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Religion

Drive for National Health Care Launched

Medicine: For the first time, a broad range of religious groups have joined forces to push for the program.

From Associated Press

Churches, historically trailblazers in providing hospitals, clinics and personnel to care for the sick, are joining forces to press for a national comprehensive health care plan.

It is an old proposition, but with a new push behind it.

It has been argued since the 1930s when it was disparagingly called "socialized medicine." Most industrialized countries have established some form of it except the United States, which has resorted to lesser measures.

But it is now on the U.S. agenda, politically and otherwise. For the first time, a broad coalition of religious leaders and organizations is pooling its influence to work for basic health care for all.

The present system is a "moral outrage," with conditions showing a "massive breakdown" in it, said the Rev. Thom White Wolf Fasset, general secretary of the United Methodist Board of Church and Society.

That church was among 15 national religious bodies and 30 state ecumenical organizations whose leaders this month launched an "Interreligious Health Care Access Campaign" to promote the cause.

The campaign aims both at educating religious constituencies across the country and putting the coalition's findings and proposed principles before Congress, where more than 30 bills on health care are pending.

They seek various approaches such as requiring companies to insure employees, or expanding Medicare and Medicaid or tax credits to the poor, or other partial steps on up to nationalized universal health insurance plans.

Some are modeled after Canadian or European systems.



The campaign for health benefits 'is rooted in our religious understanding that everyone . . . has a right to health care.'

LEONTINE T.C. KELLY
Retired United Methodist Bishop

With the issue also bound to figure in this year's political campaigns, the religious organizations have spent more than two years studying proposals and developing their health care platform.

"Many Americans are realizing that the current health care system is no longer working," said Sue Thornton of Austin, Tex., head of a 15-member interreligious steering committee that drafted the drive's working principles.

Thornton, of the United Church of Christ and also drive chairwoman, said the goal "is access to primary and acute health care for every person living in the United States."

"It is time," she added, "to use some stones from the old walls to build a new structure that will provide a healthier population for generations to come."

In starting their drive, religious leaders cited numerous facts as indications of the country's rickety health care, such as:

More than 34 million people have no health insurance. Another 65 million lack adequate coverage, exposing them to out-of-pocket costs threatening family economic survival—a main cause of personal bankruptcy.

Although the United States, the world's richest country, is recognized as having the best medical facilities and personnel, and spends most per capita on health care, it ranks 19th in infant mortality rates. And 15 million people annually do not get needed medical care because they cannot afford it.

Calling the present system a "moral scandal" and "national disgrace," Rabbi Alexander Schindler of New York, president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, said:

"By 'pricing out' one-fifth of this country's population from health care coverage, we mock the image of God and destroy the image of God's work."

The Rev. Teri T. Taylor, Washington executive of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), said the present system is neither equitable nor accessible, and added:

"It fails the American dream of compassion and justice. Corporate society is squeezed by its high costs. Morally sensitive individuals are scandalized by its inequity. A growing number of individuals are suffering and dying because of lack of access to health care."

Most major mainline Protestant denominations, including their ecumenical body, the National Council of Churches, and Reform Judaism back the drive. Roman Catholic bishops also have supported the cause for two decades.

Although the coalition is not endorsing any of the specific plans before Congress, pending developments about them, it has worked out a consensus on principles essential to reform, including:

That the plan serve everyone, that it provide comprehensive benefits, that it draw financial support



'By 'pricing out' one-fifth of this country's population from health care coverage, we mock the image of God and destroy the image of God's work.'

RABBI ALEXANDER SCHINDLER
President, Union of American Hebrew Congregations

from the broadest possible resource base, that it guarantee access to care in all areas, that it reduce unnecessary care, malpractice litigation and current rapid inflation in medical costs.

"We must stop the piecemeal approach to health care reform," the Rev. James Bell, a United Church official in Washington, told a recent House committee hearing. "Now is the time to develop and deliver a fully comprehensive reformed health care system."

Retired United Methodist Bishop Leontine T.C. Kelly of San Diego, president of the coalition's drive, said it "is rooted in our religious understanding that everyone . . . has a right to health care."



COPY

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

December 16, 1993
2 Tevet 5754

Ms Raquel H. Newman
945 Union Street #6W
San Francisco, CA 94133

Dear Racky:

I agree with you that the young adult population (23 to 40) is one which ought to be targeted by us, and the fact of the matter is that we have been trying resolutely to reach this group which is so important to Jewish continuity.

I don't know whether you know this, but we have a Department of Outreach to the Unaffiliated headed by a most competent professional, Rabbi Renni Altman, who has been well received, and who has developed some exceedingly helpful materials.

In her work, she has focused on the 20-30 generation, and our UAHC Privilege Card Project has proved to be a successful tool. I enclose a small brochure for your perusal which will give you some idea of what is involved.

Unfortunately, our resources will not permit us to go further in this area, and so I have been endeavoring to raise some extra-budgetary resources to allow us to do more. Specifically, I have been trying to persuade a major donor to sponsor a center for young Jewish adults in the New York area. Don't be misled by the word "center". It is a thematic rather than geographic designation; it refers to a program rather than a building. In effect, I want to have some program for Jewish singles every single night of the week here in New York to draw them closer to our community.

I enclose a copy of the proposal which will give you some idea of what we have in mind. Why not try and fund a venture like this in your neck of the woods? That would be preeminently worth while.

Happy Chanukah to you and yours.

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

Unaffiliated

RHN ASSOCIATES

November 15, 1993

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

Dear Alex:

At the Biennial, I thought about your remarks on new levels of outreach and inclusion of non-Jews married to Jews in synagogue life. I am upset by your remarks, but not for the reasons that you are getting negative feedback. Let rabbis determine which rituals are appropriate for non-Jews to participate in that affect the synagogue's role.

What ticked me off is your emphasis on the non-Jewish population for inclusion with the scope of the Reform Movement's activities. What I believe you should have been concentrating on is the lack of involvement of our children, now in the population group age 22 to 45; the young, often single, or young marrieds who have been educated in the Reform tradition, who avoid any contact with institutional Jewish life - and especially the synagogue. Here are untold thousands of Jews who are not being embraced by our Movement. As leader of the UAHC, you need to look at what is alienating this huge population. Why are they not attracted to synagogue programming. What is to ensure Jewish continuity for this population group, when over 90% have nothing to do with Judaism currently, yet are living and working as independent adults. Reform Judaism appears not to offer good enough reasons to reconnect via the synagogue or camping. Should these people only be Jewish when the UJA calls, or if Israel is in crisis? Or when they need a rabbi for marriage, brit millah, baby naming or bar mitzvah? It is imperative to remedy lack of outreach to our very own Jews.

Sincerely,

Raquel H. Newman • Public Affairs Consultant

945 Union Street, #6W • San Francisco, CA 94133 • (415) 885-2963 • FAX (415) 885-1488

RHN ASSOCIATES

November 30, 1993

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler
UAHC
838 Fifth Avenue
New York, N. Y. 10021-7064

Dear Alex:

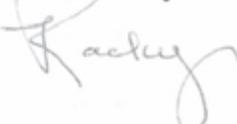
Many thanks for your letter of November 23, and the points made in it. I do not disagree with what you say.

However, your correspondence and mine do not mesh. Maybe I did not make myself clear to you. Permit me to try once again.

What I think is a prime concern for our movement is not the money or attempts at outreach. What is not happening is inreach, to our own Reform adults, ages (roughly) 22 to 45. This huge population, in whom we have already invested by way of religious school, life cycle events, camping, etc. are gone - or at best, distanced - from living Jewishly in terms of Reform's offerings via the synagogue.

We cannot back away from this tough reality! We must find out what turns our Reform Jewish adults off, and what they need and how they see themselves as Jews in today's world. If we ask and do the necessary study, we may be both surprised and shocked at what we are told, or the UAHC may be validated in its efforts and plans. I refer you back to my letter of November 15th. Lest you think what I describe is unique to the Bay area, I suggest that our movement consider a national discussion of this vital subject. Please do not say that the UAHC cannot afford such a project; money is not the issue. If you care to pursue this matter, I am available until December 16th. If I do not hear further, I will assume that this subject is closed for pursuit at this time. My very best wishes to you and Rea.

Sincerely,



Raquel H. Newman • Public Affairs Consultant

945 Union Street, #6W • San Francisco, CA 94133 • (415) 885-2963 • FAX (415) 885-1488



COPY

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

November 23, 1993
9 Kislev 5754

M. Schindler

Ms Raquel H. Newman
945 Union Street
#6W
San Francisco, CA 94133

Dear Racky:

Thank you for sharing your thoughts with me. I don't mind your adverse reactions in the slightest. The truth of the matter is that I wanted to evoke a discussion. I want people to think about their Judaism and how much they value it, and whether they value it sufficiently to offer it to others in the market place of ideas.

I am amazed by the implication in your letter that we are not concentrating on the involvement of our children. That is what the bulk of the money of the Union goes to - camping programs, education program, youth programs.

Moreover, I consider our Outreach effort itself a unity of a threefold concern:

- a. Outreach to the religiously non-preferenced.
- b. Outreach to the non-Jewish partners of our many intermarried children.
- c. Outreach to unaffiliated Jews.

In strengthening one aspect, I strengthen the others as well.

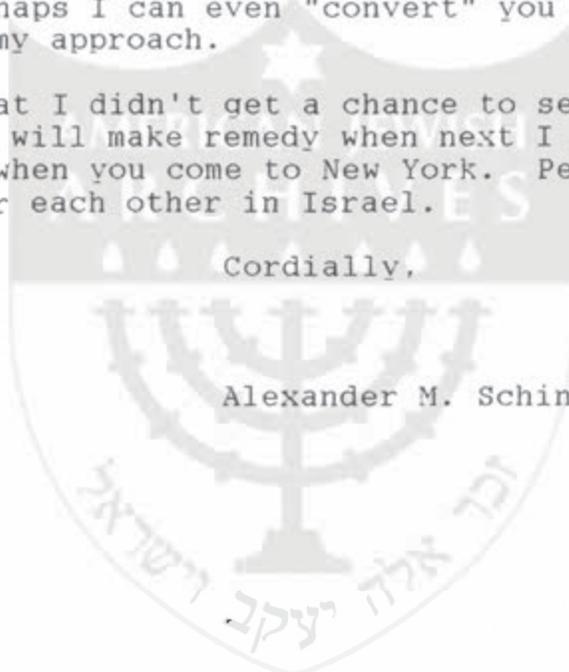
In any event, a minuscule sum is involved. As you well know, when we do get the full five million dollars for such a fund, it will throw off perhaps two hundred fifty thousand dollars and that expenditure out of a total budget of some twenty seven million dollars is scarcely disproportionate in terms of our central mission.

Hopefully we will have a chance to be together one of these days. I would really like to engage you in this dialogue, perhaps I can even "convert" you to the rightness of my approach.

I am sorry that I didn't get a chance to see you in San Francisco. I will make remedy when next I am in your community or when you come to New York. Perhaps we will encounter each other in Israel.

Cordially,

Alexander M. Schindler



RHN ASSOCIATES

November 15, 1993

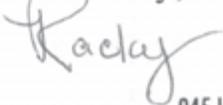
Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler
UAHC
838 Fifth Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10021

Dear Alex:

At the Biennial, I thought about your remarks on new levels of outreach and inclusion of non-Jews married to Jews in synagogue life. I am upset by your remarks, but not for the reasons that you are getting negative feedback. Let rabbis determine which rituals are appropriate for non-Jews to participate in that affect the synagogue's role.

What ticked me off is your emphasis on the non-Jewish population for inclusion with the scope of the Reform Movement's activities. What I believe you should have been concentrating on is the lack of involvement of our children, now in the population group age 22 to 45; the young, often single, or young marrieds who have been educated in the Reform tradition, who avoid any contact with institutional Jewish life - and especially the synagogue. Here are untold thousands of Jews who are not being embraced by our Movement. As leader of the UAHC, you need to look at what is alienating this huge population. Why are they not attracted to synagogue programming. What is to ensure Jewish continuity for this population group, when over 90% have nothing to do with Judaism currently, yet are living and working as independent adults. Reform Judaism appears not to offer good enough reasons to reconnect via the synagogue or camping. Should these people only be Jewish when the UJA calls, or if Israel is in crisis? Or when they need a rabbi for marriage, brit millah, baby naming or bar mitzvah? It is imperative to remedy lack of outreach to our very own Jews.

Sincerely,



Raquel H. Newman • Public Affairs Consultant

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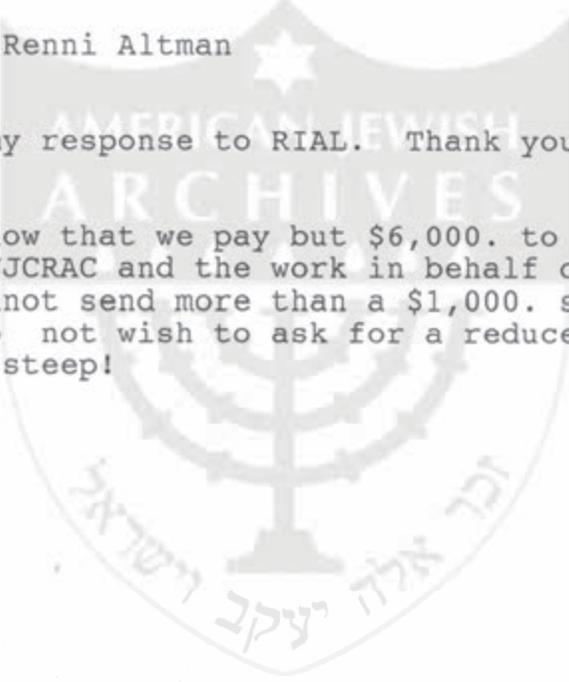
November 16, 1993
2 Kislev 5754

From: Rabbi Alexander . Schindler

To: Rabbi Renni Altman

Enclosed is my response to RIAL. Thank you for your guidance.

You should know that we pay but \$6,000. to the Presidents' Conference, NJCRAC and the work in behalf of Soviet Jewry. We simply cannot send more than a \$1,000. subvention to RIAL and I do not wish to ask for a reduce fee. \$10,000. per annum is steep!



November 16, 1993
2 Kislev 5754

The Rev. Nicholas B. van Dyck, President
Religion in American Life
2 Queenston Place, #200
Princeton, NJ 08540

Dear Dr. van Dyck:

Thank you for your congratulations on my recent UAHC President's Message. I appreciate your having taken the time to write and reiterate your invitation to share in the work of RIAL.

From time to time, I do see the materials produced by RIAL. They are most impressive and I congratulate you and the organization for providing such excellent resources.

Your 1992 success in increasing worship service attendance at participating congregations is heartening news. We congratulate you and support your work in seeking increased affiliation with religious institutions as well as your efforts on behalf of freedom of religion. Alas, however, as much as we would wish to participate in the work of RIAL, I fear we simply do not have the financial means to contribute in accordance with the financial requirements for membership in RIAL. The UAHC gains funding from dues contributions of member-congregations and special gifts from individuals and/or foundations. We must husband our resources with great care and while we do provide subventions to a few umbrella organizations with whom our work is allied, none of them require the substantial annual contribution which RIAL requests. We simply cannot undertake such an expenditure.

I much regret this negative response and continue to wish you well in the fine work of RIAL.

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

cc: Rabbi Joseph B. Glaser



איחוד
ליהדות
מתקדמת
באמריקה

TASK FORCE ON THE UNAFFILIATED

UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS

SERVING REFORM JUDAISM IN NORTH AMERICA
838 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10021-7064 (212) 249-0100

November 12, 1993
28 Cheshvan 5754

MEMORANDUM

To: Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler

From: Rabbi Renni S. Altman

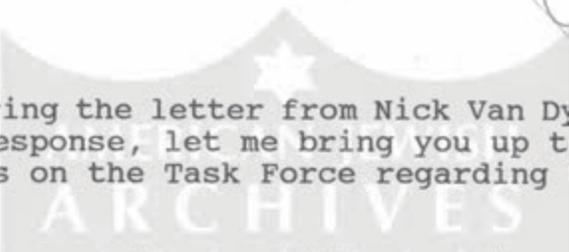
Re: RIAL

Thank you for sharing the letter from Nick Van Dyck with me. Prior to suggesting a response, let me bring you up to date on the most recent discussions on the Task Force regarding UAHC participation in RIAL.

- At the summer Executive Committee meeting of the Task Force, Mel shared with us his desire to urge our members to ask their friends to join synagogues and he asked the Task Force to prepare a brochure that would support that effort. In the discussion that followed, we revisited the possibility of joining RIAL and participating in their "Invite a Friend" program, as it accomplishes exactly what Mel wants to do. We recalled that when Joe Glaser presented RIAL to the Task Force four years ago, we declined because the materials appeared "too Christian" in tone. RIAL redesigned them to be more inclusive of synagogues. The major stumbling block that remained was cost -- a contribution of some \$10,000 (RIAL's funding comes from foundations and denominations' fair share contributions). The Task Force decided not to participate in RIAL and the UAHC made a contribution of \$1000 to support their efforts. At our meeting this summer, the Executive Committee recommended that we take another look into the possibility of joining RIAL.
- After the meeting I spoke with Joe Glaser, who was thrilled at the response of the Executive Committee of the Task Force, and Joe confirmed that this was a one-year contribution. After speaking with Nick Van Dyck, however, it turned out that Joe was working under a misconception and, in fact, the \$10,000 is

Director of Programs
Rabbi Renni S. Altman
Chairperson
Myra Ostroff
Co-Chairperson
Rabbi Steven E. Foster
Vice-Chairs
Sheila Thau
Geraldine Voit

*I like your
answers 1-3
No need to ask for
lower participation -
Just say you secured funds
for UAHC 6000 -
Soviet Jewry 6000 -
how are you
RIAL use \$1000
more from
\$10000 -*



an annual contribution. I told Nick that I thought that was way beyond our means. He suggested that the increase in members that congregations are experiencing as a result of this program would quickly pay for the annual fee. I explained to him that we, the UAHC, would not see the revenue from those additional memberships.

4. After discovering that the \$10,000 was an annual contribution, I spoke with Dan Syme. It was apparent that the UAHC does not have the funds for such a contribution and we never went any further with the recommendation of the Executive Committee.

Thus, it appears that the limitation on our participation in RIAL is a financial one. Do you have any philosophical issues in participating in this organization? Is there a financial level at which we would be able to participate on an annual basis? Would you envision money from the \$5 million Outreach project being made available for our participation in RIAL?

Personally, I would like to see us part of RIAL, but their fair share system -- as it stands -- makes it prohibitive for us. Congregations do have access to the Invite A Friend Program and Joe sent out information about it to all CCAR rabbis over the summer. Denominational participation makes a statement and helps to underwrite production of materials and advertisements so that the cost to congregations is minimal. I don't quite understand it, but they do have the UAHC listed as a supporter (it may be because of Joe's and Ron Sobel's personal involvement and financial contributions). The Orthodox, Conservative and Reconstructionists movements are also listed as supporters on their brochure.

Given the current situation, the following are my suggested points for a response:

1. We think that the work RIAL is doing, the materials they have produced and the resources they offer congregations are excellent.
2. We applaud their success in 1992 in increasing attendance at worship services in participating congregations.
3. We support RIAL's efforts, both on behalf of freedom of religion and on increasing affiliation, but we do not have the financial means to participate in the level that they require.
- [4. Alex, do you want to open the door for our participation at a lower level?]

I would be happy to discuss this with you further.

Lesni

MEMORANDUM

November 10, 1993

COPY

FROM: Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler

TO: Rabbi Renni Altman

Would you please review the enclosed from RIAL and let me have a suggested response.

Thank you.



Union of American Hebrew Congregations

SERVING REFORM JUDAISM IN NORTH AMERICA

838 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK, NY 10021-7064 (212) 249-0100

Religion In American Life
2 Queenston Place - Room 200
Princeton, NJ 08540
609 921 3639



*All return
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November 3, 1993

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

Dear Rabbi Schindler:

Congratulations on your October 23rd sermon at the annual meeting of the UAHC in San Francisco.

As soon as you feel you and your colleagues can be serious about outreach to the unaffiliated, I would be very happy to resume conversations with the UAHC about ways of helping UAHC congregations to capitalize on the \$20 million worth of public service advertising that RIAL provides the religious community. These public service ads as well as congregation-based activities are all focused on the most effective way of involving unaffiliated people in the life of a congregation--namely, inviting them.

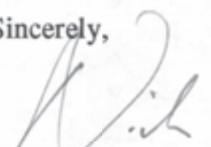
Although this is a habit that is strange to many current members, we have developed gentle and friendly ways of inviting people into the discovery of what a joy it can be to invite a friend to share something they believe is meaningful in their own lives.

Yes, RIAL will need financial support in order to print and distribute the materials to your congregations. Needless to say, it is worth it.

You may be interested in the fact that participating congregations throughout the United States in 1992 averaged an 11% increase in attendance at worship services. We would be pleased to help this happen in UAHC congregations, as well.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,


Nicholas B. van Dyck

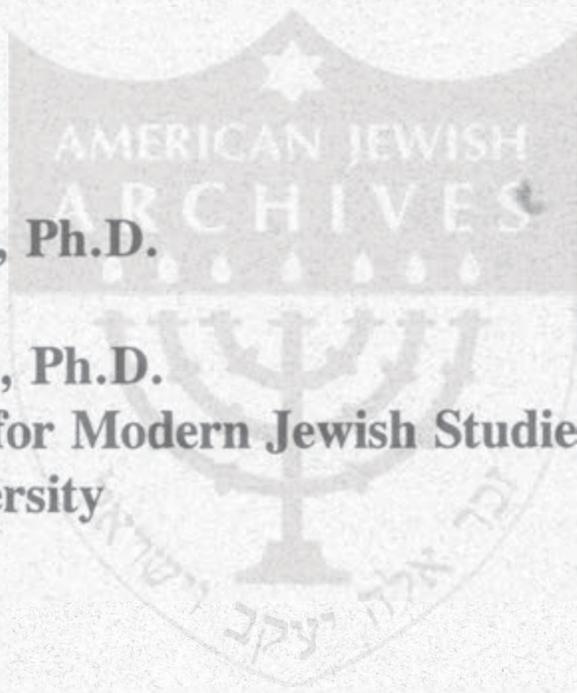
NBVD:sl

cc: Rabbi Joseph B. Glaser

Unaffiliated

Synagogue Affiliation: Implications for the 1990s

Gary A. Tobin, Ph.D.
and
Gabriel Berger, Ph.D.
Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies
Brandeis University



Research Report 9

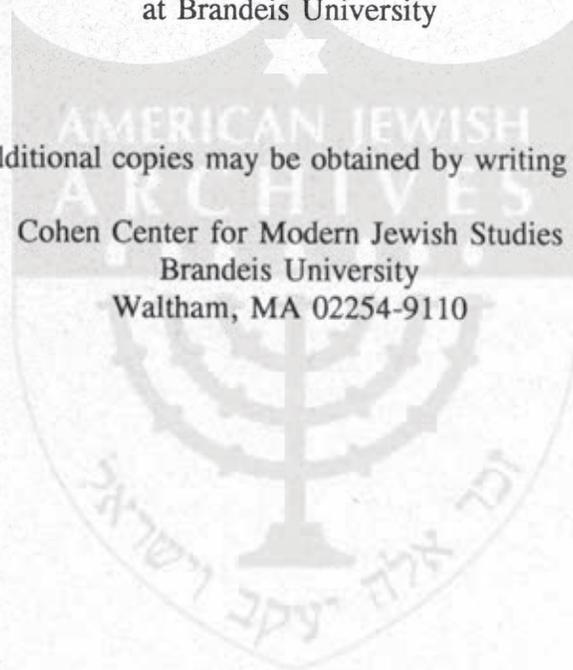
September 1993



This is a publication of the
Maurice and Marilyn Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies
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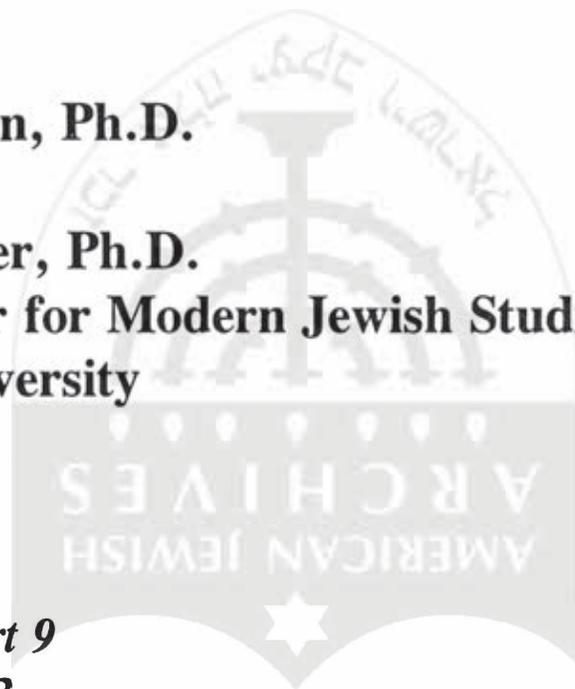


Synagogue Affiliation: Implications for the 1990s

Gary A. Tobin, Ph.D.
and
Gabriel Berger, Ph.D.
Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies
Brandeis University

Research Report 9
September 1993

Sylvia Barack Fishman, Ph.D.
Editor



SYNAGOGUE AFFILIATION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE 1990s

INTRODUCTION

Empirical analysis of synagogue affiliation and dropout of American Jews has rarely been published. While much scholarly work has explored the historical development and sociological dynamics of the American synagogue as an institution (Goldstein, 1955; Heilman, 1982; Jick, 1976; Kaploun, 1973; Sklare, 1975; Wertheimer, 1987), few empirical assessments have appeared focusing on factors influencing synagogue affiliation, involvement, and activities. It is no coincidence that two volumes dedicated to methodological issues in the study of denominations and congregations -- one published in 1979 and the other ten years later -- (Wuthnow, 1979; Welch, 1989) include no articles about the study of American Jews, their religious behavior, or their congregations. While some studies have been published about the determinants or the consequences of synagogue affiliation (Cohen, 1988, 1985; Himmelfarb, 1980, 1979, 1975; Himmelfarb and Loar, 1984; Huberman, 1985; Lazerwitz, 1988, 1978, 1973; York and Lazerwitz, 1987) by and large they tend to focus either on the broader acculturation-assimilation debate or on the study of religious identification among American Jews, treating synagogue affiliation as one of its indicators. In both cases, the published analyses of synagogue affiliation do not delve as deeply as studies of congregational affiliation in other religions. In addition, previous empirical analyses of synagogue affiliation have been based on data sets collected either for local community studies or for the 1970 National Jewish Population Study, raising the issues of limited coverage and currency. In contrast, the large data set of the recently completed 1990 National Jewish Population Survey (NJPS, Kosmin et al., 1991) offers a unique opportunity to explore synagogue affiliation on a national basis at the beginning of the nineties.

A true picture of synagogue membership is complicated by conflicting notions of what membership means, and by the tendency of members to cease paying dues. The 1990 NJPS asked respondents whether they themselves or any other member in their households were currently (at the time of the interview) a member of a synagogue;¹ thirty-nine percent of Jewish households reported that they include someone who is currently a member of a synagogue. The concept of synagogue affiliation measured by this question differs from that of synagogue membership as seen by officials of Jewish religious congregations. While synagogues by and large consider membership to mean dues-paying, individuals may say that they belong to a synagogue if they attend services on occasion, such as High Holidays, or if they once belonged to a synagogue. Current affiliation rates already seem low, but actual synagogue membership rates may be even lower (Tobin et al., 1988).

¹ It is interesting to mention that Gallup and Castelli report that 44 percent of American Jews (with a +/-7% margin of error) say that they are members of a synagogue or temple, which is not statistically different from the percentage reported in this paper --39%--.

The minority of Jewish households would seem to be affiliated with a synagogue at the beginning of the nineties; however, six out of ten Jewish adults have been members of Jewish religious congregations at some point in their adult lives.² This implies that 21 percent of Jewish adults have been members of synagogues at some point in their adult lives, but have dropped out from synagogue life. Put another way, 35 percent of people who ever affiliated with Jewish congregations became synagogue dropouts. In sum, four out of ten Jewish adults say that they currently belong to a synagogue, two out of ten have previously been members of synagogues during their adult life, and four out of ten have never been members of Jewish religious congregations as adults.

In terms of attendance at organized Jewish religious services, American Jews can be divided into four groups: 19 percent say that they never attend religious services, 23 percent claim that they only attend on special occasions related to rituals of passage --bar/bat mitzvah, wedding, etc. -- or once or twice a year, 33 percent attend on the High Holidays or a few times a year, and another 25 percent attend at least once a month or more often.

Compared to other religious groups, American Jews tend to be "unchurched." These statistics provide evidence of what Gallup and Castelli note in their study of religion in America (1989, p. 116): "Religion is a relatively low priority for American Jews, who lag behind the general population in membership in a congregation, worship attendance and the importance they place on religion in their lives." In this light, Gallup and Castelli (1989) found in an analysis of aggregated national polls conducted in the 1986-1988 period that while 55 percent of all Americans say that religion is "very important" in their lives, only 30 percent of American Jews make this statement. Conversely, one-third of American Jews (35 percent) say that religion is not very important in their lives, compared to only 14 percent of the general population.

Yet synagogue affiliation is positively associated with nearly all measures of a stronger Jewish identity, greater participation in Jewish ritual and practice, and participation in organizations and other Jewish institutions. While associative patterns can be noted, the causal relationships are difficult to define. It can be argued that belonging to a synagogue leads to higher ritual observance, or that higher levels of ritual observance lead to synagogue affiliation. It is only known for certain that synagogue membership is positively associated with most measures of higher participation, activity, and identity with the Jewish community both in organizational and religious terms.

The communal and religious value of synagogue membership, of course, cannot be evaluated only in terms of other positive relationships between synagogue membership and other religious or communal factors. Synagogue membership also has intrinsic value for two other reasons. First, synagogues are themselves community-building institutions. They serve as

² The NJPS included the following question: "Aside from membership your parents may have had, since you have been grown, have you ever belonged to a synagogue or temple?"

central gathering places that help organize social, political, and cultural activities. Synagogues help strengthen group identity and provide a focus for joint activity. As many analysts have noted, the congregation offers a communal structure beyond family or clan that gives coherence and meaning to an expanded group and individual identity. Synagogues also offer a location for vital life cycle events such as baby namings, weddings, and funerals. The synagogue also serves as an educational center, both for children and adults. Bar/bat mitzvah training serves several purposes. It is a valuable ritual practice in itself, a rite of passage for younger Jews, and also serves as a ceremony that integrates Jews into the fabric of the religious community.

Furthermore, synagogues can provide a moral and ethical framework which contextualizes life in the broader, general society as well as the individual religious group. Therefore, strengthening the synagogues of the Jewish community also benefits society as a whole.

Synagogue members within all branches of Judaism volunteer more hours for Jewish organizations, are more generous to religious philanthropies, give their children more religious instruction, and are more likely to participate in public prayer and private Jewish home rituals. While it is obvious that the religious consciousness that involves them in these activities also motivates them to affiliate with synagogues, there are strong indications that the influence works in the other direction as well: belonging to synagogues reinforces involvement with social action, civic responsibility, and with contemporary religious life. Ultimately, we would argue that these benefits constitute an overall increase in the quality of life, and bolster the positive strength of Jewish tradition.

The synagogue is one of the most important ways in which Jews become involved in the life of their community. Its critical role stems from the fact that while participation in organized religion originates as a private matter, it leads progressively to an expanding concern and commitment to the larger community of Jews.

Synagogue members are much more likely to contribute time and money to both Jewish and non-Jewish organizations and causes. In the early seventies, it was proposed that religious involvement was a major gateway to increasing participation in general voluntary associations. In the case of Jews, religious involvement seems to lead both to involvement in Jewish organizations and to participation in other general organizations. In other words, the synagogue socializes American Jews into further voluntary participation in other Jewish organizations, which in turn socializes them into participation in general voluntary associations. Synagogue membership and frequency of synagogue attendance have been found to be strong predictors of philanthropic contributions to non-Jewish organizations. Frequency of attendance at synagogue services is one of the strongest predictors of volunteering for Jewish organizations.

This paper begins with a description of the data source of this analysis--the 1990 NJPS--and a discussion of the data that were analyzed in this study. The second section discusses basic parameters of synagogue affiliation of American Jews. The third section of this paper looks at variations in synagogue affiliation rates by different groups defined in terms of socio-

demographic variables, background factors, and Jewish identification indicator levels. The final section of this paper presents the results of a multivariate analysis of synagogue affiliation. It then discusses the data from the 1990 National Jewish Population Survey, presents policy implications, and concludes with a discussion of a new research agenda for the study of synagogues in contemporary Jewish life.

DATA SOURCE AND SAMPLE

The data set analyzed here comes from the 1990 National Jewish Population Survey conducted by the Council of Jewish Federations and the North American Jewish Data Bank at the City University of New York (Kosmin et al. 1991a). This survey has already become a landmark study in the sociological analysis of American Jewry, and will probably serve as the main source for analyses for years to come. The final sample of the NJPS includes 2,441 completed interviews conducted during 1990, after a year-long process of screening over 125,000 randomly selected adult Americans. The data were collected through phone interviews by the ICR Survey Research Group of Media, PA during late spring and early summer of 1990.

The design of the NJPS called for a sample of 2,500 households drawn from a qualified universe of households containing at least one person identified as currently or previously Jewish. In order to obtain this sample, the 1990 NJPS included three stages: 1) a screening process on religious preferences of the adult American population (125,813 interviews) in which 5,146 households were identified as containing at least one person who qualified as Jewish; 2) an inventory stage in which qualified respondents from the first stage were re-qualified, the purpose of the study was explained, and basic demographic information about household composition was obtained (attempts were made to re-qualify 4,208 households previously qualified in the screening); and 3) a final interviewing stage of the study which yielded 2,441 completed interviews. In this third stage, respondents were asked about the current religion of each household member (Kosmin et al. 1991; Marketing Systems Group, 1991).

The analysis presented in this report is based exclusively on those households in which at least one household member was identified as Jewish by the respondent (the adult interviewed) in response to the question on current religion during the final interviewing stage. Of the 2,441 households included in the CJF/Data Bank analysis, only 1,794 cases meet this criterion (see Berger, 1992 for a thorough discussion of the redefined sample). As a result of the redefinition of the sample, 97 percent of the respondents identify themselves as currently Jewish by religion, while 2 percent are either Christian or have "other" religions, and 1 percent responded "none." The analysis reported in this paper is based on a weighted sample. The sample (or sub-set of the NJPS data set) included in this analysis represents over 2,160,000 households with over

5,300,000 members, and the respondents represent over 3,930,000 adults of current Jewish religion, and 4,130,000 adults.³



³ Given that the utilization of weight factors which yield a higher number of cases than the original number included in the sample, the use of tests of significance are problematic. Therefore, the original weight factors were recomputed to yield the same number of cases as the number of cases in the unweighted sample. In this manner, the relative frequency distributions obtained using the recomputed weighted sample size (1794), or the original weighted sample size (2,160,000 for households or 4,130,000 for adults) are equal.

LOOKING AT VARIATIONS IN PATTERNS OF CONGREGATIONAL MEMBERSHIP AND DROPOUT AMONG AMERICAN JEWS

In this section we examine differences in rates of current synagogue affiliation, synagogue affiliation ever, and synagogue dropout along multiple segmentations defined by socio-demographic characteristics (regional location, distance from the immigrant generation to the United States, length of residence in the community and at the present address, age, marital status, and family composition), socio-economic dimensions (level of educational attainment and income), level of Jewish socialization, extent of Jewish social networks, and degree of religious involvement. This analysis reveals which characteristics can be considered to affect Jewish congregational affiliation.

Regional Variations: Rates of affiliation with synagogues show significant differences by region of the country. Jews living in the Midwest are the most likely to be affiliated with synagogues, followed by Jews living in the East (the synagogue affiliation rate is 43 percent for the 46 percent of Jewish households located in the East). Jews living in the South and in the West are less likely to be affiliated with a synagogue (35 and 29 percent respectively). The percentage of adults who have ever been affiliated with synagogues is lowest in the West (51 percent) and is highest in the South (65 percent). This implies that Jews living in South are the most likely to be drop-outs from synagogues. The fact that Jews living in the South (mainly in Florida) are more likely to be dropouts could be related to very specific reasons: since a large proportion of Jews in Florida are senior citizens who have moved there after retirement, the dropout rate of Jews in the South is a result of their relocation and the abandonment of their institutional affiliations in their previous places of residence. It is quite possible that patterns among Jews in the South would be different without the Florida data.

SYNAGOGUE AFFILIATION BY REGION

Region	Current Synagogue Affiliation		Synagogue Affiliation Ever		Synagogue Dropout	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
North East	42.5	57.5	61.0	39.0	30.3	69.7
Mid-West	48.0	52.0	63.0	37.0	23.8	76.2
South	35.4	64.6	64.8	35.2	45.3	54.7
West	29.0	71.0	50.5	49.5	42.3	57.7
N	693	1101	1072	720	378	693

Length of Residence in the Community and At the Present Address: Respondents who have moved to their current communities since the eighties are the least likely to be affiliated with a synagogue. Similarly, those who have lived in their community for 10 years or less are less likely to have been affiliated during their adult lives. Similar patterns can be seen relative to the length of residence at the present address, except that those who moved into their present address before 1965 show a rate of ever-membership (and as a result of dropout) between that of those who moved in the decade of the eighties and that of those who moved earlier.

SYNAGOGUE AFFILIATION BY YEAR MOVED TO CITY OR TOWN

Year	Current Synagogue Affiliation		Synagogue Affiliation Ever		Synagogue Dropout	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
1985 - 1990	29.9	70.1	49.5	50.5	39.6	60.4
1980 - 1984	29.4	70.6	52.0	48.0	43.5	56.5
1975 - 1979	47.1	52.9	68.0	32.0	30.3	69.7
1970 - 1974	44.6	55.4	67.5	32.5	34.0	66.0
1965 - 1969	43.2	56.8	68.1	31.9	36.6	63.4
1964 or before	44.3	55.7	64.9	35.1	31.6	68.4
N	685	1086	1058	711	373	685

SYNAGOGUE AFFILIATION BY YEAR MOVED INTO CURRENT RESIDENCE

Year	Current Synagogue Affiliation		Synagogue Affiliation Ever		Synagogue Dropout	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
1985 - 1990	30.9	69.1	50.1	49.9	38.3	61.7
1980 - 1984	33.2	66.8	57.4	42.6	42.1	57.9
1975 - 1979	51.8	48.2	74.4	25.6	29.8	70.2
1970 - 1974	45.8	54.2	72.6	27.4	36.9	63.1
1964 - 1969	63.0	37.0	80.4	19.6	21.6	78.4
before 1965	45.1	54.9	63.4	36.6	28.9	71.1
N	1089	686	1057	717	371	686

Generation in the United States: Affiliation with a synagogue is higher among those who were born abroad (51 percent), it decreases to 43 percent among those born in the United States, but who have one of their parents born abroad, and seems to stabilize after the third generation in the United States. Similar patterns can be seen when looking at rates of ever-affiliation. However, dropout rates are highest among the second generation Jews (those who were born in the U.S., but whose parents were born abroad), with a 39 percent dropout rate among those ever-members of synagogues.

SYNAGOGUE AFFILIATION BY GENERATION IN THE U.S.

Generation	Current Synagogue Affiliation		Synagogue Affiliation Ever		Synagogue Dropout	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Foreign Born (first)	50.9	49.1	72.2	27.8	29.6	70.4
One Parent US Born (second)	42.7	57.3	69.6	30.4	38.6	61.4
Both Parents US Born (third)	36.3	63.7	53.9	46.1	32.4	67.6
3 or 4 Grandparents US Born (fourth)	38.7	61.3	51.9	48.1	25.5	74.5
N	716	1065	1077	701	361	716

Age: By looking at the relationship between respondent's and spouse's age (when the spouse is present in a household) and the household affiliation with a Jewish congregation, we see that those in the 25-34 age group have a lower rate of affiliation than older adults (28% versus 41-45%). Percentages of affiliation with synagogues during adult life increase with age: from 42 percent among those aged 25-34 to over 70 percent among those 55 and older. As a result, given the relative stability of rates of current affiliation after the middle of the forties and the linear increase in ever-affiliation rates with age, older individuals exhibit higher dropout rates than younger adults. The lowest dropout rate corresponds to the 35-44 age group (26 percent of ever-affiliated). This is due to the fact that the prime affiliation period (in which households join synagogues, but have not yet begun dropping out) occurs in these years.

SYNAGOGUE AFFILIATION BY AGE*

Age	Current Synagogue Affiliation		Synagogue Affiliation Ever		Synagogue Dropout	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
18 - 24	45.7	54.3	58.5	41.5	21.9	78.1
25 - 34	27.5	72.5	41.8	58.2	34.2	65.8
35 - 44	40.8	59.2	54.9	45.1	25.8	74.2
45 - 54	44.3	55.7	67.9	32.1	34.7	65.3
55 - 64	44.7	55.3	73.6	26.4	38.9	61.1
65 - 74	41.8	58.2	71.1	28.9	40.9	59.1
over 75	45.2	54.8	79.0	21.0	42.6	57.4
N	1108	1681	1695	1090	587	1108

* by respondent and spouse

Family Composition: The extent to which synagogue affiliation is determined by family life cycle is shown by increases in its rate from 29 percent among respondents who have never had children to 39 percent among those having children under age 6, to 53 percent among respondents having children between the ages of 6 and 9, 50 percent among respondents with children 10 to 13 and no older children, reaching a peak of 73 percent for households with both children 10 to 13 years old and children 14 to 17. Rates of synagogue affiliation drop when children in the household are older or leave home, but not so sharply as to reach the level of households with children under 6. Ever-member rates follow a similar pattern. However, the complete story is told when looking at rates of synagogue dropout by family life cycle. Dropout rates tell an interesting story: they begin at a high level among those who never had children (35 percent) and then begin falling, reaching a floor among households with more than 1 child at home, including a child 10-13 years old and a child 14-17 years old (13 percent). Dropout rates rise again when children pass their Bar/Bat Mitzvah years, being highest in households whose children have already left home, or if at home are 25 years old and older.

SYNAGOGUE AFFILIATION BY FAMILY COMPOSITION

Family Composition	Current Synagogue Affiliation		Synagogue Affiliation Ever		Synagogue Dropout	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Never Had Child	29.1	70.9	45.0	55.0	35.4	64.6
Child Under 6 at Home	39.2	60.8	52.7	47.3	25.7	74.3
Child 6 to 9 at Home	52.9	47.1	65.0	35.0	18.6	81.4
Child 10 to 13 at Home	49.5	50.5	61.3	38.7	19.3	80.7
Child 10 to 13 and 14 to 17 at Home	73.3	26.7	84.6	15.4	13.4	86.6
Child 14 to 17 (none 10 to 17)	53.4	46.6	67.6	32.4	21.0	79.0
Child 18 to 24 at Home	55.9	44.1	75.1	24.9	25.5	74.5
Had Child but none at Home or 25 and Older	42.0	58.0	77.5	22.5	45.6	54.4
N	807	1188	1214	778	408	807

Marital Status: Married respondents and widowed respondents show the highest percentages of affiliation with a synagogue or temple (43% and 44% respectively). Never married individuals show a lower percentage, while divorced and separated respondents are the least likely to be affiliated with Jewish religious congregations. However, since the ever-member rates are highest among widowed respondents, they show as high a dropout rate as divorced/separated respondents.

SYNAGOGUE AFFILIATION BY MARITAL STATUS

Marital Status	Current Synagogue Affiliation		Synagogue Affiliation Ever		Synagogue Dropout	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Never Married	36.5	63.5	50.5	49.5	27.8	72.2
Married	42.9	57.1	64.0	36.0	32.8	67.2
Divorce/ Separated	31.4	68.6	54.7	45.3	42.7	57.3
Widowed	41.9	58.1	74.8	25.2	44.1	55.9
N	716	1056	1078	691	362	716

Household Income: Affiliation with a synagogue is higher among households in the higher income categories: 43 percent among those in the \$60,000-\$79,999 income group and 49 percent among those in the \$80,000 or above income category. Households in the \$50,000-\$59,999 income group are the least likely to have ever been members of synagogues, while those with incomes of \$80,000 or more are the most likely to have been ever-members. Finally, households with incomes between \$20,000 and \$39,999 are the most likely to have adults who have dropped out of congregations, while those with incomes over \$80,000 are the least likely to have adults who have dropped out of synagogues.

SYNAGOGUE AFFILIATION BY HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Household Income	Current Synagogue Affiliation		Synagogue Affiliation Ever		Synagogue Dropout	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Less than \$19,000	35.1	64.9	55.1	44.9	36.3	63.7
\$20,000-\$29,999	34.6	65.4	59.3	40.7	41.7	58.3
\$30,000-\$39,999	30.5	69.5	54.3	45.7	43.5	56.5
\$40,000-\$49,999	38.0	62.0	57.7	42.3	34.2	65.8
\$50,000-\$59,999	31.1	68.9	48.1	51.9	35.4	64.6
\$60,000-\$79,999	42.7	57.3	58.9	41.1	27.5	72.5
\$80,000 or more	49.1	50.9	68.0	32.0	27.8	72.2
N	576	952	884	642	308	576

Secular Education: Contrary to some popular misperceptions, higher educational levels are related to higher rates of synagogue affiliation. While 35 percent of respondents and spouses who completed high school or less are currently affiliated with a congregation (who, incidentally, comprise 27 percent of all heads of households), 45 percent of those with graduate degrees are affiliated with synagogues. However, those without college degrees are as likely as those with them to have been affiliated with synagogues at some point in their adult lives, and as a result they are more likely to be synagogue dropouts.

SYNAGOGUE AFFILIATION BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT*

Highest Degree Completed	Current Synagogue Affiliation		Synagogue Affiliation Ever		Synagogue Dropout	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
High School or Less	34.5	65.5	58.7	41.3	41.1	58.9
BA Not Completed	36.0	64.0	61.8	38.2	41.5	58.9
BA	41.7	58.3	58.7	41.3	28.8	71.2
Graduate Degree	45.3	54.7	64.3	35.7	29.6	70.4
N	1086	1659	1664	1078	576	1088

* by respondent and spouse

Enrollment in Jewish Education: The degree to which synagogues are rooted in the family is reflected in the relationship between synagogue affiliation and having children enrolled in formal Jewish education programs. As one observer noted, "education is the magnet that draws Jews to synagogue life," given that one of the primary functions assigned to Jewish congregations is to socialize children into the Jewish religion. Almost all (94 percent) households with children enrolled in Jewish education programs are currently affiliated with a synagogue. The percentage drops to 34 percent among households without children enrolled.

SYNAGOGUE AFFILIATION BY CHILD ENROLLED IN JEWISH EDUCATION

Child Enrolled in Jewish Education	Current Synagogue Affiliation		Synagogue Affiliation Ever		Synagogue Dropout	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
No	33.7	66.3	56.5	43.5	40.2	59.8
Yes	93.5	6.5	96.5	3.5	3.1	96.9
N	693	1101	1072	720	378	693

Jewish Social Networks: Greater social involvement with other Jews seems to be related to synagogue affiliation, either as an antecedent or as a consequence of it. Through relationships with synagogue members, individuals are encouraged to affiliate with synagogues. If we consider Jewish social networks as a consequence of affiliation with religious congregations, we see that affiliation at some point during adult life leads to larger Jewish networks. Only 15 percent of those having no Jews among their closest friends are affiliated with a synagogue, as compared to 51 percent of those who report that most of their closest friends are Jewish, and 58 percent of those who report that all of their friends are Jewish. Dropout rates among those who have been synagogue members at some point in their life decrease with the extent of Jewish social networks, from 60 percent among those with no Jewish close friends to 25 percent of those who report that all of their closest friends are Jewish.

SYNAGOGUE AFFILIATION BY NUMBER OF JEWS AMONG FRIENDS

Friends	Current Synagogue Affiliation		Synagogue Affiliation Ever		Synagogue Dropout	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
None Jewish	15.0	85.0	37.4	62.6	59.8	40.2
Few Jewish	23.1	76.9	41.9	58.1	44.7	55.3
Some Jewish	34.3	65.7	54.5	45.5	37.0	63.0
Most Jewish	50.8	49.2	73.0	27.0	30.4	69.6
All Jewish	57.8	42.2	78.0	22.0	25.4	74.6
N	710	1070	1078	699	368	710

Denominational Differences: Rates of synagogue affiliation are determined to a great extent by the denomination of the household. The majority of Orthodox Jewish households, but by no means all of them (65 percent), are affiliated with a synagogue. Orthodox Jews may not have formal affiliations, but still pray in less institutional group settings. Conservative Jewish households follow Orthodox Jews in their rates of affiliation: half of them are affiliated with a synagogue. Of the three main Jewish denominations, Reform Jewish households are the least likely to be affiliated: four out of ten claim to be synagogue members. Finally, households which identified themselves using non-denominational labels (Just Jewish, secular Jews, traditional, etc.) are less likely to be affiliated with synagogues than those identified with any of the three main Jewish denominations. The 1990 NJPS did not ask about involvements with Havurah-style group worship and study.

When focusing on ever-member households, Orthodox Jews and Conservative Jews are just as likely to affiliate with synagogues at some point during their adult lives, with three-quarters of them claiming to be currently affiliated with a synagogue, or to have been personally affiliated during their adulthood. However, in contrast, Conservative Jews are almost three times as likely to drop out of their congregations as Orthodox Jews (29 percent versus 10 percent). Reform Jews lag behind members of these two more traditional denominations in their ever-member rates. In addition, they show the highest dropout rate of the three main branches of Judaism (38 percent). It is interesting to note that one-third of those households which identify themselves as Just Jewish or Secular Jews have been affiliated with synagogues. This is probably a manifestation that synagogue affiliation is not only the result of religious commitment, but in the context of the American Jewish community synagogue affiliation serves the purpose of expressing Jewish ethnic identification, or people switching their denominational labels. By affiliating with a synagogue, American Jews maintain and feed their ethnic networks, socialize their children in the Jewish tradition and culture, and participate in a number of ritual practices that are considered central to Jewish life, even by those who define Judaism in non-religious terms.

SYNAGOGUE AFFILIATION BY HOUSEHOLD DENOMINATION

Household Denomination	Current Synagogue Affiliation		Synagogue Affiliation Ever		Synagogue Dropout	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Orthodox	65.4	34.6	73.2	26.8	10.1	89.9
Conservative	52.2	47.8	73.5	26.5	29.0	71.0
Reform	40.0	60.0	64.7	35.3	38.1	61.9
Just Jewish/Secular	13.4	86.6	38.0	62.0	64.6	35.4
Other	21.1	78.9	36.2	63.8	41.2	58.8
Non-Jewish	5.6	94.4	23.3	76.7	75.7	24.3
N	691	1033	1052	669	361	691

Jewish Religious Socialization: The number of years of formal Jewish education that a person has had seems to directly affect the likelihood of membership in a religious congregation. One-quarter of those who have not received a formal Jewish education are affiliated with a Jewish religious congregation. The percentage increases to 38-39 percent among those with 1 - 4 years of formal Jewish education, jumps to 48-49 percent for those with 5 - 8 years of Jewish education, and increases another 10 percent among those with 9 or more years of Jewish education. When looking at rates of ever-membership in a synagogue we note a similar relationship with years of Jewish education, although the increase does not seem to be as linear

as in the case of rates of current synagogue affiliation. Altogether, there seems to be a clear distinction among those who have not received Jewish education, those who have received between 1 and 8 years of Jewish education, and those who have received 9 or more years: 45 percent in the first group have ever been adult members of religious congregations, between 64 and 67 percent in the second group have been synagogue members, and over 76 percent in the third group have been synagogue members as adults.

Another component in the religious socialization of American Jews is determined by the denomination in which individuals have been raised. Jewish denominations are differentiated not only by their traditions and rituals and the ways in which they interpret Jewish sacred texts, but also by the importance attached to participation and active involvement in the activities and affairs of a religious community. The denomination in which respondents have been raised would have influenced whether they belonged to or attended a Jewish religious congregation when they were growing up, and previous participation during childhood should have an impact on adult participation in synagogue. Therefore, affiliation with synagogues will not only be influenced by the current denomination of the respondents, but also by the religious tradition in which they were raised. The influence of Jewish denominations during childhood in adult synagogue affiliation can be analyzed in a number of ways. First, we can look at rates of affiliation by denomination in which someone was raised: fifty-six percent of those raised as Orthodox Jews, 42 percent of those raised as Conservative Jews and 30 percent of those raised as Reform Jews belong to a synagogue. The same pattern in the impact of the main three denominations emerges when looking at the ever-member rates. In addition, those raised as Reform Jews show the highest dropout rate of any of the three main denominations in American Judaism (42 percent), while Orthodox Jews show the lowest (29 percent).

A more refined way of looking at the influence of denominational identification on congregational affiliation is obtained by looking at the percentage of Jews raised in a particular denomination and identified with the same denomination as adults who are affiliated with synagogues. This analysis confirms the same patterns observed previously: the more traditional the denomination -- of origin as well as choice -- the more likely someone is to affiliate with a congregation, and the less likely to drop out from congregational life. In addition, the difference between rates of synagogue affiliation ever between Orthodox Jews and Conservative Jews is minimal. Finally, the data indicate that there is about a fifteen percent difference in rates of affiliation among the "product" of the three major Jewish denominations and those raised and identifying as Just Jewish or Secular Jews: 67 percent of the raised-current Orthodox, 53 percent of the raised-current Conservative, 36 percent of the raised-current Reform, and 20 percent among the raised-current Just Jewish/Secular Jews.

SYNAGOGUE AFFILIATION BY YEARS OF JEWISH EDUCATION*

Age	Current Synagogue Affiliation		Synagogue Affiliation Ever		Synagogue Dropout	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
None	25.0	75.0	44.9	55.1	44.2	55.8
1-2 Years	39.3	60.7	66.3	33.7	40.7	59.3
3-4 Years	38.0	62.0	64.0	36.0	40.5	59.5
5-6 Years	48.6	51.4	67.3	32.7	27.8	72.2
7-8 Years	51.6	48.4	67.3	32.7	28.1	71.9
9-10 Years	59.5	40.5	75.6	24.4	21.4	78.6
11 or More Years	60.7	39.3	79.8	20.2	23.4	76.6
N	1033	1596	1577	1047	544	1033

* by respondent and spouse

SYNAGOGUE AFFILIATION BY DENOMINATION RAISED

Denomination	Current Synagogue Affiliation		Synagogue Affiliation Ever		Synagogue Dropout	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Orthodox	56.0	44.0	79.2	20.8	29.1	70.9
Conservative	41.8	58.2	63.4	36.6	34.1	65.9
Reform	29.6	70.4	51.3	48.7	42.1	57.9
Just Jewish/ Secular	32.4	67.6	47.8	52.2	32.2	67.8
Other Jewish	19.8	80.2	44.5	55.5	55.5	44.5
Non-Jewish	41.2	58.8	49.3	50.7	16.6	83.4
N	715	1044	1080	676	365	715

SYNAGOGUE AFFILIATION BY DENOMINATION RAISED AND CURRENT DENOMINATION

Denomination Raised and Current	Current Synagogue Affiliation	Synagogue Affiliation Ever	Synagogue Dropout
Orthodox	67	75	9
Conservative	53	71	26
Reform	36	56	37
Just-Secular	20	40	51

Religious Involvement: Affiliation with a synagogue can be thought of as emerging from someone's previous level of religious involvement and commitment. This does not exclude the possibility that by participating in a congregation people in turn increase the level of their religious involvement. At one level we can surmise that synagogue affiliation is triggered -- among other things -- by a more frequent participation in religious services. People who attend services more frequently tend to formalize their relationship with the institution in which they worship. Thus, 84 percent of respondents who attend services about once a month or more often are affiliated with a congregation as compared to 16 percent of those who attend a couple of times a year. Also, some may pray through non-institutional services such as *havurah* or *shtiebel*.

Another manifestation of religious involvement is measured by the number of Jewish religious practices observed: keeping kosher (defined here as having separate sets of dishes for dairy and meat products), lighting candles on Friday night, lighting Hanukkah candles, and participating in a Passover seder. Synagogue affiliation increases with the number of religious practices observed by household members: while 80 percent of those observing these four rituals are affiliated with a synagogue, 9 percent of the households not performing any of these four rituals claim affiliation with a synagogue.

A third dimension of religious involvement which may be used to look at variations in synagogue affiliation is the importance which the respondent said s/he attached to being a Jew. Synagogue affiliation increases with the degree of importance of being Jewish: 18 percent of those for whom being Jewish is not very important are affiliated with a congregation, 29 percent of those who say that being Jewish is somewhat important, and 57 percent of those for whom being Jewish is very important.

A final dimension of religious involvement which is available in this analysis of the NJPS relates to whether people define being Jewish in religious terms or in ethnic/cultural terms. The NJPS asked a sub-set of respondents (about a third of the original sample) if they thought that

being Jewish in America means to be a member of a religious group, an ethnic group, a cultural group, or a nationality group (respondents could agree with more than one category).⁴ Those defining being a Jew as being a member of a religious group were clearly more likely to be affiliated with a congregation: 50 percent of them are. In contrast, 31 percent of those defining being a Jew as being a member of an ethnic, cultural or nationality -- but not as a religious -- group were affiliated with a congregation. It is interesting that the difference between these two groups -- those defining Jewishness in religious terms and those defining it in secular terms -- in their rates of ever-affiliating with a synagogue are smaller (66 percent versus 58 percent).

This may be an indication that people's understanding of what it means to be Jewish changes over time from a religious perspective when they are (or were) affiliated with a synagogue to a secular perspective, which characterizes non-members. The NJPS showed that 51 percent of non-members consider that being a Jew in American means being a member of an ethnic, cultural or nationality group versus 38 percent who defined Jewishness in religious terms and 11 percent who chose neither categorization.



⁴. The NJPS included the following question: "When you think of what it means to be a Jew in America could you say that it means being a member of ...(A religious group?; An ethnic group?; A cultural group; A nationality?) Each respondent was asked to respond yes or no to each of the four items. A new variable was created for this analysis using responses to these four items, taking three possible values: 1) yes to religious group; 2) no to religious group, but yes to ethnic group, cultural group or nationality; and 3) no to any of the four items.

SYNAGOGUE AFFILIATION BY SYNAGOGUE ATTENDANCE

Synagogue Attendance	Current Synagogue Affiliation		Synagogue Affiliation Ever		Synagogue Dropout	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Do Not Attend at All	8.0	92.0	40.2	59.8	79.9	20.1
Once or Twice a Year/ Special Occasions	15.7	84.3	36.2	63.8	56.7	43.3
High Holidays	47.7	52.3	71.9	28.1	33.5	66.5
About Once a Month or More	83.6	16.4	94.3	5.7	11.4	88.6
N	711	1001	1078	631	367	711

SYNAGOGUE AFFILIATION BY THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING A JEW

How Important	Current Synagogue Affiliation		Synagogue Affiliation Ever		Synagogue Dropout	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Not Important	6.3	93.7	15.3	84.7	59.0	41.0
Not Very Important	18.3	81.7	45.1	54.9	59.4	40.6
Somewhat Important	29.1	70.9	50.0	50.0	41.7	58.3
Very Important	57.1	42.9	78.8	21.2	27.6	72.4
N	238	348	361	225	123	238

SYNAGOGUE AFFILIATION BY DEFINITION OF JEWISHNESS

Jews are Members of	Current Synagogue Affiliation		Synagogue Affiliation Ever		Synagogue Dropout	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Religious Group	52.0	48.0	69.0	31.0	22.0	78.0
Secular Group	31.0	69.0	58.4	41.6	47.0	53.0
Neither Religious Nor Secular	25.3	74.7	52.1	47.9	51.4	48.6
N	238	348	361	225	123	23

AMERICAN JEWISH

PREDICTORS OF CURRENT SYNAGOGUE AFFILIATION, SYNAGOGUE AFFILIATION EVER, AND CONGREGATIONAL DROPOUT

The analysis presented in the previous section suggests that synagogue affiliation varies along many different characteristics. For example, it showed that synagogue affiliation is higher among those living in the Midwest and is lower in the South and in the West. Similarly, current synagogue affiliation seems to be affected by income level, being higher among those with incomes over sixty thousand dollars. Additionally, many other characteristics would seem to be associated with synagogue affiliation (e.g. identifying with a more traditional denomination, residing in the same community since before the eighties, being foreign born or first generation in the US, etc.), with synagogue affiliation ever (older age, having older children, being widowed, etc.) or with synagogue dropout. However, this examination does not reveal which of these relationships reflect independent effects and which are the result of confounding factors. In order to establish which are the variables having predictive power on current synagogue affiliation, synagogue affiliation ever, and synagogue dropout we need to take the analysis one step further.

We have conducted a multivariate analysis using a technique called logistic regression, which allows us to assess which variables have an independent effect on a dichotomous dependent variable (one taking only two values).⁵ A variable has an independent effect on another when it maintains a statistically significant relationship with a dependent variable, even after controlling (through analytical manipulation) for the effects of the other independent variables in the analysis. In technical terms, one goal of multivariate analysis is to statistically adjust the effects of each variable included in the model for differences in the distribution of and associations among the other independent variables. A confounding relationship between an

⁵. This analysis was conducted using the SAS computer package (Harrel, 1988) on a VMS environment.

independent variable (e.g. length of residence in a community) and an outcome variable (e.g. synagogue affiliation) may exist when there is another independent variable (e.g. age) which is associated with both the first independent variable (in this case, length of residence) and the outcome variable (synagogue affiliation). Multivariate analysis permits adjustment of the relationship between length of residence and synagogue affiliation for the confounding impact of age. Therefore, we can assess whether the noted relationship between length of residence and synagogue affiliation is still found after controlling for the effect of age. In multivariate analysis, we can in fact introduce several independent variables at the same time in the same model, and study the relationship between any of the independent variables included and the outcome variable, adjusting for the effects for all the other independent variables in the model (Aldrich and Nelson, 1984; Hosmer and Lemeshow, 1989).

The following table presents the independent variables included in the multivariate analysis and their basis statistics (mean, standard deviations, minimum and maximum values). This list includes variables measured in an interval scale (such as age), ordinal scale (such as how many of the closest friends are Jewish), and discrete, nominal scale variables (such as child enrolled in Jewish education). It should be mentioned that a few of the variables were originally multinominal scaled, that is, measured using several mutually exclusive categories, which have neither numeric relationship nor order among themselves. In the multivariate analysis, these multinominal variables have been introduced as a series of "design variables": dichotomous variables for each of the categories of interest which indicate the impact of a particular characteristic relative to that of a "control" or "referent" group which is not included in the multivariate model. For example, generation in the United States was measured using the categories "first generation," "second generation," "third generation," and "fourth generation," but in the multivariate only the last three categories are included as dichotomous variables. As a result, the coefficient obtained in logistic regression analysis for each of these three variables indicates the effect on the likelihood of affiliating with a synagogue of being a "second," "third," or "fourth" generation American relative to being "first" generation.

The multivariate analysis of synagogue affiliation reveals that the likelihood of being a member of a Jewish congregation is affected by the following:

- It increases with older age.
- It is higher among those living in the Midwest than it is among those living in the Northeast. However, there are no significant differences among those living in the South and in the West relative to those living in the Northeast.
- It is less likely among those who have moved to the current town or community during the eighties.
- It is more likely among households with incomes of eighty-thousand dollars or more. However, there is no difference in the probability of affiliating with a synagogue between households with incomes in the \$60,000-\$79,999 group and those with lower income levels.

- Households with children between the ages of 6 and 9 are less likely to affiliate with a synagogue relative to empty nester households or those with children over 24 years old at home.
- Contrary to what might be expected, never-married individuals are more likely to be affiliated than individuals with other status (when controlling for other factors).
- It increases with the number of years of formal Jewish education received. Those with 5 to 8 years of Jewish education are more likely to be affiliated with a synagogue than those with 4 years or less, or with no Jewish education at all. In the same vein, those with 9 or more years of Jewish education are even more likely to be affiliated with a synagogue.
- It is higher among those identified with any of the three main denominations than among those self-defined as "secular or Just Jewish."
- It increases with the number of Jewish religious practices observed.
- It is affected by having children enrolled in formal Jewish education. In fact, the size of its coefficient indicates that this is the strongest predictor of synagogue affiliation.

The logistic regression analysis of whether or not someone has been a synagogue member at some point during adult life reveals several similar patterns to those observed with regard to current synagogue affiliation and some distinctive relationships. The likelihood of ever belonging to a synagogue is affected by the following:

- It increases with age.
- It is higher among those living in the South relative to those living in the Northeast. There are no significant differences between those living in the Midwest, in the West, and in the Northeast.
- It is higher among those living in households with incomes over \$80,000.
- Individuals with graduate degrees are less likely to have been members of synagogues than those without advanced degrees.
- Those with children under the age of 14 or who have never had children are less likely to have ever been members of synagogues than those who are empty nesters or who have children over 24 years old at home.
- It increases with the number of years of formal Jewish education received.
- It increases with the number of religious practices observed.
- It is higher among those identified as Conservative Jews or as Reform Jews than among those identified as "Secular or Just Jewish." However, when controlling for other factors, there do not seem to be differences between Orthodox Jews and non-denominational Jews in their likelihood of ever-affiliation.
- Having children enrolled in formal Jewish education maintains its character as the strongest predictor of synagogue affiliation, even when taking an adult life horizon.

Finally, the multivariate analysis of factors affecting synagogue dropout shows findings consistent with those presented above. This analysis reveals that the likelihood of dropping out from synagogues is affected by the following:

- It decreases with older age.
- It is higher among those who moved into their current communities in the eighties.
- The likelihood of dropping out of congregations decreases with the more traditional character of the denomination of the individual. Orthodox Jews are the least likely to drop out relative to Secular Jews, followed by Conservative Jews and Reform Jews.
- It is lower among those with incomes over \$80,000 relative to those with incomes under \$60,000.
- It is lower among those who have never had children or who have children under the age of 6 (and who have been members of synagogues as adults) relative to those who are empty-nesters. Similarly, it is lower among those having children enrolled in formal Jewish education.
- It is lowest among those who had 9 years or more of formal Jewish education relative to those who had 4 years or less.
- It decreases with the number of Jewish religious practices observed.

CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The data in this monograph clearly indicate that the factors that are negatively associated with synagogue affiliation are becoming more widespread. For example, the data indicate that current synagogue affiliation is considerably lower in the South and West than the Midwest and Northeast. Yet the same data indicate that Jewish population has shifted geographically, as have other American populations, with increasing proportions of Jews living in the South and West as opposed to the Midwest and Northeast. Given this regional association, one may expect that geographic contextual factors will continue to impinge negatively on synagogue affiliation. Similarly, data indicate that the synagogue dropout rate is highest in the South and West. As Jews continue to relocate from the Northeast and Midwest, the dropout rate should continue to increase if the institutional status quo is maintained.

One might have expected that synagogue affiliation would decline with each successive generation. However, there is no statistical difference between the affiliation rates of third and fourth-generation Jews. Nor is there any significant difference by age, with the exception of 25 to 34-year-olds, who are less likely to have a current affiliation. This seems to be more a function of family composition and life cycle than age. As the proportion of singles, never-marrieds, empty nesters and other "non-traditional" families continues to grow, these contextual factors will also continue to negatively affect synagogue affiliation as long as the institutions remain in their current form.

The biggest differences are recorded between those who rank the importance of being Jewish as very important, as opposed to not important. Only 6 percent of those who say being Jewish is not important belong to a synagogue, as opposed to 57 percent of those who say it is very important. Clearly, synagogue affiliation is closely associated with one's definition of Jewishness and the importance of religion in one's life. This presents the greatest challenge for the synagogue as an institution to appeal to the ever growing number of Jews who do not see religion or being Jewish as very important or even somewhat important in their lives. Equally telling, even 43 percent of those who consider being Jewish to be very important in their lives do not have a current synagogue affiliation. Therefore, the central role of the synagogue as either a community institution or a religious institution is in question for both Jews who consider religion and Judaism important and even more so for those who do not.

Both institutional and contextual factors will affect synagogue affiliation. Contextual factors include both demographic and cultural factors. Demographic factors include population growth and decline surrounding a particular congregation or the population growth or decline of a particular religious group. Racially changing neighborhoods often have a negative impact on the growth of a particular congregation. Racial change is often accompanied by change in income, and declining income often has a negative impact on the size and positive or negative growth of the synagogue. The demography of subgroups surrounding the congregation, whether those subgroups are defined by age, marital status, family composition, or other factors may have a positive or negative influence on the congregation as well.

Cultural factors affect affiliation as well. A growing trend to consumerism, in which individuals shop for congregations as they shop for other consumer goods, including organizations and institutions, affects synagogue affiliation and loyalty to the institution. Individuals are more likely to drop out of or join the synagogue depending on their own particular needs or the needs of their family. The institution is viewed as a service to the individual rather than a communal obligation.

Cultural consumerism is combined with other culturally influenced factors, and with an overall movement among Jews as well as other Americans away from organizations. For example, the overall loss of authority of organized religion has some influence. Individuals may feel no particular need to join the synagogue and it may have no legitimacy or authority in their everyday lives. This lack of authority and legitimacy may also encourage individuals to drop their membership at any given time. They may feel no communal or other sanctions from their decision to disaffiliate.

Perhaps the position of the synagogue would be improved if the institutional role of the synagogue were used to affect contextual factors. The synagogue might be a place, for example, where single Jews would meet to find marriage partners. If the synagogue could serve this function of creating new Jewish families, then in some sense it would create future constituencies. Perhaps the synagogue should adapt its education curriculum and aim to increase the number of 18 to 30-year-olds who attend. Such individuals would then be more likely to have active involvement in the Jewish community as a whole and in the synagogue in particular.

In the end, synagogues cannot make Jews live in New York, raise their incomes, or provide them with a secular education. But synagogues can facilitate trips to Israel, improve the quality of Jewish education, provide programs for Jews to meet other Jews, or encourage trips to Israel. Such actions strengthen the Jewish community.

Perhaps the strategic location of satellite synagogues in locations in low density suburbs could provide an institution around which Jews could make locational decisions. Perhaps synagogues can, as in the Orthodox community, anchor particular communities. Serving as a communal-based institution can strengthen the vitality of the Jewish family.

All of these ultimately are contextual factors that are not outside the institutional influence of the synagogue. Altogether, the internal restructuring of the synagogue can influence the immediate membership and have a long-term positive effect on the contextual factors as a whole. Given affiliation as a vital and intrinsic value to the continued vibrancy of the Jewish community, the active role of the synagogue in these endeavors is critical.

The countervailing forces against synagogue affiliation, both demographic and identity factors, necessitate a much more aggressive set of policies and actions on the part of synagogues to increase membership. Even though the institution has evolved in a variety of ways over the

past generation, the current data indicate continuing need for adjustment. While one may debate the relative importance of contextual versus institutional factors, it is clear that contextual factors have an overall negative influence on synagogue affiliation. Therefore, the institutional factors become even more critical, and whatever variance in membership can be ascribed to institutional versus contextual factors requires a more in-depth institutional examination and approach.

The individual culture of the synagogue may cause growth or decline. Is it a large institution or a small institution? Is it friendly or cold? Does the synagogue actively promote or discourage involvement? All of these are cultural aspects of the institution which may appeal or not to specific subgroups of Jews.

Impressionistic and anecdotal data from individual synagogues and from the umbrella organizations of the Reform and Conservative denominations, for example, indicate that special programs in outreach, a new rabbi, or other special efforts can produce rapid growth in synagogue membership, particularly in synagogues that have had no growth or decline due to institutional stagnation. It is not clear whether or not one synagogue pulls members from another or there is a net gain due to institutional innovation, but it can be assumed that in most cases there is a net increase in the total synagogue membership when innovative institutional efforts are undertaken. Given the communal importance of synagogue affiliation, special efforts to expand the number and type of membership recruitment programs or programs that are inherently interesting or needed by larger proportions of the Jewish population would seem to be a top priority on the Jewish communal agenda.

One of the implications of the data rests in the differences between respondent definitions of synagogue membership and affiliation and the institutional definitions of membership. As indicated before, much higher proportions of the respondent population indicate that they belong to a synagogue, that is to say they are dues-paying members, than are actually on the rosters of the individual institutions. Membership is more broadly defined by the respondents to include infrequent attendance, former affiliation, or some psychological or geographical tie to the institution. Part of the explanation for lower affiliation has to do with the institution's social and financial barriers to formal membership. Given the relatively low levels of religious identification of many Jews, institutional barriers of any kind are likely, and indeed have been shown to have a serious negative impact on synagogue membership. The predilection not to join or be active is already strong enough from the change in contextual factors, so that any institutional barriers will have a multiple compound negative effect for many Jews who are already predisposed not to have formal synagogue affiliation. Recruiting members and participants in synagogues is difficult under the best of circumstances in contemporary Jewish life and the data indicate that demographically these are not the best of circumstances. Therefore, synagogues must make extraordinary efforts in order to increase membership.

The structure of the organization in terms of lay/professional roles also may influence membership. Are the committee structure and board equipped to achieve change in an evolving society? Are the roles of the rabbi and the congregants clearly enough defined that each plays a productive role in the life of the synagogue? Is there a working partnership or an adversarial

relationship? All of these questions also influence the overall structure of the organization and the institution's ability to increase affiliation.

The sense of congregant control and the level of democracy in the synagogue also is an institutional factor that may attract or deter potential affiliation. With the growing culture of individual empowerment and greater levels of participation, individuals may or may not join a synagogue depending on whether they feel integrated into its decision-making processes and part of the overall decision-making process to guide the synagogue. Others, of course, may want no part in these processes. The synagogue must provide a sense of control to some subgroups who otherwise may not want to be part of the institution.

The same may be said for whether or not the synagogue is family oriented and presents a family feeling. Since one of the central roles of the institution is to provide support beyond family or clan, or in addition to family and clan, the extent to which the institution serves the individual or the family may have a great deal to do with its stability or growth.

At the same time, the role of the rabbi and the image of the rabbi can be quite influential. Is the rabbi young and dynamic, old and wise? Does the rabbi relate well to children or to young people in general? Is the rabbi giving and warm and accessible, or does he present an image of aloofness? The rabbi's role in the congregation and the image that he or she presents to the congregation can have a critical impact on rates of growth and decline.

The synagogue serves communal, educational and group-building functions. Many American Jews feel, however, that its most important function remains communal worship. The intrinsic value of the synagogue as a gathering place for Jews to engage in communal worship cannot be substituted by any other Jewish institution. While religious services may be held in other locations, or communal worship may take place in individuals' homes or in other settings, the organizational structure of the synagogue remains a key institution for communal worship in the Jewish community. Aside from whatever benefits derive from the organizational and institutional structure of the synagogue, a gathering place where Jews find unique collective expression in their relationship to God reinforces the importance of synagogue affiliation as a subject for inquiry and social scientific analysis.

Given the essential mission of the synagogue as a place of worship, a very critical examination of worship services is necessary at both the national and local level. If the synagogue holds the unique place in the constellation of Jewish organizations and agencies and institutions as a house of worship, and this purpose is to be a primary reason for people to join and a primary reason for people to stay affiliated, then worship services must be interesting, fulfilling, or provide some personal meaning or purpose or gratification that is not likely to be achieved elsewhere. If worship services do not meet the expectations and needs of many Jews, then the ability of the synagogue to fulfill its central mission is limited. While liturgies undergo

change, a more radical examination of how services are conducted, the content, and whether or not they are a primary motivator for synagogue membership needs to be explored.

The synagogue also must convey a sense of holiness that appeals to individuals looking for something beyond everyday life. Some synagogues are more successful in promoting this sense of holiness than others. In a time when some individuals are searching for deeper meaning in their lives, the question of whether or not the synagogue will serve this role is vital.

This, of course, is necessary for those Jews who identify themselves as religious and are looking for religious purpose. But the data indicate that large proportions of Jews are not looking for religious meaning. Therefore, the role of the synagogue as a communal institution, a gathering place, and serving multiple purposes in community building is necessary if the synagogue is to attract other constituencies. Given the high proportion of Jews who identify themselves as "just Jewish," "not very religious," "ethnic," or other variations, the synagogue may serve community, social, outreach, volunteer, fundraising, and a whole host of other activities that bring Jews to the institution but not necessarily to worship. In the same way, the synagogue can provide essential human services such as day care, preschool, or programs for the elderly. Only by fulfilling both a religious purpose and an essential community-building purpose is the synagogue likely to be an institution that attracts a diverse Jewish population. Last but not least, the financial structure of the synagogue is a very important institutional factor. Can the synagogue afford innovative membership recruitment programs? Can it experiment with new human services or social services that may attract groups of the disaffiliated? Does the synagogue place too heavy a financial burden on its current congregants or on its potential congregants? All of these financial questions are vital in understanding the institutional influence in membership growth and decline.

One of the most obvious policy implications of the data is the need to remove institutional barriers to membership. One can only assume, given the propensity of higher income households to belong to a synagogue and lower income households not to belong, that dues structures and the financial burden of the synagogue are a deterrent to membership. Indeed, data from different population studies in the Jewish community indicate that cost is a factor. More broadly, synagogues need to be more responsive to the multiplicity of family types. The data indicate that families with children of school age are the most likely to belong to a synagogue. Yet the data also indicate that this particular population subgroup is a minority of all Jewish households. If the synagogue is institutionally primarily designed to serve this population, then its ability to reach most other constituencies may be limited.

IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH

A thorough understanding of the current scene, evaluation of existing programs, research and testing for new programs, and dissemination and implementation of the results can substantively increase affiliation rates over the next decade. A new research agenda can help lead to improving levels of membership and current affiliation through focused study, building model programs, evaluating successes and failures, and creating a careful strategy for disseminating the findings.

There are no "quick fixes" for the kinds of problems that the Jewish community faces in terms of synagogue affiliation. Time for extensive testing and evaluation has been lacking in most practical research on affiliational patterns. It is necessary to know over time what works, what does not, and why. A patient and systematic approach to the study of these critical issues is essential.

In addition to demographic changes which affect patterns of affiliation with churches and synagogues, as detailed above, attitudinal factors also have a profound impact on affiliation. Attitudinal factors reflect perceptions of the synagogue. These problems of perception range from overt problems, issues such as costs of membership and locations of religious institutions, to more subtle issues such as feelings of alienation at prayer services or the possible lack of friendliness among congregants.

In order to increase and maintain affiliation levels with synagogues, carefully designed research is necessary to analyze attitudinal reasons for non-affiliation. Preliminary research based on population studies indicates that attitudinal issues may well deter more potential members than had been previously suspected. The adverse impact of negative perceptions of synagogues may be widespread.

Some attitudinal issues are more significant for particular populations. Households with limited incomes, such as singles, single parents, young marrieds, and the elderly are the most likely to be deterred from membership by financial matters, such as the perception that dues schedules are too substantial for their income. It is possible that such persons may be unaware that scholarships or sliding scales exist, or they may feel uncomfortable with what they imagine will be a process of personal interrogation to qualify for such scholarship aid. Focused research is needed to discover just how financial considerations work to impede membership, to devise techniques which can alleviate these concerns, and to map out methods of publicity to increase membership among population groups with limited income.

Location of religious institutions and transportation to and from those institutions are not only logistical issues but attitudinal as well. For some households and in some cities, twenty minutes is "too far" to travel; in other cities, any time under a half-hour is acceptable; in some areas, ten minutes is the optimum traveling time. It does seem that location and distance are primary considerations for many of the same groups which struggle with limited income as well. Further research is needed to pinpoint just how significant a role attitudes toward location and transportation play, and how best and most cost-effectively to deal with these issues.

More subtle, but at least as important in terms of people joining and staying with religious institutions, are spiritual, emotional and social factors. For some non-affiliates, this discomfort with the religious nature of the institution may not be primarily spiritual in nature but focuses instead on some very concrete worries, such as ignorance of liturgical skills. Many among the respondents in the preliminary research who did not affiliate regarded the synagogue

as a place which demanded certain levels of knowledge and background in history, customs, and prayer skills. Jews may perceive themselves as being "not religious," and therefore potentially inappropriate for membership in a religious institution. Although many such self-proclaimed secularists may in fact have highly developed moral codes and spiritual sensibilities, they may not perceive the synagogue as providing a forum for the expression of their spirituality and morality. Carefully planned and constructed new research is needed to explore the attitudes of non-affiliates toward their own spiritual lives, as well as their attitudes toward the synagogue.

Social factors also may play an extremely important role in membership patterns. Non-members may have perceptions of cliquishness or unfriendliness in synagogues. Persons who do not join synagogues sometimes perceive the religious institution as being a closed social circle. Research should be planned which investigates how such attitudes are formed and propagated, and what can be done to create an image of religious institutions as more warm, welcoming, and socially supportive places to gather.

Many questions arise: How can mainstream Jewish families most effectively be attracted to and be served by synagogues? How great a communal mandate exists among the unaffiliated for synagogue-sponsored singles programs, professional networking, or all-day child care? Might synagogues offer activities, programs, and services that would encourage singles, childless couples, and parents of pre-school children to join temples ten to fifteen years earlier? The answers to these questions are crucial to all those concerned with synagogue affiliation.

In addition to those who have not yet affiliated, households that have allowed their affiliation to lapse represent the second large group of currently unaffiliated. In order to understand why they are currently disaffiliated, we must begin by understanding why people join religious institutions in the first place. Presumably, when synagogues do not meet the needs of their clientele -- or when these particular needs cease to exist -- disaffiliation results. Assembling and analyzing the answers to the affiliation-disaffiliation patterns, is a crucial first step in devising methods to enhance satisfaction with synagogue affiliation and thus increase the longevity of the relationship.

Other questions emerge. What successful programs are being conducted today? How could these programs be adapted and disseminated to differing religious communities? What role do national institutions play?

We feel that in order to predict membership, evaluation of models is more fruitful in analyzing the causes for membership than merely looking at the direct answers respondents give for why they do or do not join a religious institution. It will be critical to investigate whether the direct reasons respondents give for joining or not joining the synagogue correspond to the variables revealed from the contextual background.

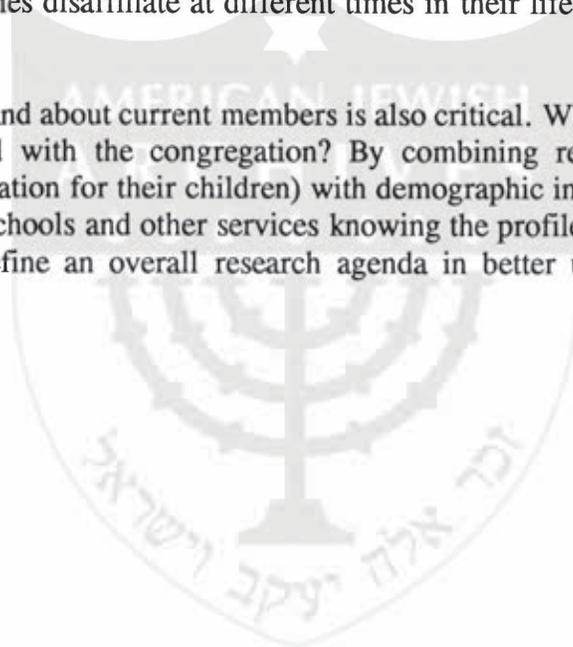
Synagogues interested in understanding the causes for affiliation and the reasons for disaffiliation need to be able to obtain information from their constituents about why they

affiliate or disaffiliate. This information must be gathered in a manner which serves both the interests of the institutions and the concerns of their congregants.

Some congregations conduct intake interviews and membership surveys. New members are asked a series of questions when they first decide to join so that congregations can ascertain why members join and what particular needs they have, while obtaining important demographic information concerning the make-up of the household.

Synagogues must also have mechanisms for collecting data from those who do not renew their membership. These data focus on the reasons for non-renewal as well as the reasons the persons originally joined. Were there unmet expectations? Were there particular reasons motivating them to join which are no longer operative? How do they feel about the congregation? Since families disaffiliate at different times in their life cycles, it is important to examine these data.

Information from and about current members is also critical. What are the reasons people joined? Are they pleased with the congregation? By combining reasons for joining (e.g., providing a religious education for their children) with demographic information, congregations can make plans for their schools and other services knowing the profile of the congregation. All of these together help define an overall research agenda in better understanding synagogue affiliation.



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APPENDIX I
VARIABLES INCLUDED IN MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS

Variable Name	Content	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
AGE	Respondent's Age	46.01	17.03	18.00	95.00
MIDWEST ¹	Live in the Midwest	0.11	0.31	0.00	1.00
SOUTH ¹	Live in the South	0.23	0.42	0.00	1.00
WEST ¹	Live in the West	0.22	0.41	0.00	1.00
ORTHRSD ²	Raised as Orthodox	0.24	0.42	0.00	1.00
CONSRSD ²	Raised as Conservative	0.40	0.48	0.00	1.00
REFRSD ²	Raised as Reform	0.31	0.46	0.00	1.00
EIGHTIES	Moved to Current in the Eighties	0.42	0.49	0.00	1.00
SECOND ³	Second Generation in U.S.	0.34	0.47	0.00	1.00
THIRD ³	Third Generation in U.S.	0.46	0.49	0.00	1.00
FOURTH ³	Fourth Generation in U.S.	0.13	0.33	0.00	1.00
ORTH ⁴	Orthodox Denomination	0.06	0.24	0.00	1.00
CONS ⁴	Conservative Denomination	0.40	0.48	0.00	1.00
REFORM ⁴	Reform Denomination	0.47	0.49	0.00	1.00
SIXEIGHT ⁵	Household Income of \$60,000-\$79,999	0.13	0.33	0.00	1.00
EIGHTYUP ⁵	Household Income of \$80,000 or Higher	0.19	0.38	0.00	1.00
GRADUATE	Completed Graduate Degree	0.26	0.43	0.00	1.00
NEVERU ⁶	Never Had Child or Is Under 6	0.54	0.49	0.00	1.00
CHILDU10 ⁶	Has Child 6-9 year old	0.11	0.30	0.00	1.00
CHILDU14 ⁶	Has Child 10-13 year old	0.09	0.28	0.00	1.00
CHILDU18 ⁶	Has Child 14-17 year old	0.06	0.24	0.00	1.00
CHJEWED	Has Child Enrolled in Jewish Education	0.08	0.27	0.00	1.00
NMARRIED	Respondent Never Married	0.23	0.41	0.00	1.00
YJED5TO8 ⁷	Has 5 to 8 Yrs of Jewish Education	0.30	0.45	0.00	1.00
YJED9UP ⁷	Has 9 Yrs or More of Jewish Education	0.22	0.41	0.00	1.00
JRITUALS	Number of Religious Practices Observed	1.74	1.06	0.00	4.00
JFRIENDS	Number of Jewish Friends	3.33	1.09	1.00	5.00

Notes:

¹ Reference category is Northeast² Reference category is Raised as Just Jewish or Secular³ Reference category is First Generation in the U.S.⁴ Reference category is Currently Just Jewish or Secular⁵ Reference category is Household Income Under \$60,000⁶ Reference category is Had Child but is not longer at home or Child over 24 year old at home⁷ Reference category is Less than 5 Years of Jewish Education

LOGISTIC REGRESSION OF CURRENT SYNAGOGUE AFFILIATION,
SYNAGOGUE AFFILIATION EVER, AND SYNAGOGUE DROPOUT

Variable	CURRENT AFFILIATION			AFFILIATION EVER			SYNAGOGUE DROPOUT		
	Parameter Estimate	St. Error	P ¹ Estimate	Parameter Estimate	St. Error	P ¹ Estimate	Parameter Estimate	Std. Error	P ¹
INTERCEPT	-6.8032	0.9405	***	-2.9882	0.7536	***	5.0250	1.1696	***
AGE	0.0331	0.0078	***	0.0315	0.0074	***	-0.0203	0.0093	*
MIDWEST	0.5660	0.2548	*	0.4805	0.2518		-0.6105	0.3300	
SOUTH	-0.0290	0.1988		0.4328	0.1930	*	0.3882	0.2339	
WEST	-0.0823	0.2179		-0.1037	0.2013		0.0236	0.2696	
ORTHRSD	0.2609	0.5346		0.4783	0.4606		0.1285	0.6646	
CONSRSD	-0.0824	0.5141		0.0446	0.4317		0.4363	0.6408	
REFRSD	-0.4907	0.5298		-0.3547	0.4379		0.5745	0.6556	
EIGHTIES	-0.4570	0.1762	**	-0.1344	0.1652		0.4924	0.2170	*
SECOND	-0.2911	0.3212		-0.4199	0.3487		0.1136	0.3636	
THIRD	0.1573	0.3354		-0.4915	0.3477		-0.2479	0.3924	
FOURTH	0.3069	0.3942		-0.4189	0.3921		-0.5239	0.4925	
ORTH	1.4786	0.6723	*	-0.5899	0.4888		-2.6788	0.8671	**
CONS	2.2659	0.5923	***	1.0806	0.3625	**	-2.3085	0.6983	***
REFORM	1.9832	0.5906	***	1.0632	0.3532	**	-1.9224	0.6925	**
SIXEIGHT	0.3494	0.2465		0.2182	0.2318		-0.4513	0.3138	
EIGHTYUP	1.0015	0.2097	***	0.7674	0.2110	***	-0.8606	0.2596	***
GRADUATE	-0.3609	0.1850		-0.3822	0.1763	*	0.2361	0.2328	
NEVERU6	0.0672	0.2252		-0.7342	0.2096	***	-0.7452	0.2724	**
CHILDU10	-0.9267	0.4076	*	-1.1098	0.3332	***	0.5735	0.5280	
CHILDU14	-0.6246	0.4499		-0.9090	0.3843	*	0.3266	0.5534	
CHILDU18	0.6555	0.4042		0.3134	0.4034		-0.7438	0.4857	
CHJEWED	4.0740	0.5742	***	3.8364	0.6751	***	-3.3097	0.7094	***
NMARRIED	0.6282	0.2352	**	0.3080	0.2062		-0.5555	0.3227	
YJED5TO8	0.3985	0.1867	*	0.3648	0.1775	*	-0.4365	0.2261	
YJED9UP	0.9051	0.2061	***	0.9864	0.2087	***	-0.5872	0.2562	*
JRITUALS	0.9945	0.0956	***	0.8191	0.0896	***	-0.7105	0.1131	***
JFRIENDS	0.0910	0.0865		-0.0002	0.0802		-0.1415	0.1076	
Correct	77.1%			75.6%			71.9%		

n	1219	1219	764
Initial LLR	1572.67	1599.37	916.50
Final LLR	1046.81	1126.79	692.66
Model Chi-Square	426.99 (27 df)***	385.71 (27 df)***	183.26 (27 df)***

¹ * p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001



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C. Miller

MEMORANDUM

✓

October 30 , 1992

From: Edie Miller

TO: Dru Greenwood & Renni Altman

Alex is eager to have a report on the Think Tank on Congregational Affiliation you attended earlier this week. How did it go?



Think Tank on Congregation Affiliation

October 14, 1992

Dear Dru :

Dru - please get me a report on how the event



Maurice and
Marilyn Cohen
Center
for Modern
Jewish
Studies

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617-736-2060
617-736-3009 TTY/TDD
617-736-2070 FAX

The Think Tank on Congregation Affiliation is drawing near and the planning committee, from the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, is looking forward to welcoming you to Brandeis University. I wanted to take this opportunity to share with you some final information related to our work.

Enclosed are two articles to set the stage for our initial conversations at the Think Tank: "Restructuring the Contemporary Synagogue" by Gary Tobin, Director of the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies and "Reinventing the Congregation" by Loren Mead, President of the Alban Institute. These articles are intended merely as an introduction, a starting point. As they were written with specific constituencies in mind, they may require you to "translate" into your own experience as you read. In this way, we will begin our active work together.

Also enclosed is a draft of the schedule of the Think Tank and a list of Think Tank members.

As you can see, we will begin at 7:00 pm, Sunday evening. If you are staying at the Newton Marriott or the Susse Chalet, a mini-bus will pick you up by 6:45 pm to bring you to the university. Please wait in the lobby near the front door for the driver.

If you are driving to Brandeis (directions enclosed), stop at the Main Entrance for a parking permit. You will be directed to the left, to Lot T. The Hassenfeld Conference Center, where we will be meeting, is a short walk from the parking lot.

Fall in New England can be a beautiful season and we have allotted time on Monday for a walk through the hills of the Brandeis campus. We suggest that you bring comfortable shoes for this "walk and talk."

And finally, if you have not as yet returned the survey on definitions of key terms, please do so as soon as possible or bring your questionnaire with you to the Think Tank. We would like to compile a full set of responses from all participants.

If you have any last minute needs concerning arrangements for the Think Tank, do not hesitate to call me. I can be reached at 617-736-2060.

Sincerely,

Amy L. Sales, Think Tank Coordinator



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Restructuring the Contemporary Synagogue

Gary A. Tobin, Ph. D., Director, Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies,
Brandeis University, Waltham, MA

Synagogues are faced with the harsh realities of contemporary Jewish life. The Jewish community is characterized by high mobility, both within communities and between metropolitan areas. The structure of the Jewish family has undergone radical changes. The traditional Jewish family, that is, two parents with children, is now a distinct minority in the constellation of American Jewish households. Later marrying age, higher rates of divorce, higher rates of labor force participation among Jewish women, and the emergence of formerly atypical family types, such as gay couples or single parent families, are now an integral part of the landscape of the Jewish family. Furthermore, rates of intermarriage have soared in the last generation. High proportions of Jews are now marrying non-Jews, and conversion rates have plummeted. Synagogues must now serve constituencies that are unlike the Jewish family that synagogues once considered to be the core of their membership. At the same time, religious patterns have changed as well. Jews are less likely to observe rituals such as lighting Shabbat candles, celebrating Hanukkah. Such ritual practice is often a function of child raising years, but is not necessarily an ongoing part of religious life. For most American Jews, religion has become peripheral to everyday life, and Judaism has become a part-time activity at best.

Yet, the synagogue remains at the core of contemporary Jewish life. Rates of membership in other Jewish organizations, support for Israel, and participation in Jewish volunteerism and philanthropies are all linked to synagogue membership and participation. Jews who belong to a synagogue are far more likely than non-members to be active in other dimensions of Jewish life. Rates of synagogue affiliation, however, are very low. In most communities, less than half of Jewish households have a current synagogue membership, while in other communities, particularly in the South and West, affiliation rates dip below 30% and in some cases below 20%. The vast majority of Jewish households do not have a current synagogue membership. Other data show that many younger Jews intend to belong to a synagogue in the future, while many Jews whose children have already grown used to belong to a synagogue in the past. Younger Jews are more likely to join a synagogue a little later in life as they form families, but they are also likely to drop their membership as they age. While synagogues are

successful in attracting most Jews at some point in their life cycle, they are becoming less and less successful in attracting them sooner and holding onto them longer.

Much of this phenomenon can be linked to the demographic and religious changes that have swept the American Jewish landscape, changes which themselves create new challenges for the synagogue. If synagogues continue to operate as they did in the past, the net result will be continued decline in synagogue affiliation and participation. Recognition of these changes must lead to reform within the structure of the synagogue. The synagogue must institutionalize the administrative response to the changes in the Jewish community. Merely acknowledging that radical differences characterize today's Jewish community without an equally radical response on the part of the synagogue, may result in temporary elimination of certain problems, but such acknowledgment does not systematically address the issues. Two fundamental areas are in need of radical reform: committee and task force structure of the synagogue, and the professional staff configuration of the synagogue. Both the lay and professional components of the synagogue need to be reorganized and restructured to address the problems facing the Jewish community.

The following recommendations must be considered in the context of the individual synagogue. The size of the synagogue has an important bearing on which of the recommendations should be implemented, and to what extent. Furthermore, whether or not a congregation is in a period of decline or growth may also have some influence. Some synagogues may have already instituted a number of these changes to one degree or another. The issue is, of course, to what degree and how effective is further change. Close examination must take place to ascertain whether or not these recommendations are already being done—often the claim of many synagogues—and whether they are being done correctly, competently, and to the degree necessary to achieve the requisite changes.

It must also be remembered that not all changes can be implemented simultaneously. A plan might call for some changes to be initiated within a year, others within three years, and still others within five or more years. While a long-range planning process may find all of the changes listed below to be stated as goals over a given time period, some of the

changes can be made immediately while others will take more time and effort.

Not all ideas are workable for every synagogue. Particular histories, demographic constellations, staff requirements, or other elements make some of the suggestions more desirable or realistic than others; however, all of the changes should be considered, or encourage other areas of change.

Finally, the particular demography of each synagogue will influence the rate and direction of change. For example, a synagogue with a high proportion of young families may wish to institute some of the structural changes suggested, while a synagogue with a population primarily over the age of 65, may want to concentrate on others. A particular demographic mix, however, should not necessarily be a deterrent to instituting many of the suggested changes. An older congregation is often thought to be synonymous, for example, with an inactive congregation. However, congregations with populations that are primarily over the age of 65 or that have static or even declining population bases, should not be hesitant to institute new structures.

The following task force structure which either complements or replaces existing committees within the synagogue, should be instituted.

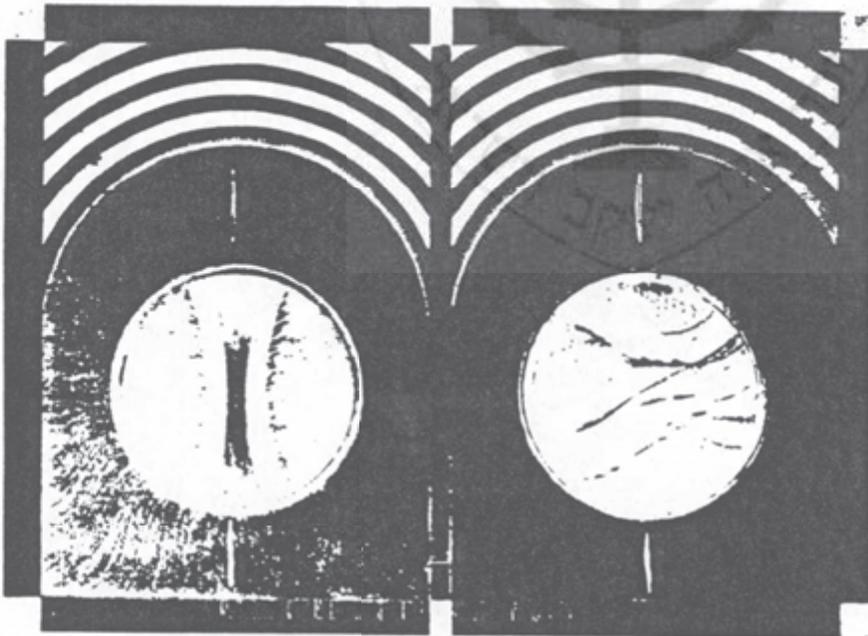
1. Long-Range Planning Committee

This committee is responsible for the creation of the long-range plan for the synagogue. **The long-**

range plan should include a mission statement of what the synagogue would like to accomplish and goals and objectives, as well as strategies and tactics to achieve such goals and objectives. Evaluative measures should be instituted by the synagogue to test how well changes are being implemented and whether or not they are successful. The Long-Range Planning Committee should be responsible for the synagogue's research efforts. This would include, for example, a *needs assessment*, a *survey* of what programs and services congregants would like to see offered at the synagogue, *membership surveys* of all kinds, and other research and development functions. The Long-Range Planning Committee should not be an ad hoc entity. Often synagogues engage in a long-range planning effort and create a written plan, but fail to do follow-up in terms of seeing that the plan is implemented. **A permanent Long-Range Planning Committee has the task not only of continually assessing the synagogue's mission and goals and objective, but of creating and modifying new plans every year as well.** The Long-Range Planning Committee is essential to map out a blueprint for the operation of the synagogue as a whole.

2. Leadership Development and Training Committee

The development of leadership in the synagogue must be an ongoing function. New board members, committee chairs, and volunteers need to



"Creation #4"
22" X 30"
Silverpoint, gold leaf and acrylic
Susan Schwalb ©1988

be formally recruited and trained to serve the synagogue. The Leadership Development and Training Committee should plan board retreats, for example, for in-depth training in management and decision making. Programs in creative thinking and brainstorming should be part of all board and committee meetings. The utilization and encouragement of creative activity on the part of lay leadership can bring the synagogue into a much more fruitful management system. Other responsibilities of this Committee may include missions to Israel or weekend retreats that revolve around planning issues facing the synagogue as well as in-depth education in Jewish ethics or Jewish history. Other aspects of leadership development and training may include formal training for ushers at the High Holidays to ensure that they are courteous and instructive about the synagogue. The various elements of leadership development and training are designed to bring more sophisticated management and decision making to the lay leadership, educate them about Judaism, increase their commitment to the synagogue, and provide avenues for creative thinking and action at the lay level.

3. Interagency Planning Committee

Synagogues must work increasingly with other Jewish organizations, agencies, and institutions to fulfill their mission. This includes cooperation with Jewish Community Centers, other synagogues, Jewish organizations, non-Jewish organizations within the community, other non-profits, the private sector, and a whole array of civic organizations, such as the Chamber of Commerce. The synagogue which must play a central communal role, needs lay and professional liaisons to both the Jewish and non-Jewish communities as a whole. It is also necessary for the Interagency Planning Committee to have formal connections with national organizations that serve synagogues. For example, each reform synagogue should have an official representative who is a liaison to the United Synagogue. These representatives should be responsible for transmitting information from the national organization to the synagogue and vice versa. They should also monitor what services are available from the umbrella organizations, such as planning assistance or national speakers. The national umbrella organizations, provide many resources that are often unknown to individual synagogues because there are no active avenues of communication. It is necessary to link with the rest of the Jewish community and the non-Jewish community as well, so that more services can be provided, higher quality services can be provided, and larger constituencies can be reached through cooperative efforts.

4. Financial Resource Development Committee

The Financial Resource Development Committee is responsible for planning and coordinating the financial needs of the synagogue. It should include the traditional fundraising mechanisms of the synagogue, such as High Holiday appeals, bingo, and the rabbis' discretionary funds, and it should expand to meet the financial realities of the coming decade, which would include annual giving campaigns. Congregants should be solicited for gifts above and beyond membership dues. They should also be formally solicited by one another for specific programs and purposes within the synagogue. The annual fund raising campaign should involve formal solicitor training, where congregants who develop leadership roles learn how to conduct face-to-face solicitations of one another. Many Jewish organizations actively engage in this successful form of fund raising, and synagogues should be no exception. The Financial Resource Development Committee should also be responsible for endowment and planned giving funds. More and more Jewish organizations and agencies rely on these mechanisms to ensure their future. Major efforts in synagogues are also necessary to create larger endowments for particular purposes and programs within the synagogue. Without large endowments, many synagogues will be unable to provide, with certainty, the range and quality of programs and services that they wish to offer in the coming years.

5. Membership Recruitment Committee

This is a pro-active committee that helps to recruit new members and retain current members. It utilizes experimental techniques, including phonathons and personal one-on-one recruitment for non-affiliates, as well as other mechanisms to recruit and maintain members. It is also responsible for experimenting with new marketing strategies for membership recruitment and retention, which may include offering High Holiday services free of charge for all non-members, and utilizing the lists of people who attend to recruit members for future years. It also may include evaluating current screening procedures for financial need of potential members to ensure that these procedures are neither embarrassing nor likely to discourage potential members from joining.

6. Communications and Marketing Committee

The Communications and Marketing Committee actively promotes the synagogue both to non-members and current members. It is designed to develop an overall strategy to promote the

synagogue. The Communications and Marketing Committee can engage in the innovative production of materials for the synagogue through Desk Top Publishing. It may create interesting and informative materials about the synagogue, which can be distributed during the High Holidays when nearly all the congregants are likely to have some contact with the synagogue. *Individuals are more likely to read materials that are handed to them, than they are to read materials that come through the mail.* The Communications and Marketing Committee may also use *alternative media*, such as suburban newspapers, the radio, or posters in supermarkets to encourage people to attend certain events, join the synagogue, or to promote a particular program. The use of alternative media is *essential in reaching the non-affiliated population who do not receive the temple bulletin*, and are not likely to receive the local Jewish newspaper. Reliance only on these vehicles is likely to be very limiting. Therefore, the Communications and Marketing Committee must examine all potential media opportunities to reach the Jewish population.

7. Special Events and Projects Committee

This committee is in charge of **creating at least one new and innovative event or project per year**. This may include, for example, *programs with recreational components* such as an innovative Jewish educational and weekend recreational package. Or it may include offering *religious services in geographically dispersed areas*. *Experimental liturgy or multiple services* within the congregation to serve different constituencies, might also fall under the purview of the Special Events and Projects Committee. It is essential to have an administrative entity within the synagogue that is responsible for developing exciting events and programs. Utilizing the same old breakfasts, dinners, and adult education formats, is not likely to increase participation.

8. Community Service Committee

This committee organizes **community service projects** and **recruits volunteers to serve the general community**. The synagogue must be a vehicle for community service. Jews *need to be actively involved in tzedakah and the performance of mitzvot*. If the synagogue is going to be a conduit for living Judaism, the Community Service Committee should develop volunteer opportunities for Jews to work in soup kitchens, serve the homeless, volunteer in hospitals, and otherwise service their fellow human beings. **The Community Service Committee looks outward as opposed to inward. Congregants are given the opportunity to serve through the synagogue as opposed to serving**

the synagogue itself. This is especially important to attract younger Jews who wish to have social action and community service as part of their Jewish identity.

9. Human Services Committee

This committee is responsible for providing **essential human services** to the congregation. These services may include day care and preschool programs for children, social and recreational programs for the elderly, transportation programs for children, and other human services needed by the congregants. The synagogue must be viewed as a place that meets the needs of its members. Jews look to synagogues to help them. **If the synagogue may not provide necessary services, individuals may look to other organizations, agencies, and institutions to do so, and they may shift their loyalties and allegiances elsewhere as well.** The provision of human services is an essential function of the synagogue and the Human Services Committee should assess which services are required, establish priorities for such services, and help to initiate and implement human service programs.

10. Adult and Family Education Committee

Many synagogues have Jewish education committees. They are devoted primarily to the education of the young, particularly pre-bar/bat mitzvah children. The synagogue needs an **Adult and Family Education Committee to concentrate solely upon the educational needs of young adults, young families, and those who are interested in continuing their education as Jews once they are adults**. The Adult and Family Education Committee can organize trips to Israel, special Shabbat weekends, lecture series, seminars, and other programs designed for both formal and informal education of adults and family units. Much of the future of Jewish education rests upon the ability to educate young families and adults. The special attention required of this committee is key to the future of Jewish continuity.

11. Interfaith Programming Committee

A special committee is necessary to meet the **needs of intermarried couples**, the fastest growing group of Jews in the United States. They are the least likely of any group of Jews to belong to a synagogue. Without special attention in terms of *counseling programs, outreach efforts, conversion classes, and other special programs*, these individuals may stay on the periphery of synagogue life. Interfaith programming cannot be left to chance. Furthermore, the Interfaith Programming Committee does more than outreach. It also does inreach

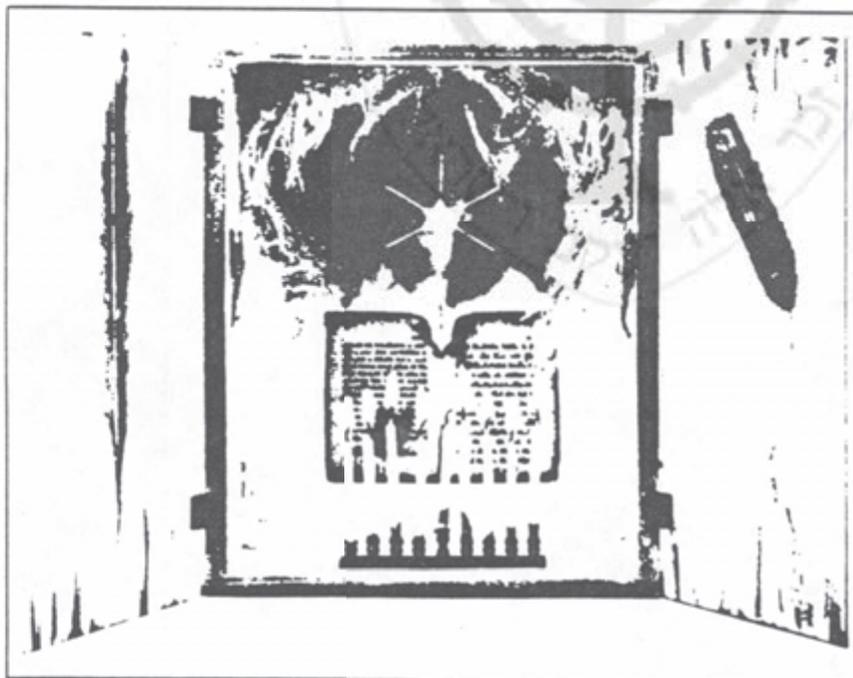
and ensures that once interfaith couples are a part of the synagogue, they are encouraged to participate in all aspects of synagogue life.

12. Personal Touch Committee

This committee is designed to **create a warm and friendly atmosphere at the synagogue.** Reaching out to people must be systematically incorporated into the everyday workings of the synagogue. *Frequent telephone calls* should be made to congregants for feedback regarding how they feel about particular issues within the synagogue. *Teletthon projects* should be organized to personally thank people for their contributions no matter what the size or purpose of the contribution. This is much more effective than a line in the temple bulletin thanking them for their contribution. The committee should *organize lay people to visit and counsel families in need, or families in transition* to ensure that families in divorce have a place to go on the High Holidays, or that hospitalized individuals receive either a card or a visit from another congregant. The committee should organize *Shabbat dinners* and have new congregants invited to other individuals' homes. Individuals who are apparent newcomers on the High Holidays should be openly and warmly welcomed. The Personal Touch Committee adds a human dimension to the synagogue.

All of the changes mentioned above require appropriate staff. It is **essential that the synagogue have enough staff and that they be assigned reasonable work loads.** Most synagogues are understaffed with a rabbi, an assistant rabbi, an educator, and perhaps an administrator. Synagogues need to have larger staffs, which may include *program directors, fund raising specialists, communications and marketing staff,* and so on. This assumes, of course, that the synagogue can successfully engage in innovative financial resource development, develop proper membership pricing systems, engage in cooperative planning with other organizations and agencies, and generally implement the structure outlined above. **Growth creates growth and proper committee structure and staffing will lead to greater financial resource development and vice versa.**

The agenda of the synagogue must be broad and comprehensive. By reassessing its current structure, the synagogue can approach the future from a position of strength and creativity. The health and **well-being of the Jewish community depends upon the willingness of the synagogue to take risks and create new systems** within its current structure. The future depends upon the synagogue's willingness to acknowledge the changes that have occurred in Jewish life and respond boldly through new ways of thinking and acting. ❖



"Portable Altar"
12" X 10" X 5 3/4"
Silverpoint with Mixed Media.
Susan Schwaib ©1980

action information

IN THIS ISSUE:

For all church leaders: *Another article in Loren Mead's series—why the mission, the organization, and the theology of the congregation need reinventing. Amy Beveridge paints a picture of Jesus as a "self-differentiated person." Readers' thoughtful responses on clergy, congregations, and codependency. John Fisk's research findings on faith development in middle adulthood.*

Especially for clergy: *"Old Problems . . . New Insights," a new column by Donna Schaper. In this issue: Why clergy can't worship in their churches, and what to do about it. How do people see the pastor's role? George Davis describes the expectations parishioners bring from daily life and work.*

And more!

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Celia Allison Hahn, editor



MAY/JUNE 1990

Reinventing the Congregation

by Loren B. Mead

The people who read this are discovering that their task within religious systems is bigger and deeper than any of us imagined a few years ago.

The problems are not cosmetic things that one can "problem solve" or outflank. They go to the heart of our institutions.

Instead of tampering with congregations or polishing them up a bit, I believe we are engaged in reinventing them, no less.

Let's put that in context, though. Many of the systems of our world seem to be flying apart—technological, environmental, economical, political, financial. There is an urgency about the tasks in those arenas, too. And many of the people who feel a call to work at reinventing congregations are simultaneously working at the redesign and repair of other systems they touch.

Those of us called to the religious systems, however, feel the foundational dimension of our task. The religious systems have provided a core of meaning, direction, and value to human life and undergirded community life and community institutions of all sorts.

We see the call to reinvent congregations as a centrally important task for human beings, for families, for communities, and for the social order.

This article, like almost everything we do at Alban, is addressed to the people engaged in trying to rebuild our religious systems, especially the congregation. That's our work.

First, I think we need to recognize what an extraordinary thing congregations—with all their faults—have *been!* The congregation has been a remarkably stable institution, able to establish its roots and grow in all kinds of environments—able to exist in thousands of forms—urban and rural; center city and suburban; rich and poor; for white and brown, black, red and yellow people. It has been able to carry important traditions through many generations in many cultures. It has provided men and women and children with a community larger than family or clan. It has been the place to celebrate and to grieve the joys and sadnesses of living. For many more than a thousand years the congregation has shaped individual lives and given transcendent grounding to the hopes and fears of people both simple and great. Congregations float through storms of theological debate, revolutions and reformations as balsa wood rides the waves of a storm at sea. They are at home in almost every neighborhood—I've seen one list that counts 394,000 of them in the United States alone. Congregations are tenacious and stubborn, hard to change and harder still to kill. Many of them go on living for years, defying

RESOURCES FOR PEOPLE WHO CARE ABOUT CONGREGATIONS

all rationality and frustrating the wisdom of the bureaucrats.

Their strengths are sometimes weaknesses. Their stability allows them to communicate religious tradition across the generations, but it makes it possible for them also to nurture prejudice and pass it across the years. Their tenacity makes it difficult for them to change even when their old patterns have ceased to give life. They maintain obsolete structures, sometimes spending all their energy just to survive.

At The Alban Institute, we approach congregations both as critics and as lovers. We are aware of the shortcomings in the *best* of them; but we see powerful potential for good in the worst of them. Indeed, we often find extraordinary grace and love in the most unlikely places. And among the finest congregations we find pettiness, double-dealing, and destructive relationships. The negative powers have always been there (read Corinthians if you doubt my word), but congregations have brought meaning to millions through the generations.

The severe stresses and strains upon congregations and clergy, the paralysis of national denominational support systems, the financial crunches, and the erosion of membership in mainline denominations are outward signs of the dislocation of our religious institutional structures from the life-giving power those structures once provided. The shape of mission has changed. The environment within which the churches minister has changed. The definitions of ministry and mission have changed. To search for

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ACTION INFORMATION, vol. XVI, no. 3
Copyright (1990) by The Alban Institute, Inc., 4125 Nebraska Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20016.
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the life-giving power of our traditional structures is to be called to reinvent those structures—especially the congregation.

What is happening is somewhere between evolution and revolution. The outcome is not entirely in our hands, yet we are called to act responsibly while our institutions move toward their futures.

The congregation needs to be reinvented in three areas—missional, organizational, and theological.

A. Reinventing the Mission of the Congregation

Congregations now increasingly recognize their primary mission as existing at their doorsteps, not far off across the ocean. They know mission involves direct engagement, not a distant activity their members only cheer and support. They *know* this, but they have not yet found how to live the new way. This change means that each member of each congregation is being called from "support service" to "active engagement." It is as different as it is to move from being an annual subscriber to the symphony to realizing that you and your friends have to pick up the oboes and bassoons and violins and make music. Different? You bet. If there is going to be music, you have to make it. You are no longer a spectator. And maybe we will have to get used to quite a different kind of music!

Ministry in the past age was the task of the professional in the pulpit or overseas. The people generously supported that ministry. The new ministry is the task of the people where they are involved with life—at work, at play, at home—wherever. Clergy, who used to BE the ministry, and were trained to be the ministry, do not know how to train the new ministry, are unsure how to support it, and often cannot even get out of its way.

Similarly the people are not universally enthusiastic about the new responsibility that is theirs, are not clear what they are to be and do, and are often afraid to get started.

In the present age, if there is going to be ministry, the people of our congregations will have to do it. It is no longer the prerogative of the professionals.

The words used to describe this new way of living are becoming commonplace: the ministry of the whole people; the diaconal ministry; the ministry of the baptized; the apostolate of the laity. Each word-set struggles to go beyond an idea to a change of behavior, but so far the major change has been a gradual change of consciousness. Not much else has changed.

If a congregation is to be reinvented for this mission, it will be a congregation turned on its head. Roles of clergy and laity will be revised and changed, sometimes reversed.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, American churches recognized a need to build a class of clergy, edu-

cated for leadership and ministry in a new nation. The theological seminary was the result. Funded and energized by laity, seminaries served the predominant model of ministry inherited from Europe—the clergy.

Now that the primary model of ministry has become the laity, a new kind of invention is called for to support laity in their leadership and ministry to the new world. I call this new invention the congregation. Not the kind we have grown up with—a reinvented congregation.

As seminaries generated leaders of ministry for the age of Christendom, *congregations* are called on now to be generators of a new ministry.

Congregations are called to be life-long centers of mission and ministry development. Part of that requires attention to *two* kinds of catechumenate, in distinction to the *single* catechumenate that prepared members in the Apostolic Age for life in the religious community.

The first is the catechumenate for membership, preparation for initiation. It is a sign of the growth of the consciousness that I describe here that programs for "catechumenate" have become growth industries in many of the denominations. Clearly new energy and imagination is called for to bring people out of the ambiguous culture into an apostolic community now that the culture no longer even pretends to be "religious." These catechumenates are modeled on those of the Apostolic Age. (There is a danger in too close an identification with first-century concepts of the catechumenate. The world from which the candidate comes to the congregation is not a first-century world, nor is the congregation a first-century congregation.) Clergy have a central role in this catechumenate, helping laity engage the power of their tradition and the biblical story.

The second catechumenate is something new. Bits and pieces of it have grown up here and there, but it is fragmentary and undeveloped.

The key to it is the system that sends the congregational member out from worship to the world, then receives her or him back a week later. Congregations have relatively passive systems that nurtured laity in an age in which their participation in ministry and mission was passive. Those systems of worship and pastoral care worked fairly well. Although those systems may need to be augmented, they will play a central part in nurture and formation of the new laity. But they are not enough.

There are at least three new dimensions of a second catechumenate that must be developed:

1. Education in the religious story and the heritage takes on a new dimension. Our traditional approach to Bible study and the story of our heritage has been—to expand my metaphor—like a class in music appreciation. Not a bad thing at all. But the class member looks for something



more when she holds a trombone and realizes that the conductor is pointing at her!

How do we move from where we are to that kind of education? How do clergy contribute to this learning, and where do their skills fall short of what is needed?

2. Our new ministry needs a system of field education. We must reinvent our educational systems in congregations for this kind of catechumenate. What we used to call "your job," or "your community responsibilities," or "your political life," or "your family/neighborhood life," need to become areas of training in ministry.

Congregations need systems that help laity enter these areas of life as a vital engagement in mission. Laity need tools and perspectives with which to differentiate, there in the ambiguous environment, between the servants of God and those who resist God. How do laity develop coalitions with those of other groups or faiths—or no faith at all—who serve God? (In the "old" world, one of my faith would ordinarily find little in common with Muslims; however to address the seriously inhuman prison systems of my town, I need to understand how to find common ground with Muslims).

How do congregations support laity's need to *see* what God is doing? To be able to look at land use problems and think "stewardship"? To look at economic planning and think "creation"? To look at personal and corporate budgets and grapple with prophecy and forgiveness?

In the past age, the Church expected to be able to handle things like that through telling laity what was what in one way or another. It did not work well very often. Only a few laity "caught on" to the concern. In the coming age the responsibility for that ministry and the sensitivity to those issues needs to flow from the laity. Our congregations have not invented ways to help laity grasp the responsibility and achieve the sensitivity their new role requires.

Another way of saying this is that laity are called upon to become theologians, not listen to a study of theology. They are to engage the world, watching expectantly to see and participate in God's work there, by whatever name it is called. Congregations know how to help laity study the-



Each member of the congregation is being called from "support service" to "active engagement." It is like moving from being an annual subscriber to the symphony to realizing that you and your friends have to pick up the oboes and bassoons and violins and make music.

ology, but our attempts have not helped them to do theology. They keep asking the pastor to play the trombone.

Please note that *this* kind of theology is not what clergy are trained in—it is a new thing. Training laity in schools or methods of clergy theology may be counterproductive. It is more likely to turn out second-rate clergy-type theology or, worse, convince laity to go to seminary to get the real thing.

3. The return from mission must also be addressed for the new age in a new way. This is a critical new frontier for every congregation—the movement of laity "back" from mission to community. What's new is to see the opportunity for reflection, for review, and for re-education.

By reflection I mean debriefing. Perhaps more, but at least debriefing. What laity have seen and done on the frontiers of their life is the very stuff of mission. As for centuries they have been taught to bring into their prayers the hurts and concerns they've met "out there," now they are called to bring their engagement books, job descriptions, and volunteer commitments. In those activities they have engaged in ministry. The congregation needs to help others tell how it has gone in God's mission in their corner of the battle.

Review brings a dimension of critique. Congregations need to help people learn to raise questions about ministry, to analyze and probe each other's experience. To challenge one another to deeper ministry.

"Re-education" points to the way that reflection and review, done well, open the door to going deeper into the faith. Indeed, in many cases, reflection and review will lead to a demand for deeper education of more familiar kinds.

Going forth, living in the world, then returning to the congregation are *parts* of the age-old systems our faiths have for grounding us in our tradition and in community. The *old* part of "receiving back," particularly worship, can only be strengthened in its pivotal role at the center of receiving and sending.

A reinvented congregation needs new systems for receiving its people from the culture, engaging them *in* an apostolic community, then sending them back to affect the culture. The second catechumenate is needed to feed the congregation with the theology discovered at the laity's frontier. That catechumenate may be the most important ingredient in reinventing the congregation.

B. Reinventing the Organization of the Congregation

The churches have done a good job of developing organizational structures that support the old model in which ministry was done by clergy, with laity as auxiliaries or helpers. It worked, and we should be grateful for it. We need to respect and honor it when it still works.

I see a powerful continuing need for the authority of the ordained (but let me note—I *am* ordained, and what I say I see *may* be wishful thinking: my bias may be leading me astray). The functions of the ordained, however, need to change. The congregation is going to need at its center one who nurtures the structures of the community, who cares for the broken-spirited and weary, and who leads the community in prayer, in celebration, and in discerning the Spirit. She or he must be a congregation-builder, a tradition-bearer, and a storyteller, one who serves the people, the community. These ordained leaders need primarily to serve the religious community, releasing and empowering laity to engage the systems of the world where their primary ministry is carried out.

The authority *needed* from the clergy is religious authority: the ability to lead people in their searching for God and in responding to God's search for them.

This is not what most current clergy bought when they signed up. It is not what they are trained for. Some clergy do not want this role. Many, many are struggling hard to live into it.

C. Reinventing the Theology of the Congregation

This reinvention of the congregation presumes a new and different understanding of the locus of theology. The theology understood as authentic in the past was judged so because it participated in a long tradition and met standards of academic testing and analysis. The new theological tasks and explorations will be undertaken by laity engaged in ministry at work and home. They will be in touch with God's activity in the world, and they will be reflecting on it and learning from it. Of course most of us do not yet know how to do any of this. Nothing so clearly indicates the size of the task lying ahead for congregations.

Tomorrow's theology will not emerge primarily from libraries and studies. It is revealing itself in encounters of congregation members (and others!) working at city hall or against city hall, in university laboratories and classrooms,

in shelters for the homeless, in conferences about building plans and land use, in family encounters, and in all the thousands of ways that people go about their lives. *There* is where theology is happening. There is where new truth about God is being revealed.

Clergy are trained to tell people what God has done or may be doing; they do not know how to help the people recognize God in the stuff of life and work.

Clergy will have a critical, but difficult new role—bringing theological *questions* to laity, not answers. Their training in the traditional language and shape of faith will be an enormous asset to the new tasks of theology. But it will block the task of theology if they use it in the old ways.

The theological task must move from the seminary to the congregation. Otherwise "ministry of the laity" is just another buzz-word, another new program to reinforce the old ways.

Every congregation must be nothing less than a new kind of seminary, helping its people engage in a lifelong search for God's meaning in their lives and community.

Conclusion

I think the reinvention has begun. It involves hard work at many levels. My bet is that anybody who has read this far in this article is already engaged in it.

In such a change we must be sensitive to those who feel they are losing something important. Some of them will be bitter and angry. Some will leave for quieter pastures. Or they will opt to live in a never-never land of Victorian antiquities.

It will take time, too. Perhaps several generations. We must be impatient, but also able to hold steady. We must be able to seize the teachable moment when it comes and do what we can do. We need to recognize that people can only do what they can do, and that each has her or his own pace. We need to build institutions that can hold steady, keep a long-term focus, and be reference points for us through the changes we face.

In The Alban Institute we want to work with people on that reinvention. In my next article I want to point to some of the places where we see it happening. The good news is that you *can* do something about it. The scary news is that it is not predictable or controllable. The best news of all is that history—of society, of the religious institutions, and of ourselves—is in hands that can be trusted.

(Part 3 of a series on "The Three Ages of the Church." See articles in March/April and July/August, 1989, issues of Action Information).

How Do Pastors Worship?

by Donna Schaper

One of the key problems for a parish minister is how to worship. We lead worship frequently enough. But leading is different than worshipping, and everyone knows it. While leading, we are concerned about our performance and the experience of others. No matter how genuine our petitions to God, or our interpretation of texts, we are still in that artificial land known as leadership. Authentic prayer and praise are steps removed.

Here I try to diagnose the problem and offer a few remedies. The problem is a no-fault problem. We are not the ones responsible for our distance from worship. We signed up for leadership. Our attention legitimately focuses on our voice, our posture, our robes, their eyes, their coughs, their mood. Our leadership, more than in most professions, has to do with turning our bodies, mind, and souls into an instrument through which others may turn to God. We know when we are "on" and when we are "off." Before the sermon is over, we know if it is doing what we wanted it to do or not. By the middle of the pastoral prayer we have remembered someone else we should have prayed for and are about to mispronounce the name we are just pronouncing. Our self-consciousness is on behalf of the congregation's worship. It is a legitimate self-consciousness.

We also count the crowd. We notice who is there and who is not and regret that we prepared a sermon "just" for an absentee and also one which is guaranteed to offend someone who is present but hasn't been for two months. It is common for parish ministers to be buoyed by good attendance and depressed by a bad one. Never believe anyone who tells you that numbers don't matter. They do matter and usually they matter much more than they should. They are an outward sign of an inner grace just like all the better sacraments. It takes enormous courage for a pastor to return to a pulpit the week after Mrs. McGillicutty has pounded him or her for a grammatical mistake or what she considers a theological mistake. There she is again, week in and week out, in the front row, licking her chops, getting ready for the so-called handshake at the end of the service. Sometimes avoiding eye contact with Mrs. McG is all anyone can manage in any one hour of "worship." Our self-

Think Tank on Congregation Affiliation

PROGRAM

October 25 - October 27, 1992

Hassenfeld Conference Center, Brandeis University

Sunday, October 25

7:00 pm Registration

7:30 pm Convocation

Dr. James P. Wind, Lilly Endowment
Rabbi Renni S. Altman, Union of American Hebrew Congregations

8:00 pm Defining the Issues

Member Growth: The Larger Picture
Loren Mead, President and Founder, The Alban Institute, Inc.

Defining Membership, Affiliation and Strategies for Growth
Gary Tobin, Director, Maurice and Marilyn Cohen Center for
Modern Jewish Studies, Brandeis University

9:00 pm Refreshments and Informal Discussion

Monday, October 26

9:00 am The Unaffiliated

Reaching Out to the Unaffiliated
Steven E. Foster, Senior Rabbi, Congregation Emanuel (Denver);
Co-Chair, UAHC Task Force on the Unaffiliated

A Typology of Protestant "Marginal Members"
C. Kirk Hadaway, United Church Board for Homeland Ministries

Why do Young Adults Join Churches? Why do They Drop Out?
Dean R. Hoge, Sociology Department, Catholic University of
America

10:30 am Coffee Break

10:45 am A Conversation with the Unaffiliated

Panel of the Unaffiliated, Moderated by Bernard Reisman, Director,
Hornstein Program in Jewish Communal Service

11:30 am Small Group Discussions

1:00 pm Luncheon

2:00 pm A Dialogue on Programmatic Innovations

Luria Conference Room

*Hosting a Homeless World: The biblical/theological motif of 'welcoming the
stranger' in the hostile environment of urban USA*

John F. Steinbruck, Pastor, Luther Place Church

The Researcher's Response

Samuel C. Heilman, Professor of Sociology, Queens College and
the Graduate Center of CUNY

Levine Conference Room

*Building Bridges: Failures and successes in reaching out across boundaries
of social class, ethnicity and race*

James A. Scott, President, American Baptist Churches USA

The Researchers' Response

James Davison Hunter, Department of Sociology, University of
Virginia

4:00 pm Walk and Talk

5:00 pm Hors d'œuvres

6:00 pm Dinner

7:00 pm *Welcome*

Jehuda Reinharz, Provost, Brandeis University

Leadership, Ministry, and Integrity Amid Changing Lay-Professional Relationships

James R. Wood, Department of Sociology, Indiana University

8:00 pm Dessert and Discussion

Tuesday, October 27

9:00 am *A Framework for Understanding Congregation Affiliation: Suggestions from research within the Christian tradition*
David Roozen, Director, Center for Social and Religious Research,
Hartford Seminary

9:45 am Coffee Break

10:00 am National Religious Institutions

The Role of National Jewish Religious Institutions in Congregational Life
Rabbi Marshall T. Meyer, Congregation B'nai Jeshurun

What Effect, if Any, Do National Religious Institutions Have on Congregational Affiliation?

William McKinney, Dean and Professor of Religion and Society,
Hartford Seminary

11:00 am Small Group Discussions

12:30 pm Luncheon

1:30 pm Looking Toward the Future: Setting new agendas

Reflections moderated by Jim Wind, Lilly Endowment

3:00 pm Adjournment

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San Mateo, CA

Rabbi Renni S. Altman
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Rabbi Alan Bregman
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Lou McNeil
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Atlanta, GA

Loren Mead
Executive Director, Alban Institute
Washington, DC

Rabbi Paul Menitoff
Director, Northeast Council
Union of American Hebrew Congs.

Rabbi Marshall T. Meyer
Congregation B'nai Jeshurun
New York, NY

Catherine Minkiewicz
The Paulist Center
Boston, MA

Howard Moody
New York, NY

John O'Hara
The Lutheran Church -- Missouri Synod

Myra N. Ostroff
Chair, Taskforce on the Unaffiliated
Union of American Hebrew Congregations

Kenneth I. Pargament, Ph.D.
Department of Psychology
Bowling Green State University

Rabbi Deborah R. Prinz
Temple Adat Shalom
Poway, CA

Michael B. Regele
Church Information and Development
Services
Costa Mesa, CA

Bernard Reisman
Director, Hornstein Program in Jewish
Communal Studies, Brandeis

William E. Remsden
Opportunity Associates
Wyncote, PA

Richard A. Rhem
Christ Community Church (Reformed
Church in America)
Spring Lake, MI



David A. Roozen
*Director, Center for Social and
Religious Research
Hartford Seminary*

Amy L. Sales
*Research Associate, Cohen Center for
Modern Jewish Studies, Brandeis*

Jonathan Sarna
*Chair, Department of Near Eastern &
Judaic Studies, Brandeis*

James A. Scott
*President, American Baptist Churches,
USA*

Rabbi Sanford Seltzer
*Director of Research, UAHC
Director, UAHC-CCAR Commission on
Religious Living*

Dr. Miriam Klein Shapiro
*Union for Traditional Judaism
Mt. Vernon, NY*

Steven Shaw
*Jewish Theological Seminary
New York, NY*

Rev. Randall Updegraff Spleth
*Geist Christian Church
Indianapolis, IN*

Dr. John F. Steinbruck
*Pastor, Luther Place/N St. Village
Washington, DC*

Larry Sternberg
*Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies,
Brandeis*

The Rev. Paul D. Sullins
*Episcopal Church/Life Cycle Institute
Baltimore, MD*

Gary A. Tobin
*Director, Cohen Center for Modern Jewish
Studies, Brandeis*

Gilbert J. Ward
Presbytery of Philadelphia

Audrey Wilson
*Assistant Director, Northeast Council
Union of American Hebrew Congs.*

James P. Wind
Lilly Endowment

James R. Wood
*Department of Sociology
Indiana University*

Rabbi Michael Zedek
*Congregation B'nai Jehudah
Kansas City, MO*



October 10, 1992

Unaffiliated

Draft Report

November 23, 1992
27 Heshvan 5753

Mr. Fred Brand
31 Island Way, #1407
Clearwater, FL 34630

Dear Mr. Brand:

Thank you for sharing with me your concerns regarding the inability of young people, such as your own children and many, many others in the same situation, to become members of synagogues because of financial constraints. Believe me when I tell you this is a segment of the population which we as a Union are well aware of and we are ever seeking ways and means to bring them into the synagogue family.

Our Task Force on Outreach to the Unaffiliated is wrestling with this very problem and has created a Privilege Card for unaffiliated Jews in the 20 to 30 years of age category. It provides incentives for affiliation such as a one or two year free or reduced membership, or in some instances free high holyday tickets are offered. For anyone over the age of 30, the majority of our congregations will provide a reduced membership for those unable to meet the costs. Granted, such a person wishing to affiliate but unable to meet the financial commitment, must speak with the membership chair and/or rabbi, depending on the particular congregation. Very often accommodations are made, even for the not-so-young. I realize that isn't always pleasant, but it can be done with dignity. Certainly when a younger person volunteers some contribution I would hope our temple officials would seek to work out a way to provide them with membership.

We must always remember that not every synagogue has the physical plant which will allow for additional persons to be seated on the high holydays. Nonetheless, synagogues welcome any and all comers for services throughout the congregational year. But we know we must do more, we must make certain they feel welcome and wanted. Thus, many temples program for young singles and in larger communities we are suggesting that temples link hands and resources to do joint programming for the very age group about which you write. They are, as you know, an age group it is very

Fred Brand
November 23, 1992
Page -2-

difficult to reach but I assure you we keep trying!

I am taking the liberty of sharing your letter with the director of the Task Force on Unaffiliated, Rabbi Renni Altman and am asking her to give you fuller details on the Privilege Card and the congregations involved. Along these same lines, we have an Access Card for college age young people and this is proving to be quite successful.

Let me assure you all of us of the Union wrestle with this complex problem. We are ever seeking and searching for ways and means to touch the lives of those who might well be lost to us if we cannot bring them into the circle of Reform Judaism. And if we lose them, what of their children?

Would that our financial situation might allow us to do as much as we would wish to do with and for this specific group of our people. But even given financial constraints, we do not drop the challenge, we are ever seeking ways and means to attract and retain this important part of our population.

With repeated thanks for your thoughtful comments and with every good wish, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

cc: Rabbi Renni Altman

Fred Brand,
31 Island Way, Apt 1407
Clearwater, FL # 34630

November 17th, 1992

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler,
President, UAHC
838 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY # 10021

Dear Rabbi Schindler :

In the introduction to the fall issue of Reform Judaism you said : ... only the synagogue creates Jews. Let there be no doubt that the synagogue-affiliated Jews stand as guardians of the future." I fully and whole-heartedly concur with this statement.

I think that if young Jews are locked out from the temple on the high holidays because they lack a ticket, we are acting against our own long-term interests. Indirectly we are supporting intermarriage, a problem more serious than antisemitism.

Let me be specific : I have three daughters and a son and they range in age from 26 to 35 years. All are over 1000 miles away from me, two on the westcoast and two on the east - coast, none are married and all are still trying to establish themselves in business without having reached adequate incomes to make ends meet.. I am retired and a dues-paying member of the local synagogue. Every year I ask them to attend services and am told that they are not being admitted without a ticket and are ashamed to ask for favors because as yet they cannot make a meaningful contribution.

I would like to make the following suggestions :

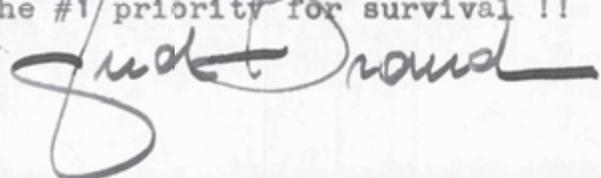
(1) The younger, struggling, unmarried out-of-town sons and daughters of UHC members should be admitted to temple anywhere until they can pay their own memberships.

(2) Congregations should not exclude them but make them feel at home, welcome them to their homes and involve them in community affairs, religious activities, lectures, etc.

(3) A special effort should be made to involve them with other Jewish youngsters socially through agranging dances, parties, get-togethers, etc.

In this huge, increasingly diverse melting-pot of a nation, where we are a mere 2% minority and where the chances of finding a Jewish mate are practically nil, it is incumbent upon us all to give this matter the #1 priority for survival !!

Sincerely yours



November 23, 1992
27 Heshvan 5753

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31 Island Way, #1407
Clearwater, FL 34630

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November 23, 1992
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With repeated thanks for your thoughtful comments and with every good wish, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

cc: Rabbi Renni Altman

MEMORANDUM

COPY

September 23, 1992

Unaffiliated

FROM: Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler
TO: Rabbi Renni S. Altman

Thank you for sending me a report concerning last Tuesday's meeting at Rodeph Shalom. Your high estimate of the programs were confirmed by many others from whom I heard concerning this session, and of course, from my children also. I hope that what started so well will, in fact be continued and then replicated in other regions. Nor should we limit ourselves to a single effort in the Manhattan area. There are literally hundreds, if not thousands, of lonely young people in the greater New York area and they desperately need places where they can encounter others. We have no higher mitzvah.

I understand that my son told you that I prepaid. I sent you a note on to him with the request that you be paid forthwith. Just in case he doesn't, I am attaching a check for \$14.00 to cover for him. When his check comes along, endorse it over to me and I will be repaid. I trust you more than I trust him.

#1



איחוד
ליהדות
מתקדמת
באמריקה

TASK FORCE ON THE UNAFFILIATED

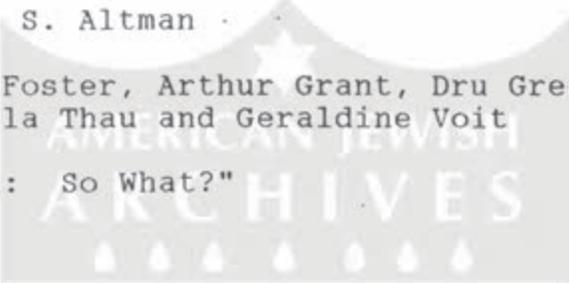
UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS

SERVING REFORM JUDAISM IN NORTH AMERICA
838 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10021-7064 (212) 249-0100

September 17, 1992
19 Elul 5752

MEMORANDUM

To: Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler and Rabbi Daniel B. Syme
From: Rabbi Renni S. Altman
CC: Rabbi Steven Foster, Arthur Grant, Dru Greenwood, Myra Ostroff, Sheila Thau and Geraldine Voit
Re: "Being Jewish: So What?"



I just want to let you that our program for Jewish New Yorkers, age 22-35, was a tremendous success. It was held this past Tuesday at Rodeph Shalom and attracted some 200 people. The room was filled with young people and energy. They were so appreciative that we had arranged this evening for them to meet other Jews, explore issues of Jewish identity and learn about opportunities for involvement.

The evening began with a wine and cheese reception before the program. The program involved a panel presentation by members of Reform congregations who are prominent professionals in various fields (law, medicine and business) speaking about why being Jewish is important to them and why they are involved in synagogue. Al (Vorspan) served as moderator and was absolutely terrific. Some of the panelists were a bit too preachy and pushy on why these people should join synagogues and Al brought it back to the focus on why be Jewish. Following the panel, discussion continued in small groups over dinner. More than a dozen HUC rabbinic students served as facilitators for these discussion groups (they were also great). The evening ended with some schmooze time to music by a jazz pianist (a New American from Russia) and the opportunity to talk to representatives from the Manhattan Privilege Card congregations and sign-up for more information.

Director of Programs
Rabbi Renni S. Altman
Chairperson
Myra Ostroff
Co-Chairperson
Rabbi Steven E. Foster
Vice-Chairs
Sheila Thau
Geraldine Voit

In their packets, participants received materials about Reform Judaism ("Reform Judaism and You", the most recent issue of RJ, a UAHC Press Catalogue and excerpts from The Jewish Home on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur) along with Privilege Cards and a schedule of on-going and upcoming activities at the participating congregations, especially highlighting those programs geared for young adults.

We are very excited about the success of the program. I spoke with Allen Kaplan and John Stern the next day. They are going to talk about it at their next presidents' meeting and discuss ways to continue what was started. There was strong interest expressed at the program in having more events such as this.

This program was organized as a pilot program with the hope that other communities around the country will replicate it. My next step is to write it up and to promote it in the regions and around the country. As a pilot project the Task Force was able to subsidize the program, primarily paying for the advertising (which was costly, but well worthwhile). Contributions from participating congregations helped to cover additional expenses. We do not have the funds to do this on a regular basis, however.

This program was more than just a wonderful way for the Reform movement to reach out to young, unaffiliated Jews. It was a good example of how congregations in one community can work together.





COPY ✓

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

May 6, 1992
3 Iyar 5752

Unaffiliated

Gary A. Tobin, Director
Cohen Center for
Modern Jewish Studies
Brandeis University
415 South Street
Waltham, MA 02254

Rabbi Renni Altman, Director
Programs for the Unaffiliated
UAHC
838 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10021

Dear Gary and Renni:

I am delighted that plans have moved forward for the Think Tank on Church/Synagogue Affiliation sponsored by the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies at Brandeis and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. It pleases me that the Lilly Endowment has determined to provide a grant to permit this very critical gathering from which I am certain that important information will come forth.

While I much appreciate the invitation to participate in the Think Tank on Congregation Affiliation, I regret that I am unable to be with you. The Jewish Agency will be meeting in Israel at the very time of the Think Tank. My presence at that meeting is most important for the Reform movement, therefore, I must decline your kind invitation to be with you at Brandeis.

Needless to note, I will be very interested in learning how the program develops and certainly what transpires during the October sessions.

With warmest regards and every good wish, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

Think Tank on Congregation Affiliation



Maurice and
Marilyn Cohen
Center
for Modern
Jewish
Studies

Brandeis University
415 South Street
Waltham, Mass.
02254-9110
617-736-2060
617-736-3009 TTY/TDD
617-736-2070 FAX



איחור
ליהדות
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Union of
American
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Serving
Reform Judaism
in North America

Funded by
Lilly Endowment, Inc.
Indianapolis private
family foundation
with a long-standing
interest in American
religion.

April 30, 1992

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler
President, UAHC

Dear Rabbi Schindler: *Alex:*

A critical challenge to religious life in America in the 1990s is the low level of church and synagogue affiliation. Researchers, clergy, and community professionals are all grappling with issues of individual motivation, needs of new target populations, and ways to respond to social trends which influence involvement in congregations.

The Lilly Endowment has awarded a grant to the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies at Brandeis University and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations to convene a think tank on church/synagogue affiliation. The Think Tank is designed to generate a creative dialogue among scholars, clergy and community professionals from across the spectrum of Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish denominations. Participants will have a unique opportunity to learn together about the latest practice and knowledge in the field and to develop new insights for future research and program initiatives.

The Think Tank will be held at Brandeis University from Sunday evening, October 25, through Tuesday, October 27, 1992. We are holding the number of participants to a select group of forty people to create the interactive environment necessary for a Think Tank.

We would like to invite you to participate in the Think Tank on Congregation Affiliation. You have been recommended as someone who would bring a rich perspective and invaluable experience to this work. Given the limited number of places, we are asking for a response by June 15.

Enclosed is further information on the Think Tank. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Gary A. Tobin
Gary A. Tobin, Director
Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies

Renni Altman
Rabbi Renni Altman, Director
Programs for the Unaffiliated
Union of American Hebrew Congregations

THINK TANK ON CONGREGATION AFFILIATION

The Lilly Endowment has awarded a grant to the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies at Brandeis University and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations to convene a Think Tank on Congregation Affiliation. The over-arching purpose of the Think Tank is to fashion links between research and practice, to ensure that each enlightens the other.

The broad questions which frame this effort are: Who are the unaffiliated and how are they reached? What factors -- social, organizational, and individual -- influence participation in congregations? The Think Tank intends to examine current knowledge in this arena and to extend our understanding so that we might identify possibilities for further scholarly exploration and program development.

The Program

Dates. The Think Tank begins Sunday evening, October 25, 1992, and continues through Tuesday, October 27, until approximately 3:00 p.m.

Location. Meetings will be held at the Hassenfeld Conference Center at Brandeis University in Waltham, Massachusetts (15 miles west of Boston). The Conference Center, set on a New England hillside, promises to be surrounded by brilliant fall foliage in October.

Participants. The number of participants is limited to 40 people. Invitations are being extended to researchers, clergy, and community professionals whose work has focused on understanding and enhancing religious affiliation. Participants will represent diverse denominations from Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish organizations.

Resource People. Key presenters will provide a framework for our deliberations and material to stimulate our thought and discussion. Among others joining the Think Tank are:

Gary Tobin -- Director, Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, Brandeis University, author of numerous community studies undertaken for Jewish federations and congregations across the U.S.

Loren Mead -- Executive Director of the Alban Institute and a founding member of the Project Team for Congregational Studies.

William McKinney -- Dean and Professor of Religion and Society at Hartford Seminary, co-author of the Handbook for Congregational Studies.

Dean Hoge -- Professor at Catholic University of America, principal investigator of a study of the religious journeys of Presbyterian "baby-boomers."

C. Kirk Hadaway -- Director of Research for United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, co-editor of a forthcoming collection of essays on new research on church growth.

Steven Foster -- Rabbi of Congregation Emanuel in Denver, Colorado, Co-Chair of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations' Task Force on the Unaffiliated.

Working Sessions. Formal presentations by the key resource people will provide "grist for the mill" for small group working sessions. These working sessions will provide ample opportunity for open discussion and exchange among Think Tank participants.

Registration Fee. The registration fee for the Think Tank is \$125. This includes admission to all formal presentations and working sessions, meals, materials, and copies of any products which emerge from this work.

Transportation and Accommodations. Participants will be responsible for their own transportation and lodging. Accommodations are available at a special conference rate at the Boston Marriott Newton (\$90 per night) or the Susse Chalet (\$49 per night). Lunches and dinners will be served at the Conference Center and are included in the registration fee.

Participation in the Think Tank on Congregation Affiliation will be on a "first-come first served" basis while maintaining a balance by religious denomination and professional practice. Please let us know of your interest in participating in the Think Tank by returning the response form by June 15, 1992.



Response Form

___ I would like to take part in the Think Tank on Congregation Affiliation at Brandeis University, October 25-27, 1992.

___ I am unable to take part in the Church/Synagogue Affiliation Think Tank.

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone: _____

Please return this form by June 15, 1992 via mail or fax to:

Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies
Brandeis University
Waltham, MA 02254

FAX: 617-736-2070

Thank you for your early response.

