

Editorial

The Jewish Family Facing Grave Crises In The 80's

Several decades ago no one would have predicted the dramatic societal changes we are currently experiencing or believed that such radical transformation would befall the Jewish family. These are some of the incredible emerging facts of Jewish family life in the 1980's, and a powerful message they convey to the Jewish community:

- One out of every three Jewish children will be brought up by only one natural parent.
- One out of two Jews who marry in the 1980's will be divorced by 1990.
- One out of every three children born to a Jewish mother or Jewish father will have a non-Jewish parent.
- One out of every two Jewish college students who marry in the 1980's will marry out of the faith.
- One out of every five married Jewish couples will have no children.
- One out of every three couples will have only one child.
- One out of every two Jewish families will not be affiliated with a synagogue or with any Jewish organization.
- Two out of every five Jewish children will receive no Jewish education and will not have a Bar or Bat Mitzvah.
- Approximately 40% of young adults in missionary and cult groups will be Jewish by birth.
- 25% of all Jewish children will have severe emotional difficulties and school problems due to broken or unstable homes.
- About half of all Jewish children in suburban schools will need special guidance.
- Two out of every ten teenage Jews will be alcoholics by age 30. Currently 27% of all Jewish college youth are involved in serious alcohol and/or drug problems. 35% of the membership of Alcoholics Anonymous groups in New York is Jewish.

The contrast with the Jewish home of the past is dramatic, considering that traditionally the Jewish home has been held up as a model of family togetherness and generally thought to be impervious to negative influences. Open society and Western affluence have taken their toll on the Jewish family.

However, the picture is by no means all bleak. Those same Jewish values that have characterized Jewish home life, motivating individuals toward outstanding academic, professional and cultural accomplishment, are still evident in many family settings.

There are signs of Jewish vitality in the Jewish community, including the growth of the Jewish day school, the increased Jewish awareness among Jewish communal leaders, the presence of increasingly larger numbers of young committed Jews and Jewish families in various sectors of the Jewish community, the growth of the *Ball Tshuvah* (returnees to Judaism) movement, the unabated record of support for humanitarian causes, particularly for Israel, and the growing sophistication of the organized Jewish community.

This vitality is overshadowed by the prognostication made in 1976 by Harvard University sociologist Elihu Bergman, that in the year 2076 there will be at best only 900,000 Jews in this country and at worst 9,000 Jews. Considering that there are presently more than 5 million Jews in the United States, this is a shocking revelation.

It is unfortunate but true, that with the exception of some Jewish day schools and yeshivot, Jewish parental commitment to Jewish schooling is generally less than supportive. The overwhelming majority of Jewish parents do not really associate themselves with the goals of the Jewish schools which their children attend, and do not provide the necessary home reinforcement for Jewish schooling. Researchers in public and private education have demonstrated that academic effectiveness is doomed without support from the home and the community, and that family background affects pupil achievement more than any school factor.

If Jewish studies and values are to be transmitted effectively, parents must become active partners in the education of their children. Quite simply, without the involvement and commitment of the Jewish family, Jewish education is doomed.

— Alvin I. Schiff

Dr. Schiff, is executive vice president of the Board of Jewish Education of Greater New York. His article is based on excerpts from a talk he gave at a Jewish Family Month gathering, held in Oceanside, N.Y. His talk was based on a number of recent surveys and many years of intimate study of the Jewish community.

The Jewish Calendar

Candlelighting

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Feb. 4 - 5:55 p.m. | Feb. 24 - Fast of Esther |
| Feb. 11 - 6:02 p.m. | Feb. 27 - Purim |
| Feb. 18 - 6:09 p.m. | Feb. 28 - Shushan Purim |
| Feb. 25 - 6:15 p.m. | |
| Mar. 4 - 6:22 p.m. | |

Spotlighting Federation

By Richard A. Klein

Is the Federation spending too much money on missions to Israel and sending people to conventions?

Fair question. And it's being asked with increasing frequency, so it needs to be considered. The Federation is a community trust, so we must carefully consider how each dollar is being spent. A finance and budget committee is being created to further watch the money raised and work with our established allocations committee.

The concern about money spent on missions and conventions is relatively new. Until recently, Charlotte's Federation was hard-pressed to find anyone who wanted to go on missions to Israel or UJA/CJF conventions around the country.

In fact, until this year, most folks couldn't name the last ten people to go to Israel on a UJA mission. Only a handful had gone to any of the regular UJA conventions. Even those listed on UJA rosters and stationery as Charlotte leaders and representatives often didn't attend.

That's changing. And with the change will come the need for subsidies and loans. Are they worth it? Should Charlotte even consider investing as much as \$10,000 to send people to conventions and Israel?

Some may suggest that the allocation is out of proportion for the needs. How many times does the community need to hear what's happening in Israel? How many new ways are we going to learn how to raise money at conventions? Why can't one or two people do the job instead of sending several people? Shouldn't the money simply go to charities and services — or directly to Israel?

Our Federation is evolving from what has been a relatively modest campaign with few demands except to Israel, to a larger campaign responsive to greater community needs and more pressure to serve Israel. To make that expansion, more solicitors need to participate and more money must be raised.

Perhaps one of our weaknesses has been the lack of development of

leadership and enough people to work in the campaign. We've depended heavily on a few good souls. Now we're faced with a much larger community; we've lost some of the trusted campaigners and many who have given generously would like to see others do the same.

In essence, we're almost starting over. Those whom we expect to do the job have to be trained. Many of the volunteers, however, do not have sufficient resources to get the necessary background to solicit effectively.

Fortunately, the United Jewish Appeal and the Council of Jewish Federations provide the necessary tools. At regional and national conventions, we can expose our future leadership and campaigners to the ways to raise more money in Charlotte and explain the reasons why. Our job is to get our people to these conventions.

From past experience, we've discovered (happily) all the following to be generally true:

1. Those attending UJA/CJF conventions and going on missions themselves will give much more money to the annual campaign.

2. Participants on missions and at conventions are charged up to successfully lead our community into a well-planned, organized campaign.

3. Participants usually develop contacts who can come into our community to assist with the campaign and raise more money.

4. Participants acquire leadership capabilities.

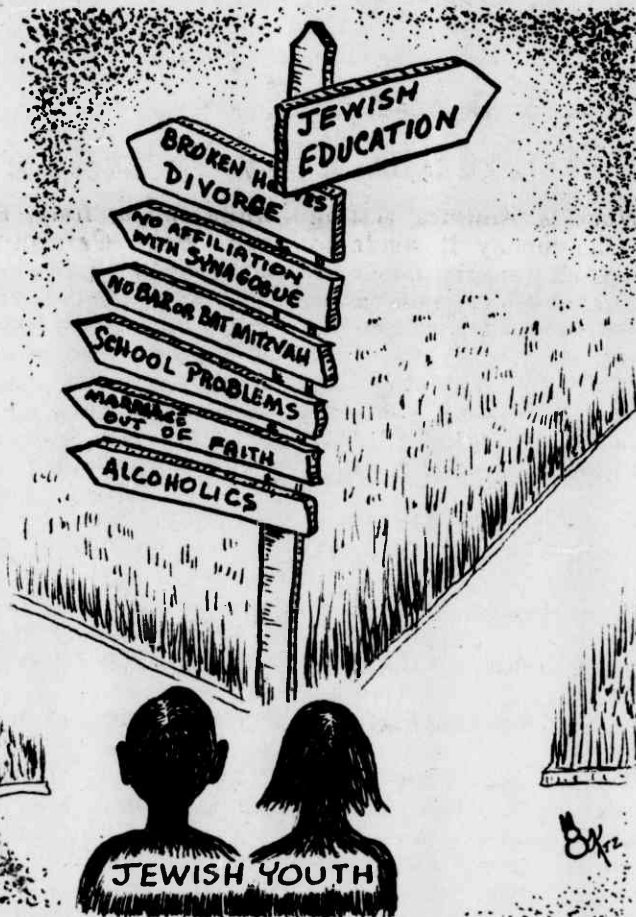
5. Not everything learned is in campaign work; we also acquire social services, community relations and synagogue skills.

The Federation has not been subsidizing everyone who has been going to Israel and conventions. Several individuals have been paying their own way. UJA has also subsidized a few of our people, recognizing that their presence in Israel will help the national campaign.

But the bottom line is that if we expect our future campaigns to flourish, we will have to train and motivate more people in the community. Recognizing that these good volunteers often don't have the means to pay for all their trips, the Federation is preparing to study on a case-by-case basis the need to provide partial or complete subsidies.

There are no "free rides" here, or junkets. These trips and missions are hard work for those attending. The hours are long. The sessions are well-planned and studious. The information comes at a rapid clip. And the dividends for those attending are superb.

As one Charlotte Federation leader recently remarked, if we expect to make money, we're going to have to spend some. The ultimate investment and its payback should be worthwhile.



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