideas they must have in order to live in a democratic and diverse society.

The traditional approach to religious education rests on the notion that human nature is alienated from God and can only be re-united by learning and accepting a doctrinal plan of salvation. Children, according to this older method, must be taught about a savior who alone can rescue them from their "evil" selves, since they are incapable of accomplishing this themselves.

Our religious education is founded on the conviction that human nature, rather than alienating us from God, actually binds us to the universe and all that sustains it. The natural curiosities and urges of children, rather than being "wicked" are the very resources on which a program of religious education should be built.

We believe that a child's religion grows out of normal experience. Religion is not something to be "given" to a child, but something to be nurtured and encouraged in a child's unfolding life.

No one has yet done a better job of describing the general aims of our religious education than William Ellery Channing, internationally revered Unitarian preacher and scholar of the last century:

"The great end in religious instruction . . . is not to stamp our minds irresistibly on the young, but to stir up their own;

"not to make them see with our eyes, but to look inquiringly and steadily with their own;

"not to impose religion upon them in the form of arbitrary rules, which rest on no foundation but our own word and will, but to awaken the conscience, the moral discernment, so that they may discern and approve for themselves what is everlastingly right and good . . ."

In week-by-week practice, our church schools are guided by concrete objectives:

We encourage in children a *natural* development of religious faith based primarily on direct experience.

We avoid *imposing* religious beliefs of any kind.

We never suggest that an ideal is to be cherished *simply* because it is honored in our church or our religion.

We encourage a *continual* search to improve faith and life.

We do not teach a *finished* gospel.

We *expose* children to the thoughts and beliefs of many religions.

We do not teach that religious truth is to be found *only* in the Judeo-Christian Bible.

We heartily urge children to ask questions, express their doubts, and seek answers that are *personally* satisfying to them.

We do everything possible to avoid an atmosphere in which children might feel that their natural *curiosity* is being repressed.

As our philosophy of religious education matured, it became necessary to create new kinds of religious materials for classroom use. Year by year, non-sectarian, educationally-sound religious curricula have grown.

We realize that the process of developing a religion of one's own is a slow, gradual and seven-day-a-week

affair. Especially during children's pre-school years, a large part of this development goes on in the home. The direction it takes, its depth or lack of depth, depends very largely on how seriously parents assume their role as religious educators. It is impossible to live with small children and not answer numerous religious questions each day. Because of this, we place great stress on parent participation in the church's program of religious education.

Parents who think that they can put their children in Sunday school for an hour or two a week to "get" religious education will not be comfortable in one of our churches. Our program is designed to appeal only to those who wish to enter *with* their children upon an adventure in religious growth.

PART FOUR

Deeds—Not Creeds

WORLD-WIDE SERVICE

For most Unitarian Universalists religion would mean little if it did not include enlightened conscience in action. Yet we are not missionary-minded. By deliberate choice we send no missionaries over the face of the earth to convert the "heathen." In fact we generally feel that people of other religions have as much to teach us as we have to teach them.

We have a moral equivalent for religious missions. Kindled by compassionate imagination and fanned by a desire to share skills and resources with people the world around, our impulse to serve is mobilized in the **Unitarian Universalist Service Committee**.

Established in 1940 to aid refugees from Nazi Europe, the UUSC has kept pace with the changing needs of our changing times. Stretching across the continent and globe, Unitarian Universalist Service Committee projects in medicine, social work, criminal justice, family planning, education, community development and leadership training testify to the effectiveness of "helping people to help themselves," to address problems of institutional oppression.

In all its efforts the UUSC remains scrupulously non-sectarian. Proselytizing on behalf of our religion is never a component of our humanitarian work.

THE POWER OF THE WRITTEN WORD

Through the Unitarian Universalist Association, we support an extremely broad publications program. It encompasses a newspaper, magazines, pamphlets, books and newsletters.

Divisions of the program are:

Beacon Press: a major publishing house which operates under the auspices of the UUA. Its function is to produce books of a serious, general, and sometimes controversial nature. Beacon hard-cover and paper-back editions are prominently displayed in bookstores throughout our continent and in many countries overseas. It is the purpose of Beacon Press to make a continuing contribution to cultural and spiritual life by a forthright and vigorous program of publishing that emphasizes the preeminence of the human spirit.

In 1947, Beacon Press had 17 titles on its backlist and a handful of outlets. Now it has hundreds of titles and booksellers in every major city of the world.

Pamphlet Commission: A large selection of attractively styled and crisply written pamphlets is available on a variety of subjects of interest to potential members, new members and established members. These pamphlets are distributed in Unitarian Universalist churches and gathering places, and are used by organized groups throughout the denomination.

Unitarian Universalist World: A newspaper which is mailed directly to more than 102,000 families 16 times a year. The official journal of the UUA, it is the successor to the *Universalist Leader* (1819) and the *Christian Register* (Unitarian) of 1821. It carries news and articles about individuals, local congregations, UUA programs, materials and services, as well as inspirational material and opinion pieces. Its letters page and editorial page reflect the wide diversity of views within liberal religion.

Besides the regular publications program, many of the affiliated groups also publish literature.

ON THE LOCAL FRONT

Most Unitarian Universalists are noted for their social concerns. Racial justice, liberation movements, international peace, community health and welfare, separation of church and state, civil liberties—these are but a few of the earthy problems that arouse lively interest and participation in our circles. Where-

ever a committee gathers to tackle a project for the improvement of human living, Unitarian Universalists are present. It is a hallmark of our religion that service to the community, the nation and the world is one of the surpassing privileges of life. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the activities of members of any typical Unitarian Universalist church or fellowship. Dr. Ellsworth Huntington of Yale, who made a study of the names in *Who's Who in America*, wrote: "The productivity of the Unitarians in supplying leaders of the first rank has been 150 times as great as that of the remainder of the population."

Our aim, obviously, is not to compile comparative statistics of leadership, but to reflect our religious convictions in dynamic contributions to a better life and a better world. We note with humility and gratitude that we have no exclusive claim to social concern and service. We try increasingly to face our weaknesses and shortcomings with candor. For example, our churches—whether North or South—are open without prejudice to people of all races. Yet, we are still overwhelmingly a "white" denomination. We make progress toward racially-integrated congregations, but that progress is not as rapid as we wish. The important fact is that people of all racial, national and religious backgrounds are cordially welcome in our churches, and we hope that the day is dawning when our congregations will be truly representative of our population as a whole.

PART FIVE

Some of the Hows and Whens of Unitarian Universalist History

To find the roots of our religion it is necessary to go all the way back to the prophets of ancient Israel and the Socratic tradition of Athens. Modern liberal religion heartily acknowledges its debt to these founts of reverence for the dignity of man and the primacy of ethics in religion.

The Christian origins of our movement are anchored in the moral teachings of Jesus, as exemplified in the Beatitudes and the Sermon On The Mount. Early Christianity was neither Trinitarian nor Unitarian. For nearly three centuries after Jesus' death, no

specific doctrine of this type was enforced as part of an official Christian creed. When doctrinal controversies became too stormy and violent, the Roman Emperor, Constantine, summoned church leaders to a council where, in 325 A.D.—almost 300 years after the death of Jesus—the Nicene Creed was voted into existence. The divinity of Jesus thus became the official orthodoxy of the Christian religion. The Nicene formula declared by a divided vote that Jesus was of the same essential substance as God.

A half-century later, at another gathering of church leaders—the General Council of Constantinople—the assembled dignitaries added the Holy Spirit to their formula, thus completing the Trinity. This was the very human manner in which the Trinitarian dogma of "Father, Son and Holy Spirit" came into existence. From the beginning there were sincere and thoughtful Christians who felt that the essential message of Jesus was being drowned in a sea of metaphysics, but it became quickly apparent that those who could not conscientiously accept the Trinitarian position were to be expelled, condemned and perhaps martyred, as heretics. Nevertheless, a spirit of independent thought and belief continued to flicker through the centuries.

The ferment of the Protestant Reformation furnished adventurous opportunities for leaders of a more liberal mind. Some began to question the Trinity, and to call for less rigid religious conceptions and practices. Their cause was immortalized by the shameful burning of Michael Servetus in Switzerland on the order of John Calvin. Servetus' crime was the writing of a book entitled *On the Errors of the Trinity*, in which he argued that the Trinity was a grotesque and distracting addition to the true Christian life. Servetus was burned and many others were tortured and slain for expressing personal convictions in opposition to the official orthodoxies, but ideas that could not be suppressed were in the air. In Italy, Switzerland, Hungary, Poland, Holland and England, spokesmen for a liberalized Christianity appeared in ever-increasing numbers. Ministers and entire congregations began to secede from orthodox ranks in rebellion against theological dogmatism.

In 1568, the only Unitarian king in history, John Sigismund of Transylvania, issued the Western

World's first edict of religious freedom. In Koloszvar, a small Transylvania town, is to be found the world's oldest Unitarian congregation. It left the ranks of orthodoxy in 1568 to follow the leadership of the brilliant reformer, Francis David. By 1600 there were more than 400 such Unitarian congregations in the surrounding area.

Later, in England, the cause of liberal religion was advanced by the powerful advocacy of such men as John Milton, Isaac Newton and John Locke. With footings established in spite of constant persecution, the Unitarian religion began to assume organizational form. Journals, schools and new churches appeared wherever the fierce objections of orthodox authorities could be overcome. In Poland, orthodox reaction was violent enough to exterminate the strong liberal movement and its members.

Early in the 18th century, liberal thought began to find expression in American pulpits.

During the last half of the 18th century, a few isolated religious spokesmen in England and America began to preach the doctrine that it was unthinkable for God, as a loving Father, to damn any of his children everlastingly to hell. The Nicene Creed must then be in error. In the 1740's these heretical notions were preached in Pennsylvania by Dr. George de Benneville. In the 60's similar ideas brought about excommunication from Methodism of John Murray. These men were Universalists, and proclaimed the final harmony of the human soul with God. Murray in 1770 helped to found the Universalist Church of America.

The Calvinist majority in the colonies was disturbed by this wandering from sound doctrine. There was immediate denunciation of the Universalists as an irresponsible lot bent on encouraging a life of reckless wickedness, counting on escaping the tortures of hell. Standing against the orthodox majority, Universalists stressed the ethical nature of God.

In 1800 a man of outstanding preaching ability appeared on the New England scene, a courageous, persuasive and scholarly Universalist preacher named Hosea Ballou. In 1803 the Universalists adopted the *Winchester Profession*, which became the standard expression of Universalist views, emphasizing the Universal Fatherhood of God and the example and leadership of Jesus, and coined the phrase "salvation

by character."

The first churches in America to assume the Unitarian name were founded by Dr. Joseph Priestley in Northumberland, Pennsylvania (1794), and in Philadelphia (1796). Though known to history as the discoverer of oxygen and as one of the most celebrated of English scientists, Dr. Priestley was by profession a Unitarian clergyman. The orthodox fanatics who burned his famous laboratory in Birmingham, England, not only deprived their country of a brilliant scientific pioneer, but also deprived Birmingham Unitarians of a beloved minister.

Priestley came to the New World to seek a religious atmosphere less contaminated by orthodox bigotry. His arrival in America was a catalyst. Intellectual and moral revolt against orthodox doctrines was sweeping across the eastern seaboard. Churches of many denominations were caught up in the desire to re-examine their theological beliefs and backgrounds. Boston's historic King's Chapel, which had been the first Episcopal church in New England, led the way. The congregation called a minister of Unitarian persuasion and revised its book of Common Prayer to eliminate all objectionable Trinitarian references.

In 1802, the oldest Pilgrim church, founded at Plymouth in 1620, became Unitarian by congregational vote. This pattern was repeated in over 100 cities and towns.

Meanwhile there had arisen in Boston a Unitarian leader of eloquence and force of personality: Dr. William Ellery Channing, under whose inspiration the American Unitarian Association was founded on May 25, 1825. By coincidence, the British Unitarian Association was officially organized on the same day. In each country the scattered, independent liberal congregations thus pooled their strengths in a formal, cooperative way, and their futures were assured.

In the early days there was little enthusiasm for close ties between the two groups. This pained Ballou, who wrote eloquently of the affinity of the two groups, recalling their common aspirations and frustrations, and calling for intellectual and spiritual unity. During the next century the two groups grew increasingly aware of one another, and on more than a dozen occasions resolutions were passed calling for union. Finally in 1947 a joint commission was established to lay the groundwork for Federal Union, and

by 1951 it was ready to present a recommendation for immediate union in the fields of religious education, publications and public relations, with a gradual trend toward complete merger, which was effected in Boston in May, 1960; total consolidation was completed in May, 1961.

CHRISTIAN OR MORE THAN CHRISTIAN?

Frequently discussed in our circles is the question of whether the free faith has grown beyond Judeo-Christianity and become something more universal.

The basic philosophy of Unitarian Universalist churches and fellowships is reflected in the following corporate purposes:

- (a) Support the free and disciplined search for truth as the foundation of religious fellowship;
- (b) Cherish and spread the universal truths taught by the great prophets and teachers of humanity in every age and tradition, immemorially summarized in the Judeo-Christian heritage as love to God and love to humankind.
- (c) Affirm, defend, and promote the supreme worth and dignity of every human personality, and the use of the democratic method in human relationships.
- (d) Implement the vision of one world by striving for a world community founded on ideals of brotherhood, justice, and peace;
- (e) Serve the needs of member societies;
- (f) Organize new churches and fellowships and otherwise extend and strengthen liberal religion;
- (g) Encourage cooperation among people of good will in every land.

PART SIX

Facing a New Age

Though it takes a special kind of courage and concern to depart from the accepted ways of orthodoxy, our growth has been encouraging.

Organized groups are now to be found in over 1000 cities and towns from ocean to ocean, from Alaska to Panama.

One of the most significant of our extension programs has been the development of Fellowships—lay-led groups organized in communities where no previous liberal religious group existed. Each year some of these Fellowships achieve full church status.

For the more isolated there is the Church of the Larger Fellowship with a headquarters and minister in Boston. Its membership extends through 40 countries.

We have been notably unenthusiastic about proselytizing, but a new zeal for “telling our story” has blossomed among us. Radio and television are increasingly used for presenting the liberal point of view on religious and public issues.

Any form of pressure to join a church is repugnant to us, but response to our informational efforts indicates that there are hundreds of thousands of potential Unitarian Universalists who are not in our churches because they do not yet know that such a church exists.

Our new members repeatedly tell us of their intense regret at having gone so many years without discovering our church. “We simply did not know that such a church existed, and no one bothered to tell us,” they say. We now sense our obligation to spread as widely as possible a knowledge of our history, our aims, our principles and the basis of our church life. More than ever before, the time is ripe for bringing together all who desire to advance the cause of freedom and human community through liberal religion.

Exciting new ideas, the experimental spirit, and wise planning and action have combined in recent years to give the profound traditions fresh relevance to the religious needs of our time.

Our present strength and future promise promote confidence that our era of greatest usefulness and effectiveness is dawning. Dr. Frederick May Eliot wrote: “The only really serious possibility of failure to meet the apparent opportunity now facing Unitarianism lies in the very center of its own spiritual life; and, if the history of the movement may be taken as indicating the probabilities for the future, there is not likely to be failure here. What I have in mind is that recurring infusion of new spiritual sensitiveness and insight which has characterized the movement from the beginning. . . .”

PART SEVEN

The You in Unitarian Universalist Religion

This pamphlet ends with the spotlight on you, the reader. What you have read is an elementary introduction to our religion, but it is enough to express the following: "This is our church; open to all, seeking to unite people of goodwill and free mind in a larger, spiritual fellowship." The ultimate test of a religious movement is association with the people who give it form, warmth and vitality.

Through nearly two centuries in America Unitarian and Universalist churches have commanded the loyalty of conscientious, progressive, enlightened men and women. No church can claim a more substantial relationship to the great human heritage of freedom.

Our traditions are inspiring. Our influence is large. Our spirit is dynamic. But best of all our religion has something vital and unique to say to the needs of modern life. Our debt to those who have loved and served freedom in the past is very great, but our obligation to speak to the present and future is even greater.

For unnumbered people in our complex society, the Unitarian Universalist church can be the very center of spiritual warmth and ethical inspiration that they have long been seeking. You may be such a person. Now that we have been introduced, we hope that you will accept our invitation to know us better.

Visit a Sunday service and coffee hour. Bring your children to one of our church schools. Make an appointment to talk over your questions with one of our ministers. You will find them eager to see you, but you need never fear that they will attempt to put pressure on you.

Try us at your own pace and in your own way. We have no shackles to press upon you; nothing but a desire to share the freedom, satisfaction and stimulation we find in our religion.

For those who, like us, cannot accept dogmatism and creedalism as the basis of their religious life, and who yearn for a religious expression stressing reason, character and service, Unitarian Universalism is an open door to fellowship—a welcome release from spiritual isolation.

We invite you to discover the place for you in the Unitarian Universalist church.

(Jack Mendelsohn is the author of **Why I Am A Unitarian Universalist**, **God, Allah and Ju-Ju**, **The Forest Calls Back** (Dr. Binder in Peru), **The Martyrs** (16 who gave their lives for racial justice), and **Channing, The Reluctant Radical**.

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UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION

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Outreach

June 2, 1980

Mr. Norman Schlosberg
22246 Victory Boulevard
Woodland Hills, CA. 91367

Dear Mr. Schlosberg:

Thank you for your letter of May 25. It was good of you to share your thoughts with me!

You will be interested in knowing that in December, 1978, I made a proposal on Outreach to the Board of Trustees of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. My proposal, which was adopted, suggested a number of outreach programs, including outreach to the unchurched who express an interest in knowing more about Judaism and the Jewish people as well as outreach to the non-Jewish partners in mixed-marriages and to intermarried couples. Since the time of the proposal, we have organized a Task Force on Reform Jewish Outreach and its activities grow with each passing day.

For your interest, I enclose herewith a copy of the March, 1979 edition of MOMENT which includes my own paper on this subject as well as comments from others.

With every good wish, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

Encl.

May 25, 1980

Union of American Hebrew Congregations,
838 - 5th Avenue,
New York, N. Y.

Dear Rabbi Schindler:

I respectfully suggest that we Jews are missing an opportunity to increase our numbers by failing to exert maximum effort by educating - or, if you prefer - proselytizing the great numbers of the unchurched.

There is currently a thirst for spiritual values in the land as well as the world. I personally know of many, both young and old, that no longer believe in the fundamentals of the Christian traditions.

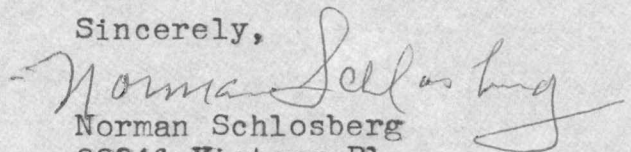
I am aware, of course, the argument that we should retain our own who are leaving the fold. However, as a matter of psychology, the non-Jew may have more respect when they see their Jewish neighbor respect our beliefs while conversely the Jew's apathy would be aroused by the non-Jews' interests in Judiasm.

Considering our articulateness, we are failing to deliver our message. My reading of history reveals that conversion was part of way of life until about the fourth century when Christianity passed repressive measures against Jewish conversion movements. There is no prohibition in Judiasm against proselytizing.

In a recent survey, it seems that the Orientals (71%) are not members of any established religion; the blacks, for other reasons, are also potential people who may be reached with the proper approach.

Your organization may avail itself of the electric media of the day and even if we do not make converts, we may develop understanding of Judiasm and understanding creates friends - and we certainly need friends.

Sincerely,



Norman Schlosberg
22246 Victory Bl.
Woodland Hills
Ca. 91367

March 11, 1980

Mr. Richard B. Wiggins
877 Falmouth Street
Thousand Oaks, CA. 91360

Dear Mr. Wiggins:

You are right, the non-participation of the rabbi in a mixed marriage would certainly represent something of a dilemma and yet it need not of necessity be interpreted as a rejection of the couple. Much depends on the manner in which this non-participation is explained. Most thoughtful non-Jews understand that there are certain rites and rights of Judaism which can only be extended to those who are Jewish and they are willing to accept this provided the explanation is given to them with patience and with care.

In my experience as a rabbi I have never had difficulty in having others accept my position and I go out of my way -- by attending the wedding and speaking to the couple both before and after the wedding -- to demonstrate that I do not regard their wedding as illegal and do not reject them personally. Moreover, you must remember that the wedding is only a limited part in time which includes a long relationship with the Jewish community which begins before the wedding and continues long after the ceremony. What I am seeking to address is this long-term relationship.

With appreciation for your having shared your concerns with me and with kindest greetings, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

PATRICIA & RICHARD WIGGINS

877 Falmouth Street
Thousand Oaks, California 91360
(805) 495-5055

16 Adar, 5740

4 March, 1980

Dear Rabbi Schindler:

My wife and I attended the University of Judaism Forum at Mt. Sinai in Los Angeles where you were the principal speaker. It was in my opinion an informative and enjoyable evening up to disrespectful and disgusting commotion by the J.D.L. riff-raff.

I congratulate you on your composure, that was better than I did, but to the point of this letter.

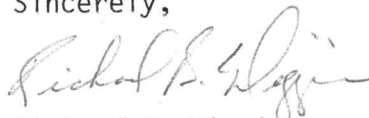
During your talk two points were raised, among others, that have provided considerable discussion. First, that the Jewish community should make positive and overt actions to welcome the non-Jewish partner of a mixed marriage into the community. Second, that neither you nor any official Rabbinat board condone the participation of a Rabbi in the ceremony of a mixed marriage. This seems to me to present a dilemma and I would appreciate your answer or thoughts on it.

It would seem that if a mixed couple approached a Rabbi to perform the marriage and are refused this will constitute a rebuff of the highest order from the Jewish community. Certainly this feeling will be intensified when a Protestant Minister leaps at the opportunity, and perhaps even a Priest - if a written agreement is given to raise the children Catholic.

However, I understand that Judaism as a religious tenet does not become a party to the officiating of such a union.

How do you convince a couple that, no, you won't and can't perform the blessing of the marriage, but that when they are married they are both welcome to the join the Jewish community?

Sincerely,



Richard B. Wiggins

RBW/pjw

Rabbi Alexander Schlindler
838 Fifth Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10021

February 12, 1980

Rabbi Allen I. Freehling
University Synagogue
11960 Sunset Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA. 90049

Dear Allen:

It was thoughtful of you to share
with me a copy of your forthcoming temple bulletin column.
I read it with great interest and appreciate your having
called it to my attention.

With warmest regards, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

University Synagogue

A Reform Congregation

11960 Sunset Boulevard • Los Angeles, California 90049 • 472-1255 • 272-3650

From the Rabbi's Study

February 1, 1980

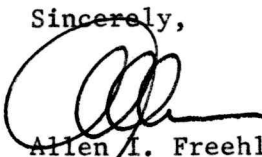
Rabbi Alexander Schindler
Union of American Hebrew Congregations
838 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10021

Dear Alex:

In anticipation of our March bulletin that soon goes to the printer's for typesetting and duplication, I wrote a monthly column which might be of interest to you. I'm enclosing a copy of the text.

It comes to you with warmest best wishes.

Sincerely,



Allen I. Freehling, Ph.D.
Rabbi

c.c. with Encl.: Rabbi Erwin Herman

AIF:jh

From the Rabbi's Study

"Turning The Other Cheek? - That's Not Our Style!"

We Reform Jews are the target of some bitter attacks. Under the circumstances, I think that we have been more tolerant than is necessary.

While it may be part of the "Christian ethic" for a person to turn the other cheek when struck, I know few people who are inclined to be that passive. And, this certainly isn't what Judaism teaches us to do.

Sadly, the attacks that prompt this column have been launched not by some external forces; instead, they have come from within the Jewish community. Perhaps, we have absorbed the blows so as to maintain peace within the Household of Israel. But, as far as I'm concerned, "dayanu" (translation: "enough already").

Recently, Rabbi Alexander Schindler, the president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, made two proposals that are urged upon us by reality and good sense. In Houston, he suggested that we reach out to the "unchurched" letting non-Jews know that when they are seeking a satisfying religious identity Judaism is open to their scrutiny, that we welcome them with a warm embrace should they choose to become part of our peoplehood.

From the time of our Biblical prophets, we have been mandated to tell the world about God, to urge one and all to live their lives under His influence. While we may not be out on the streets in an attempt to proselyte, it's not for us to shut our doors in the face of those who elect to be with us.

Yet, the Orthodox community jumped all over Rabbi Schindler. It was as if he were attempting to radicalize Judaism, to do something altogether new and different. He was bitterly attacked in a way that his tormentors' disdain for non-Jews and Reform Jews coalesced in a most obscene manner.

By and large, Reform Jewry remains silent!

In Toronto, Dr. Schindler suggested that since we Liberal Jews do not abide by halacha ("Jewish law" is not considered by us to be binding but merely to be the subject of discussion as we make decisions that affect our life style) it is time for us to break with custom regarding the religious identity of a child. Traditionally, it is predicated on the religion of the mother (for practical reasons - we always know who she is). Since there are mixed marriages in which the husband is Jewish and his children are raised as Jews, that should be a sufficient justification for us to regard his sons and daughters as co-religionists if they ask that of us.

Again, the roof has fallen upon Rabbi Schindler in a broadside attack launched by our Orthodox brothers. Particularly offensive is the well publicized position enunciated by Rabbi Maurice Lamm. Similar to his counterparts in Israel, he now insists on officiating at a marriage only when the Jewish identity of both the bride and groom are "certified." This means that if a child from a Reform home calls upon him to be the officiant at his marriage, or a person who has converted to Judaism under the supervision of a Reform rabbi asks him to officiate at a wedding, those people are liable to be turned away because in someone's judgment their authenticity as Jews is in doubt.

By and large, Reform Jewry remains silent!

Inasmuch as we are attacked and since we do not turn our cheek only to be slapped again, I suggest that we end our silence. As one individual in the Jewish community, I shall no longer attempt to hide my concern in the name of unity. Rather, in public and in private, I shall tell those outspoken Orthodox attackers that they have no authority over me and my kind. They are in no position to question our validity as Jews; they are invading our privacy and attempting to take away our integrity. These things they may not do!

Also, they have no right to pose as being "more Jewish," "more observant,"

"more genuine" than are we. In fact, by their words and by their deeds they prove themselves to be less sensitive, less humane, less the true children of Israel than we are. Their lack of lovingkindness is ever-present!

Silent no longer, let us remain true to ourselves and true to our interpretation of Judaism by offering a rebuttal to anyone who attacks us and shows hostility to our approach to Jewish life.

As we learn in the Talmud: "It is a duty to speak out regardless whether the reproof is likely to be heeded or to be ignored."

Rabbi Allen I. Freehling

November 2, 1979

Mrs. Jennie Abrams
5319 24th N.E. #203
Seattle, WA. 98105

Dear Mrs. Abrams:

Many thanks for your letter of October 28. I appreciate your having shared your thoughts and concerns with me. I was deeply touched by your comments.

One of the agenda items of the Reform Movement is the matter of determination of Jewish lineage. There are many who agree that this should not be determined through the maternal line alone and a study is now being made as to the possibility of a change to include the paternal line.

Our Task Force on Reform Jewish Outreach is now functioning, they met here in New York just last week. They will be making an interim report to our Biennial in Toronto, December 7-11, 1979. One of the matters under consideration is the opening of information centers. I have shared your letter with Rabbi Sanford Seltzer, director of the Task Force, so he is apprised of your encouragement and interest.

With repeated thanks for your candid sharing of concerns and with every good wish, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

October 28, 1979

Rabbi Alexander Schindler
c/o UAHC
838 Fifth Avenue
New York City, N. Y. 10021

Dear Rabbi Schindler:

A year ago, approximately, Albert Vorspan sent me a copy of your address at a biennial conference concerning the issue of converts and the matter of mixed marriages. These comments and observations of yours have stimulated a great deal of discussion at Beth Am, where I am a member. It is about this matter that I am writing you.

First, let me say that I am a Jew by choice and by design. My father, as pro-Jewish as one could hope to find, raised in Brooklyn, indoctrinated me early with Jewishness; all his friends were Jewish. My father, Benard Lawson Paulsen, was not, or if he was, he never admitted it. Yet he raised me to be a Jew. Now I have found out, that my father, who claimed to be of Portugese, French and Danish descent, may have been part Jewish afterall. The name Benard, and my father was emphatic about its pronounciation and spelling, is a family name. My father, my father's father and my son bear this name unchanged. It appears to have been the name of my father's father's mother's maiden name. Yet because lineage is not traced through the father's side, I have not been able to claim myself Jewish by birth, although obviously I have enough in me to meet Nazi standards. Hence, I would like to encourage you to press for counting one'self as a Jew through both the mother and father.

Further, I would like to encourage you to open, or advocate the opening of, information centers, since synagogues, shuls and temples are places which are forbidding to non-Jews. I know I would have become an observant Jew much long ago, if I had known where to turn. As it was, I waited until the Yom Kippur War to declare my allegience, obviously much later than was healthy. I would have raised my children as Jews, a sorrow that remains with me, for though I opposed having the children raised as Christians for the very same reasons and in the very same way my father taught me, I still did not have the necessary Jewish connection. Now I have a grandson, with an ominous name, of a daughter who has married a Catholic, and who threatnes to raise this child, this grandson of mine to be a Catholic priest, and who sneers at Jews, adding yet another wound to a heart already broken. Please, let us have no more miseries by not assembling the people, even the strangers in the city, to know and love the Torah.

Sincerely,

Jennie Abrams
Jennie Abrams

5319 24th N.E. #203
Seattle, Washington 98105

Dearest Rabbi Schindler,

October 22, 1979

I wanted to write and thank you personally for the time you took to answer my letter, and the trouble you went to, seeing that it reached someone who could be of assistance to me.

I hope to be in touch with Rabbi Herman by the middle of this week, and, perhaps meet with him toward the end of next week. I spend most of my weekends in Beverly Hills, and so it would be an ideal way to spend a few of them; something very exciting to look forward to!

I also wanted to thank you for the "Presidential Address" that you sent along with your letter. I must say, I was quite fascinated by it, as I have been somewhat "victimized" by my own interest in entering the Faith, and I could relate to it in many, many ways. My fondest dream would be to one day be an intrinsic part of such a program as you have proposed, as I know all too well the problems and obstacles involved in conversion and intermarriage, firsthand!

A very close friend of mine is attending one of the Hebrew Universities in New York (he is studying to be a doctor), and I hope to be visiting him during the Easter vacation. By then I am certain that I will have some interesting stories to tell, and I would most definitely be honored to meet you and share some of my experiences.

Again, Thank You, your kind words brought me much warmth and new Hope.

Most Sincerely,



* Oh, my! Another "omen"! As I close this letter, the Muzak in my office plays "Sunrise, Sunset", it is almost too bizarre, I kid you not!

SD
ELH

✓
October 16, 1979

Ms. Dori M. Barnes
8 Ima Loa Court
Newport Beach, CA. 92663

Dear Ms. Barnes:

Your letter of September 27 to The Jewish Agency has been forwarded to me for response. I was deeply touched by your comments on your personal situation. It is my fond hope our organization can be of assistance to you.

The UAHC has an Outreach Program and the enclosed address which I delivered to the UAHC Board of Trustees will give you an idea as to its thrust. We have active Introduction to Judaism programs in many centers throughout the country and the Los Angeles program is particularly active. I am therefore taking the liberty of sharing your letter with the director of our UAHC Pacific Southwest Council Rabbi Erwin L. Herman, so he will be apprised of your desire to learn more about the Jewish faith and the Jewish people. I believe it would be most helpful for you to chat with him or one of our lay people active in the program. His office is located at 13107 Ventura Boulevard, North Hollywood, CA. 91604 and the telephone number is 213-872-3550. I am confident your call will be welcomed with sensitivity and understanding.

With every good wish, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

Encl.

cc: Rabbi Erwin L. Herman

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הסתדרות הציונית העולמית — אגף אמריקאי
WORLD ZIONIST ORGANIZATION
American Section, Inc.
515 PARK AVENUE, NEW YORK, N. Y. 10022

Plaza 2-0600

Cable Address: JEVAGENCY

October 10, 1979

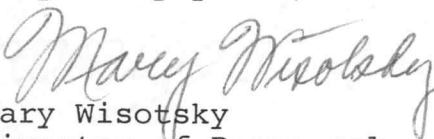
Rabbi Alexander Schindler
Union of American Hebrew
Congregations
838 Fifth Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10021

Dear Rabbi Schindler:

Enclosed please find a copy of a letter I recently received from a young lady named Dori. M. Barnes. Perhaps there is some way in which you can assist Ms. Barnes.

Your cooperation in this matter is greatly appreciated.

Very truly yours,


Mary Wisotsky
Director of Personnel

MW:cjm
Enclosure

September 27, 1979

The Jewish Agency
515 Park Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10022

Dear Sirs:

I do not quite know where to begin. I am a twenty-year-old female, currently in college, studying Sociology and Social Ecology, near my home in Newport Beach, California.

I am certain everyone has a long story to tell. I will make mine as brief as possible:

I was born and raised in California, mostly around the Los Angeles area. My Father was a Catholic and I was raised as one, along with my four brothers. My Mother had a sketchy religious background, as she was tossed around from parent to parent for the better part of her growing up years, and had very little guidance.

Around the age of eight or nine, I became aware of how stale and unfulfilling my religious life was. I became restless and obsessed with questions and paradoxes, yet all the time believing there was "something out there", as I do to this day. Around this same time, I became almost as obsessed with Jewish people, and many things about them, all for no apparent reason, since I had never come in contact with them, and knew literally nothing about Judaism. By the age of eleven, I had all but ceased going to Church, perhaps even being a Catholic.

Around the age of twelve, my "Jewish Obsession" dwindled, but kept to the back of my mind. Then, in my later years of high school, it crept back to the surface. Having been exposed to the media, I was aware of the stereotypical Russian Jewish Immigrant, and took on the habit of addressing my family in this accent at all times. It was infectious, and actually became a part of my family, yet we all looked upon it as some sort of game. I graduated high school, and this behaviour had all but disappeared once again.

Now, for the past three and a half years, I have worked part time, and gone to school part time. Over the past year, my hunger for education has greatly increased, and I have tried gradually to concentrate on a full-time schedule, although, financially, it is quite difficult.

In any case, for the past year now, the Jewish thing has returned, full-force, and to such a degree that it is hard for me to live a normal life. I am never without a book by a Jew, about a Jew, or about Judaism. I eat Jewish, sleep and dream Jewish, and, largely by chance, have come to find that all of the people I now share my life with have turned out to be Jewish... Needless to say, most people have thought me to be rather bizarre, but that's okay. My family simply humored me all along, yet figured there must have been some underlying reason. THEN:

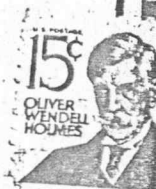
About three weeks ago, I went on a vacation with my mother, to Arizona, to visit her mother. Seemingly out of the blue, my Grandmother began discussing her will, and what she was to leave me, her major concern being a family heirloom, a gold locket (watch) on a long chain. She brought it out to show it to me, and I opened it up. On the inside there was an inscription: "To Emma, with Love, Harry, 1887". I had never in my life heard of these people. I have always been very close to my Grandmother, but never in my life have I seen, or heard about, anyone in her family, except her. She proceeded to inform me that Emma and Harry were married, and that they were both Jewish, living all their lives in Germany. They had a daughter, Harriet, who, in turn, had a daughter, my Grandmother, who had my mother. Knowing that the descent is through the maternal line, I asked if any of them had converted, they had not. I still have no idea why I was never informed of this before, and my mother could not have told me, as it was the first she had heard of it. In any case, I was utterly shocked, and at the same time, ecstatic. It was all so odd, I cannot describe the feelings I have had for these past weeks, but I cannot help feeling that it must have been pre-destined...but why so long???

Now, I desperately want to make up for lost time, and find out all of the many things I need to know. I feel I have been cheated, and I want to know my ancestry, my people, from the ground up. Perhaps I am not TECHNICALLY Jewish, but I feel Jewish, in many ways, I always have.

And so, I am asking for your help. I do not know where to begin, who to talk to. Is there any sort of scholarship for a person like myself, here, in the U.S., or over in a place such as Jerusalem, which is my ideal. There just isn't a way that I could afford it on my own, and I feel that every day that goes by is another day wasted. My Grade point average is around 3.6, and I would be most happy to send a copy of my transcripts to whoever might be interested. If you cannot be of assistance, please forward this letter to someone who possibly could, or refer me to someone else; if nothing else, a reply would be greatly appreciated.

THANK YOU!!!
Dorice M. Barnes

DORI M. BARNES
8 IMA LOA COURT
NEWPORT BEACH, CA. 92663



VIA AIR MAIL
CORREO AEREO

THE JEWISH AGENCY
515 PARK AVENUE
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10022

CHECKED

OCT X2 1979

PAR ✕
AVION

September 24, 1979

Mrs. Joe Baxt
6935 Forestglade Circle
Dallas, Texas 75230

Dear Mrs. Baxt:

Thank you for your letter following my appearance on the Phil Donahue Show. I appreciate your writing.

You make a very valid point. Unfortunately, during interviews on TV and radio it's not always possible to say all one wants to say. You are so right, our synagogue doors are open to all who wish to attend Shabbat and/or week-day services. It is unfortunate that so many people cannot comprehend the need to support the synagogue and its programs.

With best wishes to you and yours for the New Year, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

9/18/79

Dear Rabbi Schindler,

We enjoyed hearing you
on the Donahue program.

One thing I think should
have been brought out is
that everyone is welcome at
any service except the
High Holy Days. Any temple
I have know is only too
happy for visitors at any
Friday night or Saturday
service at no charge.

Sincerely

Elma Baxt (Mrs Joe)

From Arizona

Although brought up as a Protestant, I became "unchurched" years ago. After a series of bad experiences with the church, and even though I lost my faith in religion, I didn't lose my faith in God. In these eight years I have tried to go back into the church but each time they have been all unsuccessful. I'm 22 years old now and feel a need for some kind of religious affiliation. Over the years I've prayed, meditated and done almost anything I could to find out what would be the best thing for me to do. It is because of this that I found out that the only way that I could receive spiritual fulfillment was by converting to Judaism that is why I am writing to you. I am hoping that you could help me. I had some exposure to the Jewish faith and what I know of it I can truly endorse. What are the mechanics of converting, how can I go about learning more about the Jewish faith so that I can make an intelligent decision. If I would convert I could only do so, if I feel that it would be truly honest as far as my feelings, my life experiences go, I could not do it for solely the sake of family, unity, we have two children.

Maryland:

A woman who signs her name and then indicates that she is ^aWASP.

Even though it comes too late in life for me, always admiring of the works and aspirations of Jewish persons and groups, in social, personal, and so many other areas - all the beautiful music that has so enriched my life - I'm happy to see this move to turn the tide from the exclusiveness, arisen from cause, but depriving Jews and the rest of us the benefits that might be realized in acceptance of the worth of Judaism.

From Montana

I know that it is possible to be a child of God and to lead the good life without ever being a "member" of the organized religious groups. Every man has that capability. But I also have other needs. I need the affirming experience of praising God in company with my fellows. I need to do some act of commitment, some symbolic things, some ritual if you will. I can be a Jew only in my heart but I want also to be a Jew in a congregation. I want to become Jew, in some formal way. I am already a Jew in my soul.

From New York

The summary of my Jewish background is brief. I converted to Judaism over two years ago. I'm an active congregant at my 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 temple and college. I also spent a month in Israel study at ulpon. 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 childrens book in that language. 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.

From a small town in New Mexico

I was born of a Jewish lady, illegitimate. Later she married a non-Jew. As I grow older I feel lost not having the customs, traditions, history and beliefs which I should have been taught nor the unity of the Jewish communities. Here there is no Jewish community. I am writing to ask where is the nearest community and what books shall my wife and I study toward Judaism. Can we receive instructions by mail?

Minneapolis

Little over a year ago, I wrote to you about my interest and desire to learn more about Judaism. I appreciated your kind response in encouragement that I seek out others who might assist me. In August I relocated from Michigan to live and work here in Minneapolis. I have been regularly attending Temple Israel with Rabbi Max Shapiro. I have thoroughly enjoyed the temple and I'm very much looking forward to learning more and becoming a part of this fine congregation.

From a Bar-Mitzvah speech of a Jew-by-Choice

What has brought to this very special day, what has inspired me motivated me to become a son of a the commendmant which Bar-Mitzvah means in the Hebrew language? It was my study of the Hebrew language. It was my search for roots through Abraham through the little Hebrew children, through Noah, through Adam and Eve, it was my search through God. From early childhood and possible from brith I was developing this oneness in God -- people would ask me if I was Jewish and I would say no, I am a Jewish sympathizer. This line of reasoning when on for a year or so. Then one day without having a formal conversion I admitted to myself that I was indeed a Jew, a Hebrew child linked with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and part of the covenant. Judaism seems to natural to me. Although at the time I did not attend synagogue services, every High Holiday season I felt motivated to attend services. In 1978 I moved my family to New Orleans and once again as the High Holiday season began the urge came upon me to attend the services. I resumed my study of the Hebrew language at the Jewish Community Center. While there I heard about a special program entitled "Jews-by-Choice." I attended and enrolled in the conversion class. After completing the class I again spoke with the rabbi about converting. He asked when I would like to convert without hesitation I say "how" Bar-Mitzvah for boys and Bath-Mitzvah for girls is the time when a person moves to adulthood ready to accept responsibility as an adult. Jockingly, my wife has informed that when I complete my Bar-Mitzvah that I too must accept full responsibility for my actions as an adult. And, becoming an adult in the Jewish teaching I intend to do just that.

From Lake Jackson, Texas

I am a Jew and ~~because I~~ come from a very small Jewish community in the ex-Portuguese colony of Angola in Africa, and I live presently in a town of also very small Jewish community, and the nearest synagogue is Galveston about 60 miles from Lake Jackson. I been having problems trying to explain to my wife, whom I married only two weeks ago, what she needs to know to convert. My wife has been very interested in our faith all her life and I wanted her to know more about it before she starts a program on conversion. ~~Since~~ ^B because of our jobs (both in shift-work), there is no way we can go to all the classes in Galveston and also because all my books are in Portuguese).

From Idaho

I recently contacted the synagogue here. I was referred to ~~an~~ ^a man who might be able to help me to convert to Judaism. When I called this man he informed me that they didn't really condone conversion and said that he couldn't help me and gave me another number to call of someone who might be able to help me. He wished me luck and hung up the phone as if I were - the black plague. I called the other number ~~and~~ ^{and} got almost the same treatment, almost as if he was frightened of me. He told me that I would lose my friends and family if I became Jewish. I told him that if this was part of me being converted, then so be it. But my mom and I are very close and she knows that I wouldn't do it just because its there, and my friends couldn't really be my friends if this caused trouble between us.

From Missoula, Montana

I need your help with a serious problem. You made a reference on the Donahue show that there are required courses that Gentiles take when converting to Judaism. The problem is that I live in Missoula, Montana and there isn't a rabbi or a large amount of Jews in this area. The only hope I have is that you can explain to me what is required. Trusting I will hear from you soon.

From Florida

The program you are endeavoring to launch is entirely worthwhile. In our family we have a recent convert to our beautiful religion. She was converted at a Reform congregation. My grandson met his wife at a kibbutz in Israel. She is from Holland. We think she is anxious and willing to be the balebaste of a Jewish home. Would you please send her the books necessary to increase her knowledge.

From Colorado

At the moment I'm a member of the Methodist Church, but I want to go back to my family's old religion, the Jewish faith. How is it possible for me to convert back to Judaism? I am 19 years old and have therefore passed my Bar-Mitzvah age. I have been thinking about this for many years, and have decided, but I need advice --- I have lived in Europe and visited synagogues, but I've always felt like a Methodist visiting a synagogue, not a Jew. How can I become a Jew? In my heart I feel like a Jew, but knowledge of Judaism is minimal.

non-jewish
A letter from Georgia

"Many years ago I listened to my grandmother tell me of our faith and people. It always made her cry and I loved her very much. She was Hebrew. Her family were strict Jews and she married a young man ~~not acceptable~~. She said she never heard from them again but she loved her faith and her family. I am now a mother and I too have tried to teach my sons and daughters of God. The light she lit many years ago was almost dead until my son met a young Jewish girl and married her. The rabbi, asking about my Hebrew name and speaking of old customs, blew the still small flame to a glow again. I have always told anyone who asked of my heritage, but not having a lot of money and ten small ones to raise ~~them~~ and no other Jews near made for a poor training for the little ones -- all of this is only background to ask for material to help answer questions the children ask.

From Ohio from a rabbi

I consider myself a convert even though I am^a descendant, on my mothers side, from a large Latvian Jewish family. My mother chose to abandon Judaism before I was born and married my father who is not Jewish. Essentially I was raised in a non-Jewish home: no mention was made of my Jewish descent or of the fact that, according to the Halacha, I was born Jewish. Our family observed the Christian holidays complete with Christmas tree. Judaism was never mentioned. When I was about 15 years of age I became interested independently in Judaism. To the initial consternation of my family, I began to take steps towards conversion. During this process I discovered that because my mother was Jewish I did not need to undergo formal conversion. Nevertheless I experienced, in embracing Judaism, all that a "normal" convert would experience. My interest in Judaism persisted until today. I'm on the verge of being ordained a rabbi.

A letter from a young man in West Germany

My immigrant grandparents were active members of their respective Reform congregations, while the next generation drifted into a more secular variety of the faith. This generation (i.e. me) expects to find itself living and working here in Berlin for several years. The critical role this city has played for Judaism both during the tragic period earlier in the century as well as the creative years before, make unavoidable an awareness of my personal religious roots and with this a sense of responsibility towards continuing these traditions --- I vaguely remember reading that Reform Jews in the U.S. had adopted a policy that would return Judaism to being a religion of conviction and conversion as well as of simple birthright. This is a policy I would support and consider long (about 1900 years) overdue.

from Madras, India --- I am quite happy to welcome your decision to end a four century old moratorium on seeking proselytes to the Jewish faith. ...
...I am unable to identify myself intellectually and emotionally with any of the Christian sects. I would like to try whether I could find my identity in Judaism which I find is nearest to my heart of all the religions.

Hyderabad, India.....I feel very much elated to learn that with the advent of the New Year the UAHC has taken an unprecedented decision to do away with the four century long moratorium to the practice of proselytizing to Judaism.
----I have been trying for more than a decade to embrace Judaism, because I have come to love that faith passionately, from the very core of my heart.

From a participant in a Outreach weekend in Houston

It was a most stimulating and exciting meeting that I have ever had the chance to participate in. ~~I must say that I liked the concept of only the "Jews-by-choice" in attendance. I did not care for the visitors that sat in the sessions. It did restrain my remarks and curtailed my verbalizing at will. Perhaps my position in Sisterhood made me aware that my remarks were of a private nature and I did not care to have others know about them. I was delighted to share with others there who were in the same position that I was in. However~~ The free feelings and emotional expressions of the participants were most welcomed. We all had the chance of conveying our innermost feelings whenever we wanted to. It was and still is an exceptional weekend that I shall never forget. I do sincerely hope that the UAHC will continue with this program for the future. I do feel that it is a must, not only to retain our members but to educate and accept them for what they are — Jews!