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MS-630: Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler Digital Collection, 1961-1996.
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Outreach [Southeast/South Florida], 1979-1983.

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American Jewish Archives website.

Outward

June 13, 1983

Ms. Rheba L. Marks
11930 N. Bayshore Drive
Apartment 502
North Miami, Florida 33181

Dear Ms. Marks:

Your recent letter has just reached me, having been forwarded from HUC-JIR in Cincinnati, where it was directed in error. As you will note from my letterhead, I am the president of the UAHC not the HUC-JIR.

The question of rabbis officiating at interfaith marriages is one which has been under discussion in the Reform community for quite some time. Many of our rabbis will not officiate; other will. The decision in this regard is that of the individual rabbi. It is a decision of personal conscience.

We really do not know what bearing the participation or non-participation of the rabbi in interfaith ceremonies has on the religious affiliation of the people. What we do know, and what we try very hard to convey, is that the manner in which a rabbi says YES or NO to a couple is most important. A couple should not be told NO as soon as they telephone the temple, especially if they are affiliated or connected in some way to the temple. The response should not come from a staff member of the temple, the rabbi should take the time to chat with the couple. They should be made aware of the reasons why the rabbi chooses not to perform mixed marriages, there should be personal communication and an open discussion.

I personally will not officiate at an interfaith wedding. However, when I know the couple, at least one of them, when I am dealing with the child of dear friends or even with family members, I will attend the wedding if I can and express some words of mazal tov and good wishes at the reception or dinner following the ceremony. I leave the door open and do my best to bring the couple closer to Judaism. I seek to make them aware that we are willing to welcome them, to help the non-Jewish partner learn about Judaism, to assure them they are both welcome at the synagogue. Many of my colleagues do likewise, thankfully more and more have come to this position.

Ms. Rheba L. Marks
June 13, 1983
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The Outreach program of the UAHC, started about five years ago, has made remarkable progress in working with Jews-by-choice. We are now undertaking some exciting pilot projects with interfaith couples. The experience so far, while fairly limited, has been excellent. These couples have come to feel closer to Judaism, they know they will be welcome in the synagogue, they are eager to learn more about Judaism -- both Jew and non-Jew alike. It is our hope to replicate these programs throughout the country. Perhaps one day in the not-too-distant future your grand neice and her husband will have an opportunity to participate in such a program in their community.

With kindest greetings, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler



11930 N. Bayshore Dr. Apt. 502
North Miami, Fla. 33181

Rabbi Alex M. Schindler, President
Hebrew Union College,
3101 Clifton ave.
Cincinnati, O. 45220

Dear Rabbi Schindler:

I recently attended a niece's daughter marriage in Atlanta, Ga. and learned she could not get a Reformed Rabbi to marry her daughter to the young man she had been going with for six years. He is gentile and his father is Jewish. She was compelled to have them married by a judge in a Unitarian Church. I want to express my feelings in this matter as I feel it is wrong for the future of our children. It only drives the Jewish child away from the Temple whereas her husband would be delighted to attend services with her. He is a very fine young man and would have been an asset to the congregation whereas after such rejection it could drive them away from the Temple. Instead of gaining a member you lose one. I did not know the reformed have gotten so strict they cannot perform an intermarriage of this kind. I really think this needs more consideration for the future of our children. If the couple decides to marry they'll find a way so the Temple has gained nothing. I am a member of Temple Emanuel in Greensboro, N.C. and it was permitted at one time but am not up to the present laws. Please enlighten me on this important matter.

Sincerely,

Rheba L. Marks

R

Outreach

February 25, 1983

Rabbi Steven L. Jacobs
Spring Hill Avenue Temple
Post Office Box 7295
Mobile, Alabama 36607

Dear Steve:

We are trying to go about the Outreach program in orderly fashion, following the order of priorities which we established. Here it is:

1. Consciousness raising to this entire issue in the effort to remove the "not welcome" signs from our congregations.
2. An improvement in the program of education for prospective Jews-by-choice.
3. The effective integration of Jews-by-Choice in the life of the congregation and into the community.
4. Dealing with mixed marrieds who are already members of the congregation, or at least one of whose partners is.
5. Working with mixed marrieds who are not affiliated with any congregation.
6. An approach to the children of such mixed marriages in the endeavor to provide them with some kind of formal or informal Jewish education.
7. An Outreach to all "seekers after truth", that is to say, reaching out to anyone who has no commitment to another faith and who might be interested in Judaism.

The first four items have been pretty well covered and effective programs are under way, nationally, regionally and locally. I'm particularly pleased with the growing awareness of the need for Outreach not only within our congregations, but in the larger community as well.

Rabbi Steven L. Jacobs
February 25, 1983
Page two.

Point number five is being approached on an experimental basis in the Los Angeles area. You might check with Lenny Thanl and Lydia Kukoff in the Los Angeles UAHC office, 13107 Ventura Blvd., N. Hollywood, California, about the project which we are conducting.

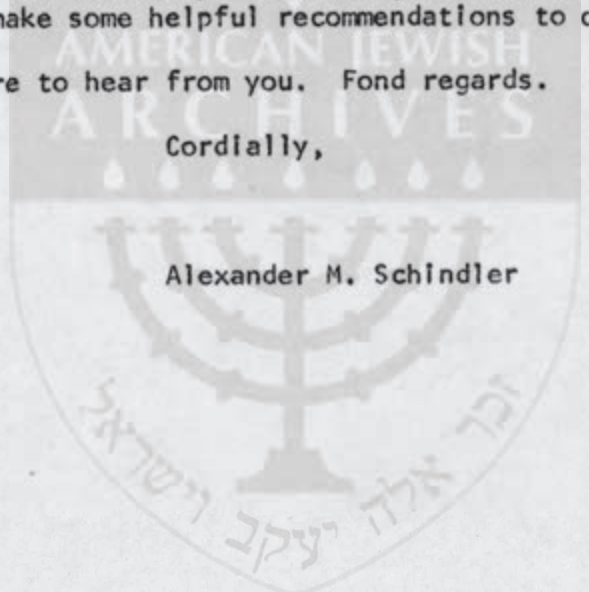
Immediately after the College-Institute Board meeting in Los Angeles I attended an evaluative session with the teachers and "mentors" of this experimental group. It is apparently most fruitful in its effect.

We have a long way to go, nonetheless, before we can take this effort national the present project will have to be revised in the light of our experience, then we have to attempt it once again, and only then will we be in a position to make some helpful recommendations to our congregants.

It's always a pleasure to hear from you. Fond regards.

Cordially,

Alexander M. Schindler



SPRING HILL AVENUE TEMPLE
CONGREGATION SHA'ARAI SHOMAYIM
P.O. Box 7295
1769 Springhill Avenue
Mobile, Alabama 36607
(205) 478-0415

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JUNE BAKER

21 February 1983
8 Adar 5743

Rabbi Alex Schindler
U.A.H.C.
838 5th Avenue
New York, New York 10021

Dear Colleague:

The more I come in contact with the members of our Congregations who are promoting the Outreach Program, the more inspired I become. You have, quite evidently, tapped into a need to which many in our Reform Jewish Community are responding. May they and you continue to meet with much success.

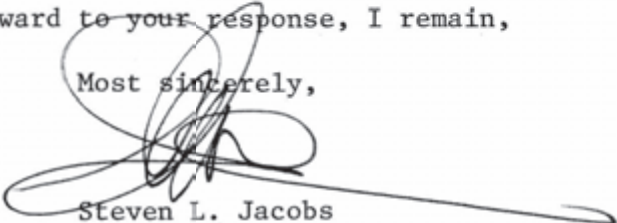
In a recent conversation with one of my own members, the following question arose. Because of its importance, I am taking the liberty of sharing it with you and inviting your response as soon as it is convenient for you to do so. In turn, I will share your comments with this member of my Congregation.

"What attempts are being made to retain the Jewish partner in a mixed marriage where the family commitment (i.e. the raising of the children) is made in the other, non-Jewish direction?"

My reading of currently available materials seems to indicate that efforts are being made where the family is neutral and/or committed to a Jewish life style. Here is, all too realistically, the other side of the coin.

Very much looking forward to your response, I remain,

Most sincerely,


Steven L. Jacobs
Rabbi

SLJ:jb

RABBI SAMUEL M. SILVER, D.D.

TEMPLE SINAI (of South Palm Beach County)

2005 N.W. 9th Street
Delray Beach, Florida 33445
(305) 272-4949

23 Feb. 1983

Dear Alex,

I want to compliment the Union on making use of the talents of Lydia Kukoff.

I also want to express thanks to Lou Littman for making her available to this area.

She speaks well and it's a fine crystallization of Operation Schindler, known as Outreach, for her to do what she does.

During the question period Lou Littman said that, as a matter of principle, he doesn't tell callers that he knows of any rabbi who does intermarriages. I respect him for that.

Then I asked whether the question has ever been part of the agenda for UAHC staff meetings. He said no.

I think it would be well at least to discuss it. Don't you?

Happy Purim and happy Pesach. Regards at home.

Yours,

RABBI SAMUEL M. SILVER

Copy to Rabbi Littman



איחוד
ליהדות
מתקדמת
באמריקה

Task Force On Reform Jewish Outreach

UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS—CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN RABBIS
1330 BEACON STREET, SUITE 355 BROOKLINE, MASSACHUSETTS 02146 (617) 277-1655

November 11, 1982

Rabbi Samuel M. Silver
Reform Congregation of Delray
Rainberry Lake
2005 N.W. 9th Street
Delray Beach, FL 33445

Dear Sam:

The issue of rabbinic officiation at mixed-marriages is a matter that the Task Force will not duck. We are studying the whole subject and are on record as stating that we will make a report at the next UAHC Biennial convention in Houston in 1983. I am well aware of the urgency of the situation and can assure you that it will not be ignored.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,


Rabbi Sanford Seltzer

RSS:dan

Chairman
David W. Belin
Co-Chairman
Rabbi Sheldon Zimmerman
Director
Rabbi Sanford Seltzer

Meet Rabbi Sam Silver of Delray Beach, Florida

By Stephen J. Cohen
Staff Writer

DELRAY BEACH — Jews wanting to marry Christians must often look far and wide to find a rabbi who will perform the ceremony.

But in South Florida, they need only seek out Rabbi Samuel M. Silver, whose Reform congregation currently holds its weekly Friday night services at Cason United Methodist Church, N. Swinton at 4th St., Delray Beach.

Silver has been performing mixed-marriage ceremonies for 25 years, much to the chagrin of most of his rabbinical colleagues.

"I've performed hundreds of them over the years," said the tall, bespectacled rabbi, as he sat yesterday in his brand new home in Delray.

"I have schlepped (carried myself) to perform these ceremonies to Mexico; San Juan, Puerto Rico; Minnesota from Florida; Vancouver, Calgary, Montreal (Canada) and even as far as Lake Worth," he said.

Silver is not an ordinary rabbi. He has written five books — one when each of his sons was bar mitzvahed. He has appeared on numerous radio talk shows, has his own weekly radio show, writes two weekly syndicated newspaper columns, and, with his wife, Elaine, travels to Christian organizations with a musical program showing that "Jewish Music is Not Sad," and "How Jewish Melodies became Christian Hymns."

When he invites guest speakers, including Protestant and Catholic clergymen, to his congregation, he converses with them at the pulpit, rather than having them deliver a sermon. They discuss religion, ideology or whatever comes to mind.

Silver's penchant for humor and the English language mark whatever he does. At 67, he is still an avid reader. Born in Wilmington, Del., he was ordained in Cincinnati, served as a clergyman in World War II, and since has served congregations in Cleveland, Ohio; Stamford, Conn.; and Fort Myers, Fla., before coming to Delray in September to take the reigns of a fledgling Reform congregation serving Delray, Boynton and Lake Worth, which he helped found last year.

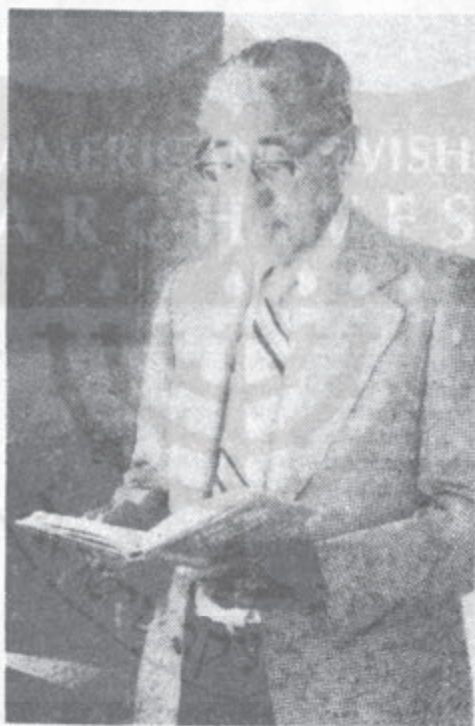
A proud member of *Who's Who in America*, Silver uses his humor to hold his audience's attention and also to illustrate serious points he is making. "I usually start every sermon with a joke," he said.

His books, he says, "are selling lousy. My publisher doesn't promote them." But, he adds, "I really don't care about that. I don't plug them on talk shows when I'm on. It's just an extracurricular activity with me."

However, he believes his latest work, *Mixed Marriage Between Jew and Christian* is a poten-

tial hot seller because the issue is widespread today.

Most rabbis, he said, "fear that intermingling between Jews and Christians will take a toll on Jews and reduce the possibility of our survival as a race." And then, smiling slyly, he added that "most rabbis don't have a mixed-marriage ceremony in their repertoire."



Staff photo by STEPHEN J. COHEN

Rabbi Silver studies a prayer.

Although he respects his colleagues' views, he says their criticisms "have pained me very much." Then, softening the issue with humor, Silver added, "It bothers me particularly because I like rabbis better than people." This widespread disapproval by his colleagues has kept him from being offered certain speaking engagements, and him and his wife from being asked to present their musical program at certain places.

But, he said, many rabbis who strongly oppose what he does, "have often referred people to me who want a mixed marriage. That's because the parents or other family members tell them they will leave the congregation unless the rabbi finds someone to perform the ceremony," Silver explained.

It was at his wife's urging 25 years ago that Silver began performing mixed-marriage ceremonies.

He said she argued that Jews and non-Jews are mingling and fraternizing more and more and the inevitable result will be many mixed marriages. If these people come to a rabbi who turns his back on them, she argued, they will likely become turned off to Judaism and will reject it as a religious option in the future.

Silver said non-Jews who marry Jews often become deeply involved in synagogue affairs or with various Jewish organizations. "Judaism is an evolutionary, non-stagnant thing, and we have to continually adapt to these changes," he said.

Although Silver said he never pressures a young couple to adopt Judaism as their way of life, "my batting average on non-Jews converting to Judaism is pretty good."

About five years ago, rabbis attending an annual convention in St. Louis voted on the issue of mixed marriages. "The result was 60-40 against. But I think things have changed since then and the vote today would probably be much closer," he said.

His easy-going, jesting manner suddenly turns harsh and the sparkle in his eyes darkens when he is asked whether he charges a set fee for these services.

"I never charge a set fee for a mixed-marriage ceremony," he says adamantly. "I tell every couple that whatever they want to give me, I'll take. It doesn't matter. The rabbis who do charge a set fee for these services give us all a bad name. People bracket me with them. It's the same old story — one bad Jew gives us all a bad name."

Silver often performs mixed-marriage ceremonies with a Protestant or Catholic clergyman. "The Christian clergymen I have worked with have always shown extreme deference to the feelings and views of the Jewish family, and have modified their ritual to accommodate these sensibilities," he said.

One well-known clergyman in Atlanta, at the end of a ceremony with Silver, told the wedding party, "The rabbi and I have harmonized so brilliantly on this that I think we'll take our show on the road."

While his wife and five sons are athletic, Silver says he shuns exercise. "I belong to 'Athletics Anonymous.' We promise not to exercise. Whenever we get an urge to do something athletic, we lie down until the feeling passes," he says.

"The only gymnastics I enjoy are verbal gymnastics. I love words and I really love puns." His vocabulary is dotted with words such as contradistinction and deferential. "I get my word's worth out of every sentence. I never use a monosyllabic word if there is a polysyllabic one that means the same thing," he said.

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Dr. Silver, a dynamic speaker, and Mrs. Silver, a noted concert pianist and graduate of Juilliard Music School, have presented their programs throughout the Country at Synagogues, Churches, Colleges, Nursing Homes, on Cruises, and before many Organizations.

**Rabbi Silver is also available for Lectures
on the Themes of Books he has written:**

- *"How To Enjoy This Moment"*
- *"Explaining Judaism To Jews And Christians"*
- *"When You Talk English You're Often Talking Hebrew"*
- *"The Six-Day Warriors"*
- *"Mixed Marriage Between Jews And Christians"*

(Books available from Mrs. Silver. Address below.)

... and on other topics:

- *"Why I Am An Ecumaniac"*
- *"Observations Of An Astonished Rabbi"*
- *"What Every Christian Should Know About Judaism"*
- *"The Middle East Picture Clarified"*

Dr. Silver is the Rabbi of Temple Sinai, The Reform Hebrew Congregation of Delray
For data on him, see "Who's Who in the U.S."

Rabbi Silver is heard on two weekly radio programs: WAVS, Ft. Lauderdale, 1190/AM, Sundays 5:30 p.m., and
WDBF, Delray Beach, 1420/AM, Sundays 7:30 p.m.

FOR RATES AND DATES CONTACT MRS. SILVER:

RAINBERRY LAKE — 2005 N.W. 9th STREET — DELRAY BEACH, FLORIDA 33445 — TELEPHONE (305) 272-4949
Temple Sinai worships Fridays, 8:15 p.m. at Cason United Methodist Church, N. Swinton at 4th St., Delray Beach.

*Outreach
S. E. Conrad*

June 2, 1982

Mr. "Chick" C.O. Reinhardt
P.O. Box 501
Palm City, FL 33490

Dear Mr. Reinhardt:

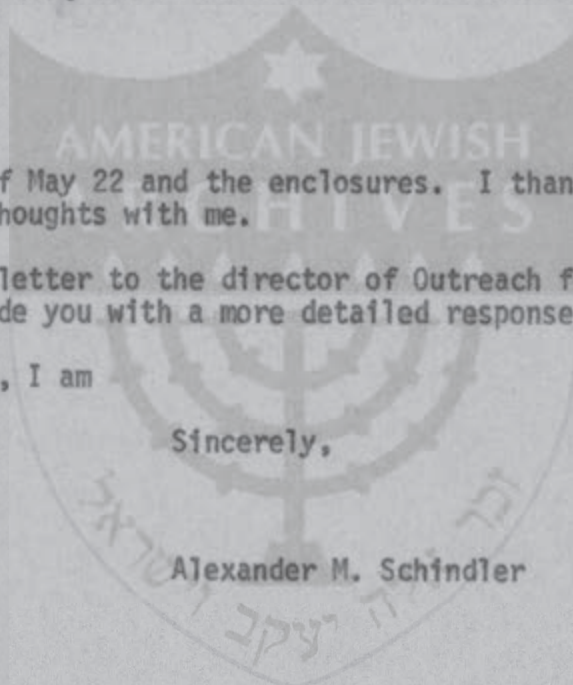
I have your letter of May 22 and the enclosures. I thank you for your having shared your thoughts with me.

I am referring this letter to the director of Outreach for the UAHC so that he may provide you with a more detailed response.

With every good wish, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler



UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

March 24, 1982

Rabbi Samuel M. Silver, D.D.
Temple Sinai of South Palm
Beach County
2005 N. W. 9th Street
Delray Beach, Florida 33445

Dear Rabbi Silver:

Please excuse my belated response to your letter of March 9th. I have been out of town and this is the first opportunity I have had to follow up on some correspondence.

First, let me thank you for your kind words about the Biennial. It was a very exciting Meeting and I believe that much was accomplished.

I read with great interest your comments on mixed marriages. Although there can surely be no doubt that it is a matter of great concern to many laymen and Rabbis, (and by and large one on which they basically disagree) the Task Force on Outreach has not consciously "ducked it". The issue surfaced early in their discussion but the Task Force agreed to defer any consideration of the problem until after they had addressed some of the more basic issues upon which they felt they could make progress and constructive recommendations. I believe that decision was a correct one in that the Biennial unanimously approved an Outreach Program as recommended by the Task Force - one which if effectively implemented will have historic implications for our people and our Movement.



UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

Rabbi Samuel M. Silver, D.D.
March 24, 1982
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Surely you know better than anyone that the basic problem is not the attitude of laymen but the very strong feeling of what appears to be an overwhelming number of the Rabbinates. Just as your position seems to have been formed out of your conscience and your interpretation of your role and commitment as a Rabbi, theirs has led them to a different conclusion and it is extremely difficult to argue with the right to their conclusions. Frankly speaking, I rather suspect that a large body of our laymen would wish their position was different but I am not sure that it can be changed except through the process of time and discussion. I have noted your willingness and desire to participate in that type of dialogue and from everything that I have been able to learn of you, I believe it would be helpful and instructive.

On a formal level, however, I am not sure whether I can assure you that it will take place. I am hopeful that the Task Force will address itself to this very basic issue in the weeks and months to come. Nevertheless, I am not so naive as to underestimate the fact that the CCAR both officially, and most of its members collectively, feel quite strongly that this is a matter for Rabbinical dialogue - and not lay-Rabbinical.

I am taking the liberty, Rabbi Silver, of forwarding to David Belin, the Chairman of the Task Force, a copy of your letter and enclosure.



UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

Rabbi Samuel M. Silver, D.D.
March 24, 1982
Page 3

Perhaps we will have an opportunity
to discuss the issue further.

Cordially

Donald S. Day

DSD/mdr

cc: Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler ✓
Mr. Theodore K. Broido
Mr. David Belin



Rabbi Samuel M. Silver, D.D.
TEMPLE SINAI
of South Palm Beach County
Residence: Rainberry Lake
2005 N.W. 9th St., Delray Beach, FL 33445
305-272-4949

9 March 1982

Dear Mr. Day,

Thanks for sending the data about resolutions adopted at the Biennial.

I'm sorry I couldn't be there but your reports and conversations with those who were there indicate that it was a most fruitful assemblage.

My compliments.

I note the resolutions having to do with mixed marriages and I'm glad that the Union is focussing on this challenging problem.

Before the Biennial I contacted your chairman on Outreach and also officers of the UAHC and urged them to seek an exchange of views on one of the aspects of the intermarriage scene which has been consistently ducked.

That is the question of whether a rabbi should give a Jewish ceremony to a mixed couple.

Every day every rabbi gets ~~calls~~ calls about this. We who do give such a ceremony have been ~~xx~~ sharply condemned, even though we firmly believe our procedure saves Jews for Judaism.

But never have we been able to take part in a calm and thorough exchange about this.

I would love to participate in such a discussion to make clear the basis for my policy. And since this is a matter of non-stop concern in every temple in the country, the Union would do well to face it rather than dodge it. With every good wish I am

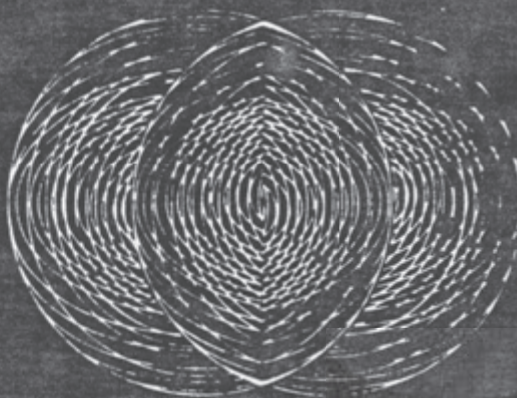
Congregation Worships Fridays, 8:15 P.M., at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 188 S. Swinton Ave., Delray Beach, Florida

Yours sincerely,

RABBI SAMUEL M. SILVER

MIXED MARRIAGE

Between Jew and Christian



by Rabbi Samuel M. Silver

Author of Explaining Judaism to Jews and Christians: The complexities and misperceptions of intermarriage with useful advice based on the author's long experience in uniting Jewish and Christian partners.

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Mrs. Samuel Silver
2005 N.W. 9th Street
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Rabbi Silver, listed in Who's Who in the U.S., is with Temple Sinai, which worships Fridays at 8:15 p.m. at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 188 S. Swinton Ave., Delray Beach.

Rabbi & Mrs. Silver, a concert pianist, are available for lecture-recitals. Call Mrs. Silver for Rates and Dates.

The 'marrying rabbi' writes a book about it

by Anthony R. Dolan

Rabbi Samuel Silver's new book is like the man himself - lively, sylogistic, funny, uproarious at times - except that the book accomplishes something the rabbi never really achieved at Temple Sinai - it loses him friends.

"No, it's never happened before," the rabbi said about the effect of this book, "Mixed Marriage," on some old associates, particularly some fellow rabbis.

The response has been overwhelmingly favorable but he is candid about the other reactions: his views on marriage between Jew and Christian are controversial, earning him at least one vote of censure from a rabbinical association and raising questions about his orthodoxy.

Which - not coincidentally - brings up a story, a typical Rabbi Silver story.

He is an Army chaplain in the Philippines during World War II and can't reach all of his far-flung congregation. So the Protestant chaplain from another island has to improvise to accommodate Jews on that island and Rabbi Silver helps the good minister, teaching him some Hebrew and the rudiments of the Jewish service.

"I like the other rabbi better than you," says one Navy Seabee after a few weeks. The real rabbi wants to know why. "He's more orthodox than you," says the sailor.

Except that anyone reading "Mixed Marriage" is first struck not at all by the new ground broken but rather by the orthodoxy, and the pleasant proselytizing.

Asked about this, the rabbi is astonished. "Well, of course, I make a pitch for Judaism, I'm a salesman, that's what I do," he replies.

It is for just that reason Rabbi Silver is one of the growing but still small number of rabbis who will agree to officiate at a marriage between Jew and Christian.

He says his wife put it well the day she urged him to perform an interdenominational marriage if by doing so he can save "just one person for the faith."

But though the rabbi's approval of mixed marriages stems from a desire not to see young Jews leave their religion because they cannot be married in it, it is clear too that Rabbi Silver is an ecumenist (though an unapologetic one).

Another story: he is chaplain again, this time on a troop ship. The only clergyman aboard, he is responsible for the religious welfare of all. So he becomes, as one soldier described him in a letter home, "the Jewish rabbi who got the Protestant ship's carpenter to make a crucifix for Catholic services."

He is doing that sort of thing again

in this book - the point here is the common ground. He thinks the Jewish service is acceptable to a Christian, who is asked to abide by the "law of Moses and Israel" - the foundation, after all, of Christianity.

And he thinks the Christian ceremony is also adaptable, citing his experiences as a traveling rabbi who has officiated with many a Christian clergyman on such occasions.

So although the religious differences are there, the Rabbi notes that the Creator is the same to all and the separate religions just the outgrowth of what his good friend Bishop Fulton Sheen once called "a lover's quarrel."

The rabbi persuades us that the lover's quarrel has, liturgically speaking, grown less heated in recent years.

WWII and the broadening experience of service life had a great deal to do with an increasing acceptance of different creeds and cultures, he says. And his notes as a sensitive Jew are insightful, sometimes downright unusual. It is interesting, is it not that two of the most glamo-

BOOKS

rous actresses of the period, Marilyn Monroe and Elizabeth Taylor, were Jewish converts. (And then there is the one about the rabbi giving Miss Monroe religious instruction who was asked by the press how long it would take. "As long as possible," he replied.)

The rabbi notices that it works the other way. Goldwater, after all, was Goldwasser before the family was protestantized and anglicized in Arizona.

"I always knew," Rabbi Silver remembers Harry Golden saying in 1964, "that the first Jewish president would be an Episcopalian."

Not that there still aren't ghetos in America. The rabbi knows.

"I'm going to my people," he said about his retirement plans in a recent interview. "Israel, Rabbi?" "No, no, I mean Florida," he beams.

That one is not in the book, but there are others like it.

And it was the rabbi's humor and his careful arguments for permitting mixed marriages that led Martin Schultz, the rabbi's literary agent, to talk him into writing this book. We owe Mr. Schultz for that.

"Mixed Marriage" explains a difficult problem and argues for a solution. A religious book, it is also good fun. And what about that?

-From the "Advocate", Stamford, Conn. Mr. Dolan, winner of a Pulitzer Prize in journalism is a speech-writer for Pres. Reagan.



Meet Rabbi Samuel Silver of Delray Beach

Rabbi Silver is heard on two weekly radio programs: "Interdenominational", WDBF 1420/AM, Sunday, 7:30 p.m. and "Clergy in Conversation", WAVS, Ft. Lauderdale, 1190/AM, Sundays, 1:00 p.m.

The rabbi

Silver mixes humor with his faith

By MARY JANE HUNTER
News-Press Staff Writer

As Rabbi Samuel Silver reads, his eyes are busy seeking any statement a writer has to make about happiness.

When he believes he has clipped enough quotes, another book will join the nine already published by the Cape Coral Jewish Community Center's new rabbi.

When he came to the Lee County congregation in midsummer, Silver had an established reputation as a rabbi, a writer, a lecturer and a man whose jokes had a serious meaning behind the sly fun they joked at human foibles, including his own.

One joke concerns his own so-called retirement to Cape Coral after 18 years with Temple Sinai in Stamford, Conn. Since he will continue to minister to a congregation, although the community center's membership is much smaller than Sinai's, he hasn't retired as a rabbi. Since he is writing several additional books, his career as a writer will continue. And since he and his wife Elaine already are accepting engagements for their joint program of music and talk, he hasn't retired as a lecturer.

In fact, it's hard to find anybody busier with continuing a multi-faceted career than Silver.

"I'm not so much retired as recycled," he quipped. "I've just transplanted my work to a warmer climate."

Although he is working on several books now, the one which interests him most is the collection of comments on happiness.

"With all of the unpleasantness and difficulty in the world, I think it will provide a bouquet to offset the ugliness," he said.

After assembling everything he can find on the subject of happiness, he is concocting his own statement of what it is.

What it isn't, he said, is pleasure, which is what most people pursue with such diligence.

After studying all of his collected material and

analyzing his own experience, Silver believes happiness is a byproduct and not something which can be pursued.

"It's that peculiar feeling you have when you are too busy to be miserable," he said, as one explanation.

"Happiness is being married to your best friend," he added.

"And happiness is finding yourself while losing yourself in something."

The gulf between happiness and pleasure is wide and deep, he said, yet many people spend their lives pursuing the latter and losing the former.

In his own life, Silver has been a moving force toward an understanding between Christians and Jews, according to tributes paid him when he left Stamford to come to Florida. One of his books is titled, "Explaining Judaism to Jews and Christians," and another is "What Every Christian Should Know About Judaism."

He also wrote "Why I Am An Ecumeniac," and "Mixed Marriage Between Jews and Christians."

He has been a much sought-after speaker during his long service as a rabbi — and a man whose work often went beyond the confines of his own congregation.

Silver says he is a great believer in "the light touch" in his books, sermons and conversations. But there is always an underlying seriousness. A major concern today is the great yearning for meaning to life expressed by so many people in this post-Watergate, post-Vietnam era, he said.

"We are in a time of transition. It is incumbent on the clergy to fill that yearning, that vague thing called spiritual need."

The process of reassessing how we are meeting spiritual needs is continuous, he said. He doesn't believe the conventional pattern of church and synagogue is meeting the spiritual needs as it should.

While organized religion is the mechanism by which needs can be satisfied, clergymen must experi-

Turn To SILVER, Page 3D



Dr. Silver, Rabbi Emeritus of Temple Sinai, Stamford, Conn. is now with Temple Sinai, Delray Beach, which worships on Fridays 8:15 p.m. at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 188 S. Swinton Ave., Delray Beach, Florida.

The Rabbi's books, including "Explaining Judaism", "Mixed Marriage", "When you talk English you are often talking Hebrew", etc. are available from Mrs. Silver, 2005 N.W. 9th St., Delray Beach, Florida, 33445, 305-272-4949.

The Rabbi and his wife, Elaine, a concert pianist, are available for programs such as "Jewish Music Is Not Sad". Call Mrs. Silver for rates and dates.

Silver

ment to find "the elements to give people meaning in their lives, he said.

"You can't be smug and snug and feel normal worship patterns are adequate, but they do have value. We are with our Christian brothers to find ways to offset the

malaise affecting people today."

The old values, he added, are needed more now than ever in this age of violence and vulgarity.

"The media give the impression only vice is exciting — virtue can be as exciting as vice, but it is our job as clergymen to prove it."

He attributes the enormous

growth of the fundamentalist sects to their ability to dramatize virtue.

"They are mystics," he said. And mysticism is dramatic.

Mainline Protestants, Catholics and Jews lean toward rationalism, he said.

"But you can still find service to mankind exciting."

Rabbi and Mrs. Silver work together on their lecture careers — hers is in music. She is a concert pianist and graduate of the Juilliard School of Music.

Their program on "Jewish Music Is Not Sad," combines their talents to the delight of program chairmen — and they have more

music-and-talk programs planned around similar themes, such as "Characteristics Of Religious Music" and "How Jewish Melodies Became Christian Hymns."

Since coming to Cape Coral, Mrs. Silver is enjoying tennis and bridge, two favorite pastimes, her husband said. Their son Danny, 16,

is a senior at Cypress Lake High School and is an amateur magician who gives public performances. Their other four sons live away from home.

And Silver stays busy in his "semi-retirement" with his congregational duties, his writing and his lectures.

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler

December 31, 1981

Ms. Janet Baron

Rabbi Sanford Seltzer

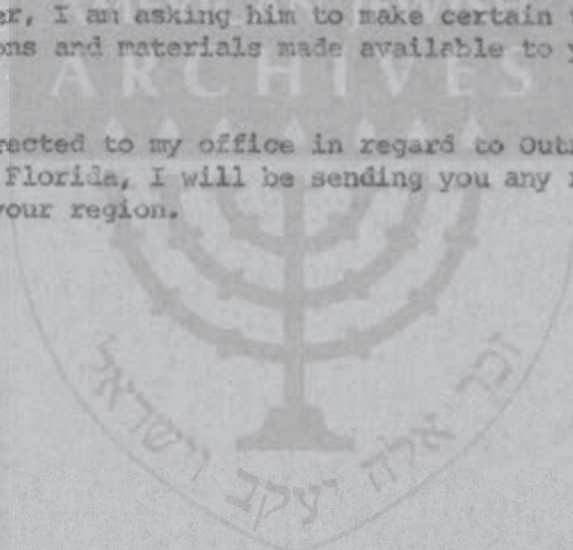
OUTREACH

Welcome! I was delighted to learn that you will be serving as Outreach Coordinator for our Southeast Council/South Florida Federation. It is my fond hope you will find your new responsibilities to be fulfilling and meaningful.

The enclosed letter is self-explanatory. If you do not already have a library of Outreach materials available in the Florida office, we will arrange to get them to you. A proper selection of books and pamphlets will help you as you seek to assist others. By means of a copy of this memo to Rabbi Seltzer, I am asking him to make certain that you have the necessary publications and materials made available to you for sharing with others.

Many letters are directed to my office in regard to Outreach. Now that you are on board in Florida, I will be sending you any requests for aid which come in from your region.

Warm good wishes.



December 31, 1981

Mrs. Ann C. Jacobs
Newport N 1059
Deerfield Beach, FL 33441

Dear Mrs. Jacobs:

Many thanks for your gracious letter of December 20. It was good of you to write and express your appreciation of our efforts in the realm of Outreach.

Your new granddaughter is fortunate to have one as caring and supportive of her decision to become a Jew-by-Choice. Let me assure you that we will be happy to be in touch with her and to provide assistance and counsel in regard to her desire to increase her knowledge and understanding of Judaism.

I am sharing your letter with Janet Baron, Outreach Coordinator for our Southeast Council/South Florida Federation and am asking her to be in contact with Martien. Ms. Baron works out of the UAHC's office in Miami and I am certain she will do her best to be of help to your granddaughter.

With every good wish and kindest greetings, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

cc: Ms. Janet Baron

Dear Rabbi,

12/20/81

The program
you are endeavoring
to launch is entirely
worthy-while.

In our family
we have a recent
convert to our beautiful
religion.

She was converted
at the Reform Congrega-
tion in Jacksonvil-
le. My grandson Mei
his wife at a kibbutz
in Israel. She is from
Holland.

Her name is Martien
and we think she is
anxious and willing

to be the balabasta
of a Jewish Home.

Would the Seminary
please send her the
books necessary to
increase her
knowledge.

Thanks for
cooperating.

Happy Hanuka
Anna C. Jacobs

Please send the material to.
Mrs. Martin Jacobs
10140 Torchwood
Plantation

H.

33374

December 31, 1981

Mrs. Ann C. Jacobs
Newport N 1059
Deerfield Beach, FL 33441

Dear Mrs. Jacobs:

Many thanks for your gracious letter of December 20. It was good of you to write and express your appreciation of our efforts in the realm of Outreach.

Your new granddaughter is fortunate to have one as caring and supportive of her decision to become a Jew-by-Choice. Let me assure you that we will be happy to be in touch with her and to provide assistance and counsel in regard to her desire to increase her knowledge and understanding of Judaism.

I am sharing your letter with Janet Baron, Outreach Coordinator for our Southeast Council/South Florida Federation and am asking her to be in contact with Martien. Ms. Baron works out of the UJHC's office in Miami and I am certain she will do her best to be of help to your granddaughter.

With every good wish and kindest greetings, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

cc: Ms. Janet Baron

Subhas

November 3, 1980

Mr. Sigmund Steckler
19370 Collins Avenue Apt. 309C
No. Miami Beach, Fl. 33160

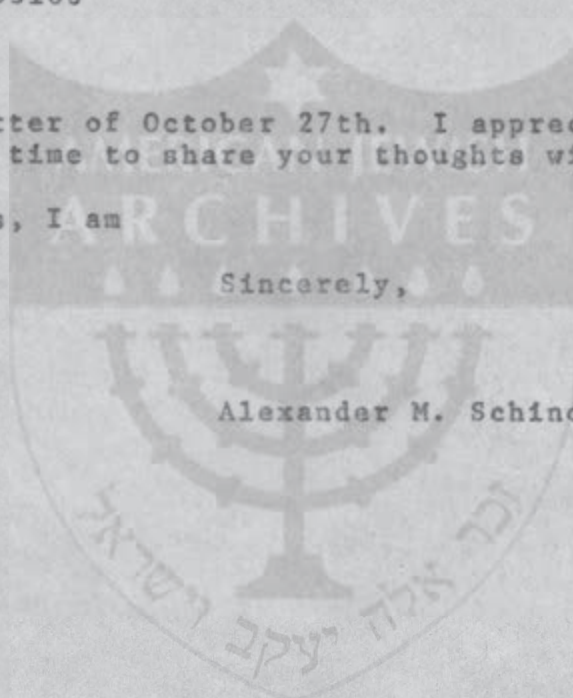
Dear Mr. Steckler:

Thank you for your letter of October 27th. I appreciate
your having taken the time to share your thoughts with me.

With kindest greetings, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler



19370 Collins Avenue 309 C

No. Miami Beach, Florida 33160

10-27-80

Rabbi Alexander Schneider
Union of American Hebrew Congs.
Fifth Avenue n. 65th Street
New York, N.Y.

Dear Rabbi

The enclosed article is very disturbing to me, a member of the Reform movement. It appears that the only way we get up to date data is through the media.

The Reform movement has sunk very low, that it is necessary to resort to the means, as indicated in the enclosed, in order to sustain the congregations. Apparently, at this rate, we no longer in the near future will have a genuine Jewish Congregation. I include the convert to Judaism as part of the group.

I wrote to you some time ago concerning the permission of UAHF and CCAR to allow Reform rabbis to perform mixed marriages (one partner a non-Jew) and admitting that nothing can be done to "kick-out" those rabbis who do this act. Everybody needs big numbers.

So now you have the results per the enclosed.

I am very seriously considering not
leaving any money to the Reform
movement agencies. I don't like the
name "Bnai Zion Universalist Humanist
Chevre".

Very truly yours,

Sigmund H. Steckles



pidl

Partners in Prayer

Reform Synagogues Are Opening Their Arms To Non-Jewish Spouses in Mixed Marriages

By ADON TAFT
Herald Religion Writer

On Sunday mornings, Emily Friedman sings in the choir at the Killian Pines United Methodist Church. Sunday nights she is one of the counselors for the Methodist Youth Fellowship.

But during the Jewish High Holy Days, Friedman directed the choir for the Bet Breria Congregation, which is using the Killian Pines Church facilities until its own temple is completed.

She and her husband, Paul, were called to open the Ark during those same Jewish services. And her 7-month-old son, Brian Joshua, will be attending the Sabbath school at Bet Breria as soon as he is old enough.

Friedman is one of the growing number of non-Jewish spouses in mixed marriages who are being accepted as members of Reform synagogues.

A SURVEY by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC) of 138 Reform synagogues around the country found that 30 congregations that keep such statistics reported 7 to 22 per cent of their membership was made up of non-Jews.

The survey also found that:

- All but three of the 138 synagogues consider children of mixed marriages to be Jewish if they have attended Sabbath and religious school.

- Nine of 10 of the synagogues bury non-Jewish spouses in Jewish



RELIGION NEWS

cemeteries.

- Non-Jewish members generally have voting rights and in some cases may even hold office in the Brotherhood or Sisterhood. One synagogue reported having a non-Jew as president of the congregation. "He was a very good one," his rabbi said.

The results surprised UAHC researchers. It had been assumed that affiliation with synagogues was limited to Jews, whether by birth or conversion, said Rabbi Sanford Seltzer, director of planning and research for the New York-based UAHC.

"IN RECENT years, however, the situation has changed radically," Seltzer said. "Not only have mixed married couples sought synagogue membership in ever-greater numbers, but non-Jewish spouses have actively involved themselves, when permitted, in the life of the synagogue."

Emily Friedman, whose grandfather was a Methodist preacher, is one such non-Jewish spouse. Despite her active involvement in the synagogue, she said she has no plans to convert to Judaism.

"Right now, I don't foresee it for me," she said. "It seems to me to be almost a backward step. Once you have advanced to accepting Christ, it's hard to think of not being a Christian."

Nevertheless, she is comfortable in the synagogue and feels completely accepted.

"I was amazed, especially during the first year, not at the differences but the similarities with Christianity. I found things I had done as a Christian, but did not know why, had their roots in Judaism."

SHE AND HER husband, an auditor, were married first in the Old Stone Methodist Church in Key West and then in a Jewish ceremony in his parents' home in Silver Spring, Md.

Paul Friedman is on the board of trustees for Bet Breria Congregation.

Emily Friedman's involvement in the synagogue doesn't trouble Rabbi Barry Tabachnikoff, spiritual leader of the congregation.

"When we started the congregation, we were careful to word our bylaws in such a way that a non-Jewish partner would have a sense

of belonging," Tabachnikoff said.

Tabachnikoff estimated that as many as a third of the married couples in the 400-family congregation have non-Jewish spouses. He said he expects that some eventually will convert to Judaism.

"I know some never will convert formally, but what does it matter if they live the life of Jewish tradition?" he asked.

Kathleen Glickman is one of those who converted after she had been a member of Temple Judea in Coral Gables for a year. A nurse who married attorney Larry Glickman, Kathleen found that people at the temple "were shocked when I went up for conversion because they thought I was Jewish."

SHE CAME FROM an Episcopalian family, but was not active in the church. She said her husband, Larry, also was "not very religious."

Her decision to convert came when her daughter from a former marriage was 7 and began to be confused about going to Kathleen's parents' home for Christmas and Larry's parents' home for Chanukah.

"I wanted our children to have some religious background," she said. "Larry could never be a Christian, so I checked out Judaism, which fit very well with my personal philosophy."

Her 6-year-old son, Jacob, "has always been Jewish," she said. Both he and his sister, Chahime, attend Sabbath school and religious school.

The conversion was hardest for Chahime, Glickman said. "She wondered what happened to Santa Claus and the Easter bunny."

No firm statistics are available,

but local rabbis said they believe the percentage of non-Jewish members is much less in Miami congregations than in the nation as a whole because this is such a strong Jewish community.

COMMUNITIES WITH smaller Jewish populations appear to have more intermarriage, the UAHC survey found. The survey found that one small congregation in the far West reported that 50 per cent of its membership was comprised of couples with mixed marriages.

Because membership in most synagogues is by families and not by



— TIM CHAPMAN / Miami Herald Staff

Paul and Emily Friedman with Son Brian

...she isn't Jewish but attends synagogue

individuals, the status of non-Jewish marriage partners seldom is a problem whether or not synagogue by-laws spell out their situation, said Rabbi Ralph Kingsley of Temple Sinai of North Dade.

20-21A.
Outreach

8104 N.W. 91st Avenue
Tamarac, Florida 33321
October 1, 1980

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

Dear Rabbi Schindler:

We thank you for your letter of September 26th and for taking the time out of your busy schedule to concern yourself with our "dilema".

It is only fair when one complains, one must also offer appreciation and compliments when due. I'm sure you must realize by now we were quite determined and persistent. Therefore, thru a long series of phone calls beginning with Rabbi Emmet Frank in Miami, on to Rabbi Max Eichorn of Satilite Beach (both very kind and understanding gentlemen), we eventually reached Rabbi Mel Hecht of Las Vegas.

Rabbi Hecht checked his schedule and quickly agreed to fly to Tucson to officiate at our daughter's wedding on a Saturday evening -- this between a Saturday morning Bar Mitzva and Sunday noon wedding in Vegas. Over and above this, it was a delight for me to speak with him and after he spoke with our children the following evening we received the most glowing phone call. He had renewed their faith in the religious community. We all look forward to meeting him personally.

Just wanted to bring you up to date and thank you again for your time and consideration. With our sincerest appreciation, we remain

Very truly yours,



Mr. and Mrs. Max Fine

September 26, 1980

Mr. and Mrs. M. Fine
8104 N. W. 91st Avenue
Tamarac, Florida 33321

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Fine:

Please pardon the delay in responding to your letter. My travel schedule has been quite heavy and this is my first opportunity to respond to you.

Needless to note, I was distressed by the contents of your letter. And I must tell you that the reaction of some of my colleagues in situations such as you describe perturbs and embarrasses me.

I am sharing your letter with Rabbi Erwin L. Herman, director of the UAHC's Pacific Southwest Region. The Reform congregations of Arizona are part of his region and I hope that he will be able to put you in touch with an understanding and caring rabbi. I also hope that he will speak with Rabbi Grosse on a personal level and try to convey to him his lack of tact in conversations with you. The manner in which rabbis say yes or no to couples planning a mixed marriage is of the utmost importance, as you can see from your own experience even one who says yes can "turn off" the couple. There must be a full measure of understanding no matter what the rabbi's response is to the couple.

With every good wish and kindest greetings, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

cc: Rabbi Erwin L. Herman

*Refer to
no for
handling*

8104 N.W. 91st Ave.
Tamarac, Fla. 33321
(305) 722-2757

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

Dear Rabbi Schindler:

As parents of a daughter who is planning to be married this forthcoming November in Tucson, Arizona to a non-Jew, the enclosed article quoting your views in this situation came as a distinct boost to our morale.

*Tell Mrs. Fine
that we are
sorry for delay -
I too am perturbed by
reaction of some
my colleagues -
embarrassed
- Regrets -*

We, as well as Bonnie, are extremely anxious to have a rabbi perform the wedding ceremony. Her future husband and his family have no objection to this and it has been agreed that any children they may have will be brought up in the Jewish faith.

Now, to the reason for this letter. I contacted Rabbi Samuel Silver of Delray Beach, Fla. and his son was kind enough to give me the names of three rabbis in the Phoenix/Tucson area who would be willing to perform the services. Rabbis Samuel Teitelbaum of Phoenix and Albert Michels of Sun City were away on vacation. However, Bonnie did reach Rabbi Frederick H. Grosse of Phoenix. His response was --- yes, provided they visited his office once before the wedding (which was fine) and his fee is \$600 because he takes an "interest". He went on to tell her she could get someone "cheaper" but, of course, without the "same interest".

Aside from the fact that \$600 seems outrageous for a few hours of time, need I describe to you the disgust with which she related this conversation to us? And need I tell you the embarrassment we felt? We are well aware that everyone has a right to set his own price on his services and then it is up to the other party to accept or decline. But we're not talking about buying or selling chickens --- at least we shouldn't be. It seems to us if Rabbi Grosse did not care to take the ride to Tucson, he just should have said so. Or if he has no interest in perpetuating our faith, he should take on another profession. In any case, if his tactless handling of this conversation is typical of him, he is the poorest example to set before our children -- doing more harm than good.

We sincerely hope you do not consider this letter telling tales out of school. We don't know Rabbi Grosse but feel someone should enlighten him in a diplomatic way on the handling of delicate situations for the future.

As things stand right now, we are still in need of the services of a rabbi for the evening of November 22nd in Tucson and we would appreciate any help you can give us. Thank you for your time and most of all, your thoughtful, openminded views for the future of Judaism. Look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Leila & Mac Fine

Mr. & Mrs. M. Fine

5th East

September 18, 1980

Mrs. Virginia Sunderhull
Rt. 2, Box 1328C
Lafayette, GA. 30728

Dear Mrs. Sunderhull:

Your lovely letter of September 2 has been brought to my attention. I was deeply moved by your comments and thank you for having shared your concerns with us.

We have many materials and books which I am certain would be of aid to you in responding to the questions your children pose. The UAHC publishes text books for the religious school and they cover a multitude of subjects. I am sharing your letter with Rabbi Daniel Syme, UAHC director of education, and am asking him to send you some of our publications with our compliments. If there are any specific areas questioned by your children, please write to Rabbi Syme at this address so he might seek to provide pertinent materials.

I am also sending to you, under separate cover, some copies of our publication KEEPING POSTED, a magazine for older religious school students, dealing with subjects I think will be of interest. I am also sending a series of pamphlets written by Rabbi Syme on The Jewish Home. These deal with ritual and practices of the Jewish people.

Unfortunately, we do not have a congregation in Lafayette so I cannot direct you to a rabbi with whom you might consult in regard to the questions of your children. I do hope, however, that the materials we are sending will be of help to you.

With every good wish and kindest greetings, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

Will - Do you have stuff
or should I send it
Sunday?

Sept. 7 1980

Pl 2 13 of 1328C

La Fayette Ga 30128

Dear Liss:

Many years ago I listened to
my Grandmother tell me of her
Faith & people. I always made her
cry & I loved her very much.

She was the new. Her family
were strict Jews & she married
a young man not acceptable.

She said she never heard from
them again. But she loved her
Faith & her family.

I am now a Quaker &
I to have tried to teach my sons
& daughters of God the light she
let many years ago. I was almost
dead until my son met a young
Jewish girl & married her.
The Rabbi asking about my
Hebrew name & speaking of old
Customs blew the still small flame
to a glow again. I have always told
any one who ask of my Heritage that.

not having a lot of money + 10
small ones to raise alone + no
other Jews near made for
a poor training for the little
ones.

There are a couple families
here but there are very
wealthy & we are not in their
social section.

All of this is only background
to ask for material to help answer
questions the children ask?

Can you help if there are changes
I will pay.

If I can I will move to where
my son is but that is not possible
at present. Jobs to care for these
school children are not that easy to
find.

Yours truly
Hershey
Sunderland

PS
your address was
"To Do Family"
By Jaispon -



May 8, 1979

Dr. Irwin Eckhauser
2529 Riverbluff Parkway
Sarasota, Florida 33581

Dear Dr. Eckhauser:

Thank you for your recent letter. I am grateful for your interest and concern.

A Task Force has been appointed and they will be meeting next week. As they develop a program I am confident there will be possibilities for involvement and assistance from Reform Jews nationally, regionally and locally. I am pleased to know that you stand ready to be of help.

On the matter of the Voluntary Prayer Bill, the UAHC has been on record for many years in opposition to prayer in the public schools of our nation. We are firm in our support of separation of Church and State. Our Social Action Commission is watching this situation with great care and will, of course, be making statements as the need arises. Our "man in Washington" makes our position known in the legislative arena and should public statements become necessary you may be certain the Union's voice will be raised on this issue.

With kindest greetings, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

2529 Riverbluff Pkway,
Sarasota, Fla. (33581)
5 May 1979

Dear Rabbi Schindler,

I am a member of Temple
Emanuel, locally, and on its Bd. of
Trustees, the father of 2 sons who
married women not of the Jewish faith.
One daughter-in-law has converted, and
the other will eventually. I'm concerned
with the problem of inter-marriage,
and feel that your appointment of a
task-force to look into this problem is
needed, and very essential. If I can
be of any help to your task-force, in
this area, feel free to call on me.

As the A. D. L. Chairman locally (of
B'nai B'rith), I've noticed more and
more, and no doubt you and your
staff have that the Senate is
promoting its Voluntary Prayer
Bill, i.e., Sen. Helms, Sen. Chiles, Sen. Stone,
etc. Has the U.A.H.C. made any
comments concerning this latest attempt

of the U. S. Senate? This proposed legisla-
tion would put prayer back into the
public schools of America. Is that
not another way of scotching the
separation of church and state
issue?

Your comments would be
most helpful. With good wishes
for continued good health,

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Iswin Eckhauser



January 24, 1979

Mr. Barney Moss
245 Ashwood Drive
Maitland, Fla. 32751

Dear Mr. Moss:

Thank you very much for your recent letter. It was good of you to share your thoughts and concerns with me. For your perusal, I enclose herewith the full text of my Board address. I believe it will be of interest.

We are in the process of naming a Task Force on Outreach. After they have had an opportunity to meet and plan for the implementation of the new program we will be in a better position to know just what is to be done on a national, regional and/or local level. I do appreciate your offer to be of service.

With every good wish, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

From the Desk of:

Barney Mass

January 8, 1979

Rabbi Alexander Schindler,
President,
Union of American Hebrew Congregations,
838 5th Avenue,
New York City, N.Y. 10021.

Dear Rabbi:

As Entertainment Editor of a local paper I write a column covering those subjects and, in addition, as a senior citizen, I also write a column, Senior Scene, covering subjects of interest to that segment of the population. In those capacities I naturally meet a great deal of people. As a recent widower, I remarried to a Catholic woman who had professed looking for a Jewish man and had an express desire to convert to Judaism even before I met her. She has already converted and, remarkably, to me, without any hesitation, doubts or traumas of any kind.

We both had attended and continue to attend local Rabbi Rudolph Adler's classes in the history and traditions of Judaism at the Ohev Shalom Synagogue. There, other gentile students attend. One is a young woman in her forties, a Baptist, who is ardently studying for conversion. She wears every Jewish symbol around her neck, from the mazuzah to the Star of David, and is single. Jews here have asked my wife and the woman described above, "Why do you want to be Jewish, you know how we've been persecuted. Looking for more trouble?" Their ready answer has been, "but Jesus was a Jew, we've never hated them."

In discussions with non-Jews I have found that this generation and even older people are questioning the "fiction" of Jesus' life as portrayed by the new versions of the Old Testament. And those who attend our synagogues and study our traditions are amazed to find that all the other faiths are based on ours with changes only to "make them different".

One of my first questions put to Rabbi Adler (before the Union officially endorsed proselytizing) was, "Why cannot we proselytize?" When you did I again asked the Rabbi, "I wonder if they will permit laymen to participate?" His answer was in the affirmative. And that is the reason I am writing to you, Rabbi Schindler.

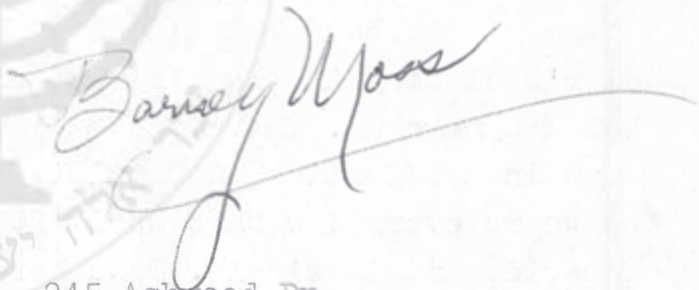
more

I honestly feel I can reason with people who are seeking "something" . I have always said to selected people who would not be offended, "Even if I were not born a Jew when I look around at the heavens, the wonders of nature on Earth and in the last decade, with our preoccupation in outer space, the vastness of infinity out there, I could not believe otherwise but that there is one God. What we call nature could very well have been a distorted, disorganized mess yet the orderliness of the universe forever awes me.

Since your program calls for a "soft" sell with information centers and literature, I would appreciate the opportunity to participate in some way. In addition, sir, cannot the "soft" sell be perpetuated with a dignified verbal approach as well, for instance, to small groups who may ask for it? Those very information centers mentioned perhaps can publicize the availability of such seminars. As a matter of fact, the classes we attend on Sunday morning for an hour are ideal settings. But I'm sure there would not be enough rabbis who have the time to spend in them without charging some kind of fee.

At any rate, I hope that there will be room for literate laymen in your program.

Sincerely,



A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Barney Weiss". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned over a faint, circular background stamp. The stamp features a menorah in the center, with the words "AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES" at the top and "עקב וישראל" (Eckov Yisroel) at the bottom in Hebrew.

245 Ashwood Dr.
Maitland, Florida, 32751.

January 9, 1979

Mrs. Harold Roussman
2916 Fitzooth Drive
Winter Park, Fla. 32792

Dear Mrs. Roussman:

Having just returned from Israel, this is my first opportunity to respond to your letter of December 29. It was good of you to share your concerns with me and I trust that a reading of the full text of my address to the UAHC Board, as well as the Resolution adopted unanimously by our Board, will help to mitigate your distress. For your interest, I enclose a copy of the address herewith.

Information on Judaism has always been a part of the UAHC program. We administer Conversion programs in many areas of the country, with the cooperation of the rabbis of our Movement. The informational material we prepare for those seeking to convert has always been available as well to those merely interested in learning more about the faith of our people.

A Task Force has been created, in accordance with the Resolution, and it will be the work of that group to determine the manner of implementation. I can, however, assure you we will not be out knocking on doors seeking converts to Judaism; we will merely make known that for those who seek a viable, meaningful religious experience and expression Reform Judaism is available for examination and when merited an open welcome into our faith.

The Task Force will be reporting to the Spring meeting of the UAHC Board of Trustees and there will also be a discussion of this program on the program of our Biennial to be held in Toronto, December, 1979.

With kindest greetings, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

Encl.

December 29, 1978

Mrs. Harold Roussman
2916 Fitzooth Drive
Winter Park, Florida 32792

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

Dear Rabbi Schindler,

I am concerned and disturbed by a recent Associated Press release which was printed in the Orlando Sentinel Star newspaper December 9, 1978.

Living in the midst of a largely Christian community, I have felt proud about my Jewish background on many counts. One of the statements which I always could say forthrightly was, "Jews do not proselytize. If someone wants to learn about Judaism and chooses to convert, we are willing to teach, to share, to cooperate, but we are not missionaries trying to seek converts."

Now I read that the UAHC, in convention, and at your urging, has "launched an active, forthright effort to win converts to the faith." The article further states that a 30-member commission was authorized for this effort and that there will be established information centers which will develop convert-seeking publications.

All of this, I presume, is financed by UAHC funds to which I contribute by virtue of my membership in the Reform Congregation of Liberal Judaism in Orlando, Florida.

I feel tense, frustrated, unhappy by this action, and I am not aware of anything which I can do to combat it. No one asked ME! There was no polling of Temples, of members, of individual Reform Jews. How can the UAHC take such action, action totally foreign to everything I have been taught in all my years of Reform Temple affiliation?

If the reason for this action is the losses which Judaism has been suffering through assimilation and inter-marriage, as seems to be indicated in this article, then it seems to me we are in a "business" not a religion, and our "gross product" is what is of concern to us as we seek ways to "increase our sales." I find that attitude offensive.

I would appreciate your response and clarification.

Sincerely yours,
Natalie K. Roussman
(Mrs. Harold) Natalie K. Roussman

April 19, 1979

Dr. Alvin Schlesinger
3051 Palm Aire Drive South
Pompano Beach, Florida 33060

Dear Dr. Schlesinger:

Thank you for your recent letter in regard to my recommendation that the Union of American Hebrew Congregations develop a program on Outreach.

For your information I herewith enclose a copy of the full text of my address to the Union Board. A complete reading will indicate to you that I did indeed suggest an attempt to reach out to the unchurched.

With appreciation for your thoughtfulness in sharing your thoughts with me and with kindest greetings, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

ALVIN SCHLESINGER, D.D.S.
3051 Palm Aire Drive South
Pompano Beach, Florida 33060
ALVIN L. SCHLESINGER, D. D. S.

101 CHITTENDEN AVENUE
WESTWOOD, YONKERS, N.Y.

April 9, 1979

Rabbi Alexander Schindler

Dear Rabbi,

I read an article in our local paper about your organization. It related to the idea of conversion of non-Jews married to Jews. I would suggest that your organization go a step further and open the doors to non-Jews other than in marriage. Many people today are seeking spiritual guidance and we Jews should bring them into our fold.

I think you are on the right track. I've said that we should have attempted to convert many many years ago. Better late than never.

Let's keep our own Jews in the fold. Don't neglect them. Much success.

Sincerely yours,

Alvin Schlesinger