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MEMORANDUM

To: Harris Gilbert, Rabbi Leslie Gutterman, Liz Linkon, Pam Waechter

From: Dru Greenwood

Re: Statistics from informal Outreach survey just completed

cc: Mel Merians, Rabbi Freeland, Schindler and Syme

I've just added up the information we received from the 14 UAHC regions (1 is missing, but I expect it soon) on an informal questionnaire completed by 372 congregations (44% of all congregations) during the past few months. I just want to stress its informality--it cannot be compared in the reliability of its information with the 1991 Outreach Census. For example, the sample is skewed by a low level of response from small congregations and by uneven responses and different means of data collection among regions. In addition, certain errors in question design make the results suspect or leave gaps. These drawbacks notwithstanding, the survey does suggest some interesting things.

1. First, the percentage of congregations with Outreach committees seems still to be climbing: 58% here compared with 51% two years ago.

2. Most intriguing is the list of "most important Outreach issues facing your congregation." Each respondent checked off three priorities. Here they are in order of frequency:

- 230 (62%) Working with interfaith couples
- 172 (46%) Integrating the non-Jew
- 115 (31%) Developing Religious School Curriculum to deal with changing Jewish family
- 108 (29%) Helping Jewish parents...
- 102 (27%) Getting attendance at Outreach programs
- 87 (23%) Starting an Outreach Committee
- 77 (21%) Integrating the Jew-by-Choice

Hands down working with interfaith couples and integrating non-Jews into the life of the congregation are the most important

Outreach issues facing Reform synagogues now. This could be due to several factors: 1) we have succeeded in attracting large numbers of interfaith couples (good for us) and 2) we do not feel successful or we feel overwhelmed in our efforts to integrate interfaith families. Clearly, if we are to meet the needs of our congregations and our responsibility to our mandate, we must maintain a strong focus on this area. Highlighting exceptional programs that succeed with interfaith families, helping congregations to understand the vital nature of Intro classes, holiday workshops, Tot Shabbat programs, learner's minyanim etc. in working with interfaith couples, and creating new programmatic responses need to be at the top of the Commission's agenda.

The other issues are pretty well bunched, but are also suggestive in themselves. For instance, the relatively low level of concern about integrating Jews-by-Choice might mean that they are seen to be successfully integrated and therefore not as much of an issue. The fact that 23% of congregations checked off "starting an Outreach Committee" means that more than half of those without a committee (42% of the total) would like support in doing so. This is painstaking and not flashy work, but obviously we need to maintain our energy here. (It will be interesting to see the size of attendance at the two Biennial workshops on creating and strengthening Outreach committees. They have consistently attracted substantial numbers in the past.)

3. In the area of the role of non-Jews in the synagogue, the following information was gathered: 76% of responding congregations permit a non-Jew to serve on committees, 37% allow Board membership, 29% permit non-Jews to serve as officers. In the area of ritual participation of non-Jewish family members at a bar/bat mitzvah, we know from the 1991 Census that 93% of congregations allow some participation. In this 1993 survey 48% of responding congregations report participation excluding recitation of berachot; 16% allow recitation of some or all berachot; 19% make no distinctions. (This material is not new and follows generally along the lines of the 1991 Census. However, the facts that almost 30% of reporting congregations allow non-Jews to be officers and almost 20% make no distinctions in ritual participation between Jewish and non-Jewish parents at b'nai mitzvah do seem to me to be cause for concern.)

4. I am encouraged by the last piece of information: 38% of congregations now ask about intermarriage and conversion on the membership form (my sense is that this is an increase); and 25% explain temple policy on participation of non-Jews when members join. Even though the numbers are still low, I think we've made some progress.

Using this information to best advantage. Here are several suggestions; I would appreciate your additional ideas.

1. I'll re-format and edit this report for discussion at the Commission meeting.

2. This time (unlike 1991) results were compiled by region. Staff members are already using the information to follow up in their regions. Indications of strengths and deficits will be used to help set goals and priorities for individual regions and coordinators.

3. Mel has indicated an interest in using some of this information (particularly that in section 2) in the Outreach portion of his Biennial address to focus attention on the success we've had in welcoming interfaith couples and the ongoing and pressing need to work with them and integrate them into Jewish life.

4. Harris and I will use the statistics in section 4 along with some concrete examples to encourage more congregations to ask the question and explain their policy up front.

F. OUTREACH POLICY

1. Most Reform synagogues do not have a written policy on the role non-Jews may play in temple life.

Table 13: Written Policy on Role of Non-Jews

Written Policy on...	Percent - Yes
1. Membership of non-Jews	46%
2. Voting Privileges for non-Jewish members	37%
3. Participation of non-Jews in temple governance	35%
4. Ritual participation of non-Jewish family members in synagogue	17%

Congregations are most likely to have a written policy on membership of non-Jews (46%) and least likely to have a written policy on ritual participation of non-Jewish family members (17%). The responses to participation of non-Jews in particular areas of temple activity (eg. voting, chairing committees, lighting Shabbat candles) are therefore based primarily on *minhag* or "oral Torah" rather than written policy. A number of respondents noted that "*this* is our written policy, but *this other* is what we actually do."

As the number of interfaith families affiliating with Reform temples is increasing and non-Jewish spouses are more frequently becoming active in temple life, concern about policy also seems to be increasing. The majority of comments offered on the Census related to policy areas and 9% of respondents (37 congregations) indicated that they are in the process of assessing and/or revising their constitutions and by-laws in this area. The relative absence of written policy in the area of ritual is most likely due to the feeling that this is an area under the purview of the rabbi and not a constitutional issue.

2. At least 88% of UAHC congregations provide for the membership of non-Jews and 62% allow non-Jews to vote.

Table 14: Membership of Non-Jews

Membership Privilege	Percent Yes
1. Non-Jews in their own right	32%
2. Non-Jews as part of family unit	88%
3. Vote	62%

There is difficulty in interpreting the above data because of inconsistencies among congregations in the definition of membership units. Some define a unit as a family and others as an individual; some provide for both. Consequently it is unclear, whether almost one third of Reform congregations permit non-Jews to be members in their own right without any Jewish family connection or whether, in some of these cases, the non-Jew must be married to a Jew in order to be a member in his own right. In any case, most responding temples, either by policy or *minhag*, do allow non-Jews to be members and to vote.

3. Participation of non-Jews in temple governance and leadership depends on the level of leadership, with the highest percentage of responding congregations allowing participation on committees and the lowest percentage allowing non-Jews to serve as temple officers.

Table 15: Role of Non-Jews in Temple Governance

Level of Participation	Percent Yes
1. Serve on all/most committees	87%
2. Serve as committee chairs	51%
3. Serve on Board of Trustees	33%
4. Serve as officers of congregation	27%
5. Serve as president of affiliates (Sisterhood, Brotherhood, Youth)	21%

Eighty-seven percent of Reform congregations allow non-Jews to serve on all (59%) or most (28%) committees. At the other end of the scale, only 27% of responding congregations allow non-Jews to be temple officers.

Again, there is evidence from comments received that some temples with no *written* policy that specifically precludes a non-Jew for example from serving as an officer, nevertheless by *minhag* do not in fact have non-Jewish officers. (See the section of this report on "Constitutions and By-Laws" for further information on the role of non-Jews in temple governance.)

4. Most Reform temples do not allow non-Jewish family members to participate generally in the public rituals of candle-lighting, *Kiddush* or *Aliyot* to the Torah. However, the vast majority do find ways for non-Jewish family members to participate on the Bimah as a child celebrates becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah or in other life cycle ceremonies.

Table 16: Ritual Participation of Non-Jews

Ritual Participation in the Temple	Percent Yes
1. Non-Jews light Shabbat candles	41%
2. Non-Jews lead Kiddush	32%
3. Non-Jews have an Aliyah to the Torah	22%
4. Participate on Bimah for child's bar/bat mitzvah	93%
5. Participate in other life cycle ceremonies (eg. naming, consecration)	94%

Table 16 clearly reflects the efforts of Reform congregations on the one hand to welcome and include interfaith families by enabling them to participate in synagogue ritual in some ways (#4 and 5), while on the other hand maintaining the integrity of the synagogue as a primary Jewish institution by more often restricting to Jews the honors of reciting particularistic blessings (# 1, 2 and 3).

It is worth noting that, even though each blessing contains similar particularistic language, there is a marked disparity in the prevalence of allowing non-Jews to light Shabbat candles, lead *Kiddush*, and have an *aliyah*. This is perhaps explained by the fact that *aliyot* are strictly a synagogue ritual, while lighting candles and reciting *Kiddush* are primarily home rituals which have been brought into the synagogue. Since non-Jews can perform home rituals in their own homes, perhaps there is not as strong a barrier to performing them in the temple. One might also hypothesize that allowing non-Jews to light Shabbat candles in the synagogue is more wide-spread because the majority of non-Jews who are active in temple life are women and candle-lighting is traditionally a woman's role.

Policy on ritual participation of non-Jews is most often set by the rabbi and ritual committee together (52%) or by the rabbi alone (34%). Less frequently the ritual committee alone (10%) sets the policy or another entity within the congregation (4%).

5. The majority of Reform temples have their own cemetery or cemetery section and over half of those make provisions for burial of non-Jewish members.

Most Reform synagogues (87%) either have their own cemetery (43%) or have a section in a community cemetery (44%). Sixty percent of responding congregations make provisions for burial of non-Jewish members in their own cemetery or cemetery section.

Further Questions and Implications for Action

While it is not surprising that so many congregations do not have an articulated policy on the role of non-Jews in the synagogue, it is amazing that these questions of policy should be asked at all. Who would have thought, even twenty years ago, that there would be so many non-Jews in Reform synagogues that policy would become an issue? The fact that it is an issue now is testimony once again to the changing demography of the Jewish community in North America and in Reform temples in particular, and to the success of Outreach.

A number of questions come to mind, many of them raised in *Defining the Role of the Non-Jew in the Synagogue: A Resource for Congregations* (Commission on Reform Jewish Outreach, UAHC Press, 1990). How can the changes occurring in the Reform Jewish community be managed in a way that guards the integrity of the synagogue by observing boundaries, and at the same time invites and encourages those who are outside those boundaries to come in? There is clearly a broad spectrum of practice in Reform temples regarding the role of non-Jews in areas of membership, governance and ritual. How can congregations make decisions for themselves and how can those decisions be communicated clearly and sensitively to interfaith families? What are the implications of the possibility that non-Jews might be temple officers in 27% of UAHC congregations? Why are non-Jews so actively interested in synagogue life not choosing conversion? Have we offered every avenue for conversion to them? In the future will burial of non-Jewish members become a pressing concern for those congregations that do not now make such provisions?

Serious discussion and action at all levels—synagogue, regional and national—is required. Some directions that might be taken include:

1. Helping congregations to address productively the policy issues that emerge as a result of the increasing numbers of interfaith couples in Reform temples; continuing the efforts of the Outreach staff to facilitate use in temples of *Defining the Role of the Non-Jews in the Synagogue: A Resource for Congregations* through workshops at national Biennials and regional conventions and through temple Board meetings.
2. Providing examples of membership forms, constitutions and by-laws, and temple membership materials that clearly delineate boundaries and sensitively invite participation.
3. Working with the CCAR to explore issues of conversion and inviting non-Jews to choose Judaism.
4. Involving other Reform Jewish professionals and lay leaders in finding new ways to encourage conversion.

Constitutions and By-Laws

In completing the UAHC Outreach Census 1991, congregations were asked to enclose copies of their constitutions and by-laws. One hundred and four temple constitutions and by-laws were returned and assessed to determine the membership status accorded non-Jews who wished to affiliate with the congregations. The constitutions reviewed corroborate the more general information from the census itself: the majority of Reform congregations permit non-Jews to become temple members.

Looking more closely, we see that membership policies ranged from very stringent stipulations that only Jews may become members (20% of those constitutions studied) to very liberal policies that accept all people who wish to join the congregation as full members, regardless of whether they have a Jewish spouse in the congregation (32% of the cases reviewed). In 53% of the congregations, overlapping with the most liberal category, non-Jewish individuals (generally defined as spouses of Jewish members) are accepted as members with the same privileges and responsibilities as born Jews and Jews by Choice.

The status of non-Jewish members seems to be a growing concern in UAHC congregations. The most recently-amended constitutions (latter half of the 1980's) address the issues of membership status of a non-Jewish spouse more frequently than do the older constitutions.

The constitutions showed that the membership status of non-Jews broke down into the following categories:

1. congregations accepting Jewish members and non-Jewish individuals equally (53%),
2. congregations accepting non-Jewish spouses of Jewish members as members with special provisions (e.g. limited voting privileges or ineligibility to serve on specific committees) (25%), and
3. congregations only accepting born Jews or Jews by Choice as members (20%).

Two percent of the constitutions did not mention religious affiliation in their membership policies at all.

1. Congregations accepting Jewish members and non-Jewish members equally

In 53% of the constitutions examined, non-Jews may become full, voting members of congregations. In more than half of these cases (60%), the non-Jewish member may join on his or her own (no Jewish spouse is required), based on her or his interest in Judaism or the specific congregation.

* One-third of these constitutions defines a member as a person of the Jewish faith or a person who is not an active adherent of another faith and who wishes to associate with the Jewish faith.

Example: The constitution of Congregation Sha'ar Zahav in San Francisco, California states that: "Any person who desires to worship God and to serve God and humanity in accordance with the principles and practices of Judaism, who accepts the purposes of this Congregation... and who is not an active adherent of another faith, is eligible for membership."

* Another third of these constitutions stipulates that any person desiring to associate with the Jewish faith may be a candidate for membership. These constitutions do not require the individual to renounce membership in other religious organizations.

Example: Temple Emanuel of Greater New Haven in Connecticut will accept as a member a person or family who is Jewish, expresses an interest in becoming Jewish, or whose family has practiced Judaism.

*In the final third of these constitutions, any person desiring to affiliate with the congregation may be a candidate for full membership. This final group of constitutions represents the most liberal policy found in the survey. The congregations do not require that the potential member sever any other religious ties or profess an affiliation with the Jewish people.

Example: The Constitution of Temple Israel of Stockton, California provides that "Any person of the Jewish faith, or any person of another faith, wishing to associate with Temple Israel, twenty-one years of age or over, may be elected to regular membership on approval of his application by the Board of Directors."

2. Congregations accepting Jewish members and non-Jewish spouses with special provisions

Twenty-five percent of all the congregations studied accept non-Jews as members, but restrict their leadership roles in some way. Restrictions on ritual participation by non-Jews in religious services seem to appear only in the most recently amended constitutions (since 1987).

*Forty percent of these constitutions define non-Jewish spouses or partners as members, but do not allow non-Jews to vote or hold elected office.

Example: Congregation House of Israel in Hot Springs National Park, Arkansas articulates its policy toward non-Jewish members in the following manner: "A non-Jewish spouse shall be considered an associate member in good standing and welcome to share in the fellowship of the congregation. Voting privileges, the holding of office, and positions on the Board of Trustees and committees shall be reserved to practicing Jews, whether by birth or by choice."

* Sixty percent of the constitutions provide the non-Jewish spouse with membership and voting privileges, but limit elected and leadership roles. Most of these synagogues stipulate that only Jewish members may vote on issues relating to the religious life of the congregation. Some detail the role non-Jews may take in leading essential elements of worship.

Examples: Temple Beth-El in Monroe, New York permits non-Jewish parents who are raising their children as Jews to become members, but not to hold office in the congregation.

Some congregations, such as Congregation Kehillat Chaim of Roswell, Georgia, offer four membership categories with differing rights and privileges based on age and religious affiliation. Certain congregations only restrict specific committees from non-Jewish leadership and involvement. Monmouth Reform Temple in New Jersey only permits Jews to be elected as officers or trustees, to chair a standing committee, to be elected as president of an Auxiliary of the Congregation, and to be appointed to these standing committees: Israel, Jewish Philanthropy, Religious Education, Ritual, and UAHC.

3. Congregations only accepting Jewish members

Twenty percent of the constitutions strictly defined a member as a person of the Jewish faith by birth or conversion. Non-Jewish spouses were not included in this definition. These constitutions represent the most stringent membership policies based on religion.

Example: The by-laws of Congregation Temple Israel of Jamaica in Queens, New York prohibit non-Jews from holding Temple membership. According to Temple policy, "Any Jew may apply for membership in the Congregation upon making written application....Should a member be a married person, his or her spouse, provided he or she is Jewish, shall be entitled to equal membership and all rights to vote and hold office...."

Summary

In approximately 80% of the constitutions analyzed, non-Jews are not prohibited from holding Temple membership. In about 68% of the constitutions, non-Jews are not prohibited from voting at Temple meetings. In approximately 53% of the constitutions, non-Jews are not prohibited from holding certain elected and leadership positions. Non-Jews seem to be given a voice in the majority of congregations studied. As the comments attached to the census forms indicate, rabbis and Temple boards are now facing the challenge of creating policies defining the non-Jew's role in the synagogue.