An Intellectual and Historical Biography
Of
Rabbi Herman E. Schaalman

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Dedication

To Howie z"l., who would be very proud of me

To our children Leah, Josh, Belinda and Ray,

To Kari and Lynne, who believed in me and to

Herman and Lotte Schaalman without whom this project could not have happened

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Thesis Digest

An Intellectual and Historical Biography of Rabbi Herman E. Schaalman

This thesis documents the life of Herman E. Schaalman who was one of the five rabbinic students that the Hebrew Union College rescued from Nazi Germany in 1935. As such, Schaalman has followed the pattern of many other young German Jews who fled Germany at that period.

The majority of his career has been as a congregational rabbi but he also spent seven years as a regional director for the Union of American Hebrew Congregations in Chicago. During his time as regional director he spearheaded the establishment of the first camp of the UAHC at Oconomowoc, Wisconsin. He has taken key roles in the CCAR as its president, chair of the Mixed Marriage Committee, the Patrilineal Descent Committee and the Ethics Committee.

Schaalman was a member of a group of Covenant Theologians who met in the 1950's and 60's. He was a lifelong friend of Emil Fackenheim and Elie Weisel and has developed his own unique brand of post-shoah theology, which I discuss at length here. Schaalman has not really published much, which has limited his exposure and the opportunity to critique his work which I have engaged in.

He has also been active in inter-religious and inter-racial activites both within Chicago and internationally. He has especially focused on Catholic-Jewish relations and was a

close friend of the late Cardinal Joseph Bernadin of Chicago, as such; he was one of a group who accompanied the Cardinal to Israel. He also led a somewhat controversial service in Bernadin's memory at Holy Name Cathedral in Chicago.

Schaalman has served on the education committee of the US Holocaust Commission and on the Centenial Committee. He also participated in the revival of the Parliament of the World's Religions and was one of the organizers of its meeting in Chicago in 1993. In all, he has had a varied and rich career, which should be of interest to many.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the help of my thesis advisor Dr. Michael A. Meyer without whom this thesis would not have happened. I would also like to thank the staff of the American Jewish Archives, the Klau Library and Rabbi Elliot L. Stevens, Executive Secretary of the CCAR for their valuable assistance in my research. To the many people who willingly gave of their time to be interviewed by me, you provided the meat of my thesis. Not the least of the latter were Herman and Lotte Schaalman who opened themselves to me so that I could tell this story.

Introduction

Herman E. Schaalman (1916-) is one of five students of the Lehranstalt für die Wissenshaft des Judentums who was brought to the United States from Germany in 1935 by the Hebrew Union College as the situation for Jews in Germany worsened. It was hoped that they would be able to return to Germany within two years, but failing that, the College would take responsibility for them and they would complete their rabbinic studies in Cincinnati. It is my purpose to chronicle Schaalman's life, accomplishments, and theology, which has not been previously done.

The majority of Schaalman's rabbinic career has been as a congregational rabbi, first in Cedar Rapids, Iowa where he went to serve in 1941 following his ordination. He remained there until 1949 when he moved to Chicago to become the Midwest regional director for the Union of American Hebrew Congregations.

While working for the Union, Schaalman spearheaded the effort to establish the first summer camp of the Union, now known as the Olin-Sang Ruby Union Institute at Oconomowoc, Wisconsin. The camp, which opened its doors to its first campers in the summer of 1952, has become a model for informal education, creative worship and leadership development for the Reform movement. It set the path for the others which followed.

In 1955, Schaalman left the Union to assume the post of rabbi at Emanuel Congregation in Chicago succeeding Felix Levy who had been Emanuel's rabbi for forty-eight years. Schaalman officially retired from Emanuel in 1986 although he has twice come out of retirement to serve as interim rabbi at Emanuel and has also served other congregations in that capacity.

Schaalman was a close friend of the late Cardinal Bernadin of Chicago and has been active in interreligious and interracial affairs both locally and internationally. He has received many awards including five honorary doctorates and the Lincoln Award as a distinguished citizen of Illinois, the Order of Merit First Class from the President of Germany as a distinguished United States citizen of German birth, and is a Laureate of the Catholic Church. He has a park and a street named for him in Chicago.

It is, however, being chosen by his peers as president of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, in which capacity he served from 1981-1983, which Schaalman prizes the most. He has also chaired three important committees of the Conference: the Mixed Marriage Committee 1971-73, Patrilineal Descent 1979-83, and Ethics 1983-91. The first two committees brought important resolutions to the Conference floor. Schaalman was once appointed and subsequently elected to the chair of the Ethics Committee, which heard many sensitive cases and produced a revision to the Conference's ethics code.

As a member of a group of "Covenant Theologians," which met periodically in the 1950's and 1960's, Schaalman came into contact with many of the important thinkers of

the Jewish world, including Elie Wiesel. Wiesel influenced him to begin dealing with the theological implications of the *shoah*. As a result, Schaalman has developed his own post-*shoah* theology. Although it borrows in some respects from other major thinkers, it uniquely reflects Schaalman's views. Because Schaalman has published very little, his views have had a rather narrow exposure, but they are, none the less, worthy of consideration.

Schaalman referred to himself in his 1981 Presidential address to the CCAR as a "brand plucked from the fire." It is to the history and thought of this "brand" that I will now turn my attention.

Chapter 1 – Background: Germany and German Jewry

Herman E. Schaalman , the oldest of three sons of Adolph and Regina Schaalman, was born in Munich, Germany on April 28, 1916. Munich, the capital of Bavaria, is located in southwest Germany. Jews have lived there off and on at least since the 13th century. In 1229 there is a record of a Jew called Abraham from Munich who appeared as witness at a trial in Regensburg.[1]

Regensburg is also part of the Schaalman family lore as there is information that was given to Schaalman that mentions a "rich Jew" of the same name who was driven out from Regensburg in 1519. Schaalman often muses that he was probably the last Schaalman who had money. He does, however, feel that there is reason to believe that there is a family connection since his name is not a common one and his father's family came from that area of Franconia.

As to Jewish life in Munich:

"Jews were prominent in the cultural life of Munich, a center of German arts in the late 19th and 20th centuries as well as being more equally represented in Bavarian political affairs than in other German states...In the postwar years [WWI] of economic and political upheaval, Munich was a hotbed of anti-Semitic activity and the cradle of the Nazi party...Sporadic anti-Semitic outbursts characterized the years till the Nazi seizure of power in 1933, when Reinhold Heydrich and Heinrich Himmler took control of the police; the first concentration camp, Dachau was erected near Munich...Munich Jewry was subject to particularly vicious and continuous acts of discrimination, terror and boycotts, but responded with a Jewish cultural and religious revival."[2]

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[1] Editorial Staff, Munich, volume 12: Encyclopedia Judaica, (Jerusalem, 1972), 521.
[2] Ibid., 523.

It is in this atmosphere which Schaalman spent his youth until 1935 when, upon graduating from gymnasium, he headed to Berlin to begin his rabbinic education at the Lehranstalt für die Wissenschaft des Judentums. A deeper look at the turmoil which surrounded the German Jewish community of this period is, therefore, warranted.

The Jewish settlement in Germany mimics that in many other regions of the world. "Jews originally settled along the Rhine in Cologne and elsewhere in the wake of the Roman legions. Until the great massacres during the Crusades, they constituted a middle class of merchants, physicians, and other professionals." [3] As such they were hardly newcomers to these regions, and they long preceded Saxons, Bavarians or Prussians in what was later known as the "German lands." "The earliest written record testifying to their presence in the Rhineland is the text of a decree of A. D. 321 by the emperor Constantine (preserved in the Vatican Library). It instructs the Roman magistrate of Cologne on relations with the local rabbi."[4]

It was following the Crusades that the lives of the Jews changed, being "made miserable by the brutality and superstition of the mob, the greed of princes and the growing intolerance of the Church. By the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries they had become mostly rag dealers, pawnbrokers, money changers, peddlers and vagrants. The remarkable thing about them was that the poorest men (and some of the women) were often literate, though in Hebrew only."[5] This high level of literacy served to set Jews apart and contributed ironically to their role as the quintessential other.

As a result, while Jews joined the enlightenment, their hoped for legal equality did not accompany them and many eventually converted to Christianity in order to rid themselves of the impediment that their Jewishness placed upon them. There is no better

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[3] Amos Elon, The Pity of It All; A History of the Jews in Germany 1743-1933 (New York, NY, 2002), 20-21
[4] Ibid., 21
[5] Ibid.

example of this predicament than the great Jewish thinker Moses Mendelssohn who followed his teacher David Frankel to Berlin in 1743. Although he eventually advocated for changes in his teacher's strict orthodoxy, Mendelssohn remained observant. He did, however, seek a secular education. He was known throughout Europe as the "German Socrates" and many non-Jews sought him out. Despite his prominence and the status he achieved for German philosophy, Mendelssohn lived in Berlin as a "tolerated Jew," but without the rights of citizenship and his family's status was dependent on him. When he died they were in danger of being forced out of Berlin. Eventually most of his children converted to Christianity.

The most important initial law in the emancipation of German Jews came in the period when the French conquered Prussia and was issued on March 11, 1812. It was soon reversed when the so-called "free cities" were liberated by the Germans. In general, "Jewish emancipation in Germany prior to unification was related, as in Italy, to aspirations for the reform of the state along liberal and democratic lines, and to the desire for unifying the nation, as well as to the revolutionary movement. But after 1848 Germany was controlled by conservative, 'historic,' elements, which shaped the form of German unity and the nature of its political life. The process of emancipation in Germany was, therefore, a prolonged and bitter struggle, complicated by assimilation on the one hand, and the power of the German 'tradition of hatred' of Jews on the other. The struggle was to last from the 1780's until the passing of the law on Jewish equality in the North German Confederation on July 3, 1869, and its extension, with the ratification of the Constitution, to the whole of the German Empire on April 14, 1871."[6]

Although things improved periodically, there were still many inequalities. It is no wonder that the Jews of Germany eagerly greeted the promise of true equality that they hoped would come from the Weimar Republic. In the end they were doomed to disappointment.

"The Weimar Republic named for the city where its constitution was adopted in 1919,"[7] was a direct outgrowth of World War I. Although many Jews, including Schaalman's father served on behalf of Germany, the advent of the war was greeted in a mixed

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[6] Benzion Dinur editor in the article on the emancipation of the Jews of Germany in the Encyclopedia Judaica, Vol. 6, pages 704-707, Jerusalem, 1972

[7] Amos Elon, The Pity of It All, 355.

fashion.[8] Amos Elon comments in his book, The Pity of It All, about the reaction of the noted Jewish author Franz Kafka in his diary, "Kafka's diary entry for Sunday, August 2, 1914 is suggestive: 'Germany has declared war on Russia-swimming in the afternoon.' In a diary otherwise so lucid and opinionated, Kafka leaves no record of what he thinks of the war itself. If he was not overly disturbed, neither were millions of educated Germans of all faiths, Frenchmen, Russians, Austrians, and Britons."[9]

In the weeks proceeding the declaration of war one influential Jew, Walter Rathenau, who foresaw the disastrous consequences of a world war went to see Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg to warn him that Germany was getting trapped in a situation that did not serve its best interests. Rathenau was not heeded and the ultimate irony is that, despite warnings by his friends and his mother, he accepted the position of Germany's foreign minister after the war. It was his job to help reconcile Germany with her former enemies. He held the position until June 24, 1922 when he was assassinated. "The murder, the 354th political assassination committed by right wing extremists, shook the Republic." [10] The complaint against him was that "the Jewish prince" had sabotaged the war effort,[11] which, of course, was not the case.

Most Jews, in fact, greeted the war with enthusiasm. Leo Baeck writing on August 5, 1914, which was two days after Germany's declaration of war, writes, "It is not a war over land or influence that is now waged, but a war that will decide on the culture and

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[8] See Paul Mendes-Flohr, "In the Shadow of the World War," in German-Jewish History in Modern Times; Vol. 4(New York, 1998), 9. By the war's end 96 thousand Jews had served in the Kaiser's army, 12,000 died in action and 35, 000 were decorated.
[9] Amos Elon, The Pity of It All, p 297
[10] Ibid., p370
[11] Ibid., p 369

morality of Europe, whose destiny has been placed in the hands of Germany and in the hands of those who stand by its side." "This intense and almost universal identification with the German cause (writes Mendes-Flohr)...was borne by a sense that the longed for moment had arrived when German Jews would finally be fully accepted as fellow citizens. Writing to a fellow Zionist in September, 1914, the religious philosopher Martin Buber says, 'never has the concept of "people" become so real for me as it has in these weeks. Also among Jews in general one finds nearly everywhere a great and solemn feeling.'"[12]

But Buber was later to change his mind when Jews found themselves subtly excluded by the myths and symbols of the war. Those on the frontlines were called on "to regard their death as analogous to the passion and death of Christ."[13] Much in the trenches helped reinforce the separateness of their lives for Jews as "the camaraderie of the trenches did not suppress the anti-Semitism of the average German that the Jew met in the army."[14] Schaalman's father served in the German army for four and a half years. He was stationed at Verdun and rarely spoke of his experiences. Perhaps the anti-Semitism was the reason. The war ended in bitter defeat for Germany.

The Treaty of Versailles was signed by Germany's foreign minister Hermann Müller on June 28, 1919. The terms included Germany losing a certain amount of its own territory to a number of surrounding countries. This included the territory of Alsace-Lorraine which had been ceded to Germany in 1871 from France. It was also stripped of all of its

[12] Mendes-Flohr, "In the Shadow of War," 9
[13] Ibid., p 12
[14] Ibid., p 13

overseas and African colonies and Germany's ability to make war was limited by restrictions on the size of its military. Germany acknowledged and agreed to respect the independence of Austria. Germany also agreed to accept responsibility for the war which resulted in an agreement to pay reparations.[15] The result was public humiliation for Germany and someone needed to be blamed. In many circles it was the Jews.

Whether the economic burdens which the reparations brought actually led to the end of the Weimar Republic and the rise of Adolf Hitler has been debated by scholars. Certainly it was one of the factors. What is of importance here is that one of the people who was most active in the 1918-19 financial and economic negotiations on behalf of Germany after the armistice was a Jewish banker by the name of Carl Melchior. This "paved the way for Germany's reacceptance into the family of nations"[16].

There is some question whether Melchior expected that Germany would actually have to make the reparation payments which he negotiated.[17] But what is true is that when "the hyperinflation of 1922 wiped out savings, the [German] middle class moved to the right"... [And] the rightists identified the Weimar Republic with Jews which was no accident. Jews were among it most ardent supporters." Walter Rathenau, Albert Einstein, and Hugo Preuss, are among the many names which are mentioned.[18] What was apparently ignored was the fact that many Jews suffered just like everyone else. Schaalman shared stories from his childhood of how inflation affected his family.

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[15] See "Treaty of Versailles" on en.wikipedia.org
[16] Joachim O. Ronall on "Carl Melchior" in The Encyclopedia Judaica Vol. 11, Keter Publishing House Jerusalem Ltd (Jerusalem, 1972) 1287.
[17] Ibid., "The Treaty of Versailles"
[18] Ibid. Elon, p 356

The Weimar Republic "began in a flurry of hope...It was a showpiece of intense creativity until the very end." [19] And Jews were in the forefront of the creativity associated with everything that was new and therefore not part of the German Volk which Hitler would later promote. They were the intellectuals even though "few of them regarded themselves as Jews and would certainly not have claimed to represent Judaism or Jewish interests. Nonetheless, the Jewish community as such was stigmatized."[20]

The Weimar constitution made the Jews political equals not just in theory but also in fact. Twenty-four Jews were elected to the Reichstag and no fewer than six served as senior cabinet ministers in the central government in 1919. Some we have already mentioned. German universities opened up their faculties at all levels.[21]

What apparently went unnoticed at the opening of the new Reichstag was Article 48 in the constitution which would later prove to be the fatal flaw for the Jews. This article provided the president with the authority to rule by decree when it was deemed necessary. And it was this article which allowed a beleaguered Hindenberg to appoint Adolf Hitler as Chancellor of Germany on January 30, 1933. It was all perfectly legal.

After the World War I, Jews felt that they were German more than ever. They had proven their patriotism on the battle field side by side with non-Jews. Soon they would be fully integrated in German society. But the post-war years of 1918 to 1924 were a further disappointment. As the economy worsened "Political radicalization and economic

[19] Ibid., 355.
[20] Mendes-Flohr, "In the Shadow of War," 22
[21] Amos Elon, The Pity of It All, 358.

turbulence in the short-lived Weimar Republic dominated everyday life." There was bitter animosity toward Jews in all social strata.[22]

As discharged soldiers wandered from city to city looking for work, the hyperinflation mounted. "Already at the war's end, the mark had lost 40% of its value."[23] The result for many was a demoralizing loss of social status and an ever sharper contrast between the rich and the poor. Since Jews by and large did better financially than their non-Jewish counterparts, attention focused on them. Munich was especially volatile. According to one Jewish source, "anti-Semitism was even more ferocious in the years of hyperinflation 1919-1923 than in 1933, the year Hitler finally came to power."[24]

I do not know that Hitler can ever really be explained, but his eventual impact on Schaalman's life and the lives of millions of others, Jew and non-Jew alike, requires that we speak about him here.: In 1922 a 30 year old veteran Adolf Hitler was elected chairman of the National Social Democratic Worker's Party (NSDAP). His platform described Jews as "vampires that had to be eliminated from Germany, if possible by legal means but ultimately through violence, deportation and death.[25] "Hitler's popular support came from those who frequented the enormous beer halls of Munich where on November 9, 1923 he proclaimed 'the end of the "criminal" government in Berlin and the formulation of a new regime headed by him." He followed the verbal coup with an unsuccessful attempt to seize the seat of the municipality in the city's historic center.

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[22] Avraham Barkai, "Population Decline and Economic Stagnation" in German-Jewish History in Modern Times, Vol. 4 (New York, 1998) 45
[23] Amos Elon, The Pity of It All, p 367
[24] Ibid., p. 368
[25] Ibid.

What followed was a show trial where Hitler was allowed to make long political speeches. He was sent to Landsberg prison where he was allowed to receive his friends and wrote the first volume of Mein Kampf. He served less than a year.[26]

Opinion seems to be divided as to the lack of popularity of Mein Kampf which apparently was not well written. What is abundantly clear is that the book, which was not published until 1925,[27] makes no secret as to Hitler's plans for the Jews for anyone who took the time to read it.

Hitler's initial success was modest as in May of 1924 the NSDAP won 32 seats in the Reichstag with under 2 million votes. The years 1924-1928 were years of political and economic stabilization. The result was that in May, 1928 the NSDAP received only 800,000 votes which netted them 12 seats in the Reichstag. By February, 1929 with the onset of the depression there were three million unemployed in Germany.[28]

From 1929 on anti-Jewish propaganda and violence assumed staggering portions everywhere in Germany. In September, 1930 with Nazi influence and propaganda mounting the Nazi party took six million votes which gave it 107 seats in the Reichstag making it the second largest party. [29] "Two generations after gaining full emancipation,

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[26] Ibid., p 373
[27] Ibid., p 389
[28] Avraham Barkai, "Political Orientations and Crises Consciousness" in German-Jewish History in Modern Times (New York, 1998) 103
[29] Ibid

German Jews found themselves hurled back into the position of a 'protected Jewry' that sought to safeguard its existence by an appeal to state power."[30]

During the Weimar period Berlin became the cultural capital of Europe and it was also the city with the largest concentration of Jews in Germany. "In 1933 54.5 percent of all Jews in the German Reich lived in ten large cities with over 100,000 inhabitants-some 160,000 (32.1 percent) in Berlin alone."[31] As the Nazi persecution grew, these figures shifted with more and more Jews abandoning the countryside for the perceived anonymity of the cities.

In Berlin and in some of the other university cities, social intermingling was widespread and growing all the time. Intermarriage was at an all time high and informal liaisons must have been even more frequent.[32] Later this perceived dissolution of the Aryan race would become a focus of Nazi policy. Schaalman himself would erroneously be pointed to in his classroom by a Nazi expert on racial characteristics as a perfect example of the racial characteristics which the Führer wanted to breed. He was sixteen when Hitler came to power.

Besides the huge contribution of Jews in the secular sphere, there was a renaissance of secular Jewish culture and in evidence. Elon offers the opinion that this was "generated in part by the Zionists to encourage emigration to Palestine and in part by Buber's

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[30] Avraham Barkai, "Political Orientations and Crises Consciousness," 115
[31] Avraham Barkai, "Population Decline and Economic Stagnation," in German-Jewish History in Modern Times, (New York, 1998) 33
[32] Amos Elon, The Pity of it All, 377

popular book on Hasidism." That Buber should spark a secularist movement is a bit odd but as Elon himself states, "Zionism rarely resulted in emigration. By 1933 less than 2,000 German Jews had immigrated to Palestine."[33] Among those who did immigrate to Palestine was Schaalman's fiancee who died in Palestine in a swimming accident in 1939. We will discuss their relationship in the next chapter.

There was the establishment of lectureships of Jewish studies and ethics at various German universities during the Weimar Republic. This served to recognize the Jewish component of European civilization however short lived this advancement would be. The first such lectureship was established at the University of Frankfort in 1924 and was occupied by Martin Buber.[34] Jewish sports clubs abounded as well as various youth movements. Some of these organizations focused on self-defense when the occasion called for it.

The Weimar Republic saw the establishment and growth of the Lehrhaus movement which focused on adult Jewish education. It also became the epicenter for the rivival of Modern Hebrew. The first Lehrhaus was founded in Frankfurt by the great Jewish theologian Franz Rosenzweig, who himself nearly became an apostate. Others followed.[35]

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[33]Ibid., p 378
[34] Paul Mendes-Flohr, "Jewish Cultural and Spiritual Life," in German- Jewish in Modern Times, (New York, 1998) 145
[35]Ibid Elon, p 3 78

The "Hallmark" of the German-Jewish renaissance was the "boldly novel" translation of the Hebrew Scriptures which Buber and Rosenzweig collaborated on. Begun in 1925, it was completed by Buber in 1961 after Rosenzweig's death. What made this translation of the Tanach unique was that it Hebraized German in order to entice Germans to learn Hebrew, which also speaks to the situation of the period. In this it is the opposite of Moses Mendelssohn's 1783 translation. Mendelssohn used impeccably correct German but in Hebrew letters since the majority of the Jews of that time did not read Latin letters. The Buber-Rosenzweig project was a big success largely through the underwriting of it by the B'nai Brith under the leadership of Leo Baeck.[36] It was part of an overall renewal of Jewish religious life in Germany and was used along with a Hebrew bible in the Schaalman household as he was growing up.

Perhaps the most ambitious literary project of the Weimar period was the Encyclopedia Judaica. It was initiated by Nahum Goldmann and Jacob Klatzkin, both committed Zionists. Printed in German, 10 of the projected 15 volumes were published between 1928 and 1934 when the National Socialist regime's restrictive policies forced suspension of the project.[37]

"Within the secular German-Jewish culture nestled the variant culture of Russian-Jewish expatriates who were to be found in the major cities of Germany. [Among their effects on the Jewish population and] because of their efforts, Berlin in the 1920s temporarily

[36] Mendes-Flohr, "Jewish Cultural and Spiritual Life," 148
[37] Ibid., p 150

became one of the major centers of Hebrew and Yiddush publishing."[38] These Russian Jews joined many others who had fled the pogroms of Eastern Europe and they were not well accepted by their German coreligionists who often looked down on them as poor and uneducated and considered them a drain on community resources. Among the refugees was Schaalman's mother whose parents fled the Ukraine with her in 1893. She was six months old at the time.

Jews were in the vanguard of musical innovation in the secular sector during the Weimar period. But new Jewish music was also created, some of which was intended for liturgy.[39]

On a religious level the post-war period was characterized by a search for a deeper spiritual life. For some this search involved things like experimentation with liturgy in order to encourage more active participation in the service by the congregants. In all streams of Judaism there was a desire to restore the synagogue to its original function as both a house of prayer and a center of living community. [40] In other words, there was a searching for a Jewish Gemeinschaft [sense of community] within the Gemeiniede [community organization].

The financial situation for Germany worsened when American banks called in some of the loans that were helping Germany pay its war debt and Stalin refused to join the Social Democrats in a common anti-Nazi front. "The year 1930 saw the beginning of the end of

[38] Ibid., p 152
[39] Mendes-Flohr, "Jewish Cultural and Spiritual Life," 155
[40] Ibid., p 153-154

parliamentary democracy. Bernhard Weiss, deputy police chief of Berlin from 1927 to 1932 and a Jew, tried without success to restrain the looming civil war in its early stages.[41]

"Nazis and communists clashed in the streets and Jews were molested in the streets by Nazi hoodlums. Parliamentary democracy disintegrated under the strains of political extremism on the right and the left. There were rapid changes in cabinet positions which the Social Democrats went along with to restrain the Nazis."[42]

Finally on January 30, 1933 a beleaguered and senile Hindenberg appointed Adolf Hitler Chancellor of Germany using the dictatorial powers the Weimar Constitution had given him. His hope was that the new responsibilities would "tame" Hitler.[43] The opposite was the case. So, in 1935 as Hitler was beginning his "final solution to the Jewish problem," a young rabbinic student, Herman Schaalman, headed for Berlin to begin his studies.

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[41] Amos Elon, The Pity of It All, 385
[42] Ibid., p 386
[43] Ibid., 390

Chapter 2- Schaalman's Early Years, HUC, and the American Jewish Community of the 1930s

"When Hitler came to power in 1933, about a half million Jews lived in Germany."[1] Among them were Jews whose families had been in Germany for centuries and also Jews who had fled to Germany from Eastern Europe following the pogroms and the rise of Communism. There was a long history of cultural conflict between those Eastern European Jews and Jews whose connections to Germany were more established.

Among these Eastern European families was that of Regina Wanschel, Schaalmann's mother, whose family fled to Nuremberg from the Ukraine in October, 1893 when she was six months old. Regina's father died when she was quite young and a local rabbi, a man by the name of Freudenthal, took a paternal interest in the young girl. This relationship continued well into her adult life and figured significantly in Schaalmann's life in a couple of ways.

When Adolph Schaalmann and Regina Wanschel decided to marry, Schaalmann was a soldier in the German army in World War One serving on the front in Verdun, France. The government considered Regina to be an enemy alien since Germany was at war with her native land, and they were hesitant to grant permission for her to marry a soldier in the Kaiser's army. Rabbi Freudenthal was apparently able to intervene and obtain permission for the marriage but they[2] had only two days to make the arrangements before Adolph Schaalmann had to return to the frontline. Schaalmann's family had been in Bavaria for

[1] Walter Laqueur, Generation Exodus, (Hanover and London 2001), 1
[2] All of my information on Schaalman's biography comes from interviews I did unless otherwise stated.

centuries and they were not all pleased with the marriage to this Eastern European woman. As a result, they sent "not even a postcard" to him in the four and a half years which he spent in the war. In later years relations would improve due to Schaalmann's prestige as a professor and the birth of his three sons.

Hermann Ezra Schaalmann was born on April 28, 1916 in Munich, Germany. His brother Ernest was born in 1921 and his brother Manfred in 1924. Schaalmann's Brit is credited in family lore with having saved his father's life. The timing was such that his father had barely left the building in which he was head-quartered in order to be there for the Brit when it was shelled, apparently killing everyone inside.

After the war, the Schaalmann family occupied the top floor of what was considered an upper middle class apartment building in Munich. The top floor apparently was considered less desirable and was, therefore, less expensive.

Although they had a household servant and took regular family vacations together, money was always an issue for the young family. Adolph Schaalmann taught physics and math at a local gymnasium, a position which seemingly brought with it more prestige than monetary compensation. As the wife of such a "professor", Mrs. Schaalmann was entitled to the honorific title of "Frau Professor" but it was considered unseemly for her to work no matter how much the money was needed.

There are three events related to money Rabbi Schaalmann recalled during our interviews. Since he grew up during the terrible inflation of the early Weimar period, the impact on his family is clear. Schaalmann recalls that his mother required surgery when he was young. Inflation was so rampant the surgeon would not even scrub for the procedure until he had been paid in full in Gold marks. The family went into such debt in order to pay for the surgery that they never recovered before they left Germany in 1939.

At the height of the inflation, Schaalmann recalls his father rushing into their apartment with all of his salary in a cigar box. He instructed his wife to go immediately to the market to buy food for dinner and not wait because the next day it might be completely worthless. Many Saturday evenings, Schaalmann retold, his mother was reduced to tears as she accounted to her husband for even the smallest amount that she had used to run the household. The family was expected to work together in order not to incur any excessive expenses and this included the children.

Schaalmann describes his family growing up as both very close and very observant although not Orthodox. The family kept Kosher and was highly observant of Shabbat and the holidays. The Birkat HaMazon was recited after meals and the home was full of Jewish books.

On many Shabbat evenings, they walked together the twenty or so minutes to a local orphanage where Professor Schaalmann led the Kabbalat Shabbat with Herman assisting as a boy cantor. Having a fairly good voice he also, at times, played that role at the large Liberal

synagogue which the Schaalmann family attended. Shabbat dinner was often eaten with members of the extended family.

The synagogue was considered "liberal" in a fashion which we would today consider right wing Conservative. There was separate seating, two days observed of holidays and only slight modifications in the liturgy. The service was all in Hebrew. There were a mixed choir, an organ, and occasional sermons, which were in German. Resurrection and the hope for the coming of the Messiah were part of the liturgy. It was this same synagogue which Hitler specifically ordered destroyed because it blocked his view from his artist club across the street. Physical remnants from the synagogue remain with both Herman Schaalmann and his brother Manfred to this day.

On Shabbat afternoon the family engaged in Torah study together. There was no variation in the practice whether the family was at home or on holiday. For Schaalmann it was a passive experience in contrast to the highly interactive sessions which he still conducts at Emanuel Congregation in Chicago. The Rosenzweig-Buber German translation of the Bible was used along with a Hebrew text.

Schaalmann appears to have no doubts of his parents' affection and keen interest in his welfare but there was a formality between them which was typical of German families. In general, Schaalmann verbalizes that it would never have occurred to him not to do as he was told and he recalls only two occasions when he received beatings for his misbehaviors.

These occurred in the bathroom where he was made to lean over the tub while he was spanked and left in the dark for a while to contemplate his misdeed.

He speaks with great admiration of his father and very warmly of his mother. Schaalmann's mother had at least some university education and apparently attempted to continue her studies after he was born. She took the young boy with her to university to attend class and left him sitting outside with specific instructions not to go anywhere. Schaalmann was approached by a dog whose attempts at friendship brought him to tears. When his mother returned from class she found her son unharmed but hysterical, which ended her studies.

Schaalmann's mother is described by him as someone who was remarkable for her "humanity". He elaborated on this by saying that she "had a skill in human relations- not a given in German society." German society was governed by strict rules of behavior which apparently did not impress themselves much on Regina Schaalmann. Despite the fact that she was considered an outsider, she apparently was able to gain a high degree of acceptance and was twice elected President of the B'nai Brith women's group which was nationwide in Germany. Schaalmann states that she is the only woman ever to have been reelected to the position. She also sang and played the piano. At home the parents often spoke French because that was the language of the educated.

The family, as already mentioned, was close, eating meals together twice a day. Summers were spent in a cottage which they rented on a farm at the Starnberger See. There the close relations between the three brothers and their parents were further cemented. Besides normal

summer activities, the boys were expected to do chores on the farm. This appears to have been part of a general plan that Adolph Schaalmann had for his sons, which included a familiarity with manual labor. This plan apparently went better with the other two brothers than with Hermann, who fainted in the fields from the heat and had to be reassigned.

In later years Schaalmann would repeat these vacations that included both Jewish and classical study with his own children. Susan Schaalman Youdovin's article in her father's Festschrift[3] recalls with a great deal of humor and fondness the preparation for these family vacations in Eagle River, Wisconsin.

The family did their own cooking never going to restaurants because of the issues of Kashrut. It was on one of these family vacations when he was sixteen that Schaalmann met Lotte Strauss to whom he would become engaged in 1937 when he returned to Germany to attend his brother Manfred's Bar Mitzvah.

It was Adolph Schaalmann's intention that his oldest son should be an academic, his middle son a merchant and that the youngest would work with his hands. In my interviews with both Herman and Manfred Schaalmann, it appears that is exactly what happened somewhat loosely speaking.

Schaalmann's preparation for his Bar Mitzvah was quite intense. He studied both the Torah portion and its commentaries because he was expected to present a drash on the portion at the

[3] Susan Schaalman Youdovin, "A Kid's Eye View: Remembering Our Family," in The Life of Covenant, (Chicago, 1986) 262

party in the Schaalmann apartment. He prepared both with his father and the congregation's cantor. Schaalmann reports in his personal reflection in his festschrift, "I was only the second young boy in the history of the Liberale Gemeinde to chant the entire sidra for his Bar Mitzvah."[4] The pressure was quite intense.

In preparation for the change of his religious status, Schaalmann rose early each morning to put on tefillin with his father. This practice was apparently continued until some time during his years at HUC.

When I was discussing with Schaalmann his decision to become a rabbi, it appears that it probably began around this period of his preparation for his Bar Mitzvah because it was a time of a real change in personal status. As a sign of his adulthood, his parents gave him a key to the house so that he was not dependent on anyone else to let him in.

He describes that by High School teachers began to address you as an adult. Not only were you a "Mitzvah barer" [responsible for the Mitzvot] at age 13, but in general, there was no real adolescence. You began at a much younger age to think about what you wanted to do and plan for your future.

The preparation for his Bar Mitzvah was a special experience for him. There were rabbis in his mother's family history. The combination of a deep felt belief in God, a religious upbringing and the desire to help others made the rabbinate seem to be an appropriate choice.

[4] Herman E. Schaalman in The Life of Covenant, Essays in Honor of Herman E. Schaalman, (Chicago, 1986) xiii

In school, Schaalmann was a better than average student. As a result, he was able to obtain permission not to attend school on Saturdays following his Bar Mitzvah as long as he made up the work, which he did. This was an exception since students generally attended every day but Sunday.

He was a good athlete, sang well, and played the violin in a youth orchestra. Schaalmann had a skill for languages and did especially well in Latin and Greek. He enjoyed swimming and to this day, he plays tennis when the opportunity arises.

Because of his father, Schaalmann became involved in the Jewish youth movements that were popular in Germany. The Zionist youth movement tried very hard to recruit him with the eventual goal of aliyah to Palestine. Schaalmann states that, although he went to some of their events, for some reason it did not take hold in him. Schaalmann's involvement in the Youth movement meant that you swore never to smoke or drink and ballroom dancing was considered decadent. To this day he is only comfortable dancing with his wife in the privacy of their home although he does occasionally enjoy a glass of wine. Also, one of his fond memories of his childhood involved being sent as young boy to a local pub to fetch a stein of beer for his father.

He was involved in the Jewish version of Boy Scouts because Jews were not allowed to join the regular scouts. Activities were mostly on Sundays, which were hikes and the like as well as camping in the summer. He did not participate in the summer programs because of the

family vacations. Also, one of the youth groups Schaalmann participated in devoted time to the study of Buber's work. He states that they were arrogant enough to think that they understood Buber at the time and Schaalman was accepting of his message. Buber sometimes taught the group himself. He remembers a particular session which was on the book of Jeremiah although he could not recall the specifics. The sheer presence of the man remained with Schaalman and would later surface when Schaalman found himself in a theological crisis.

As Hitler began to gain power, the atmosphere in his school began to change. He was one of only two Jewish students in the Maximilian Gymnasium where he attended. After a few incidents of anti-Semitism, Schaalmann's father hired a retired policeman to teach him martial arts. His new skills were tested once or twice and he was not bothered after that. The other Jewish student was so harassed that his parents withdrew him and sent him to school in Switzerland.

As the Hitler Youth movement grew, students began to wear their uniforms to school and to express the Nazi ideology. Even the teachers who did not agree with fascism did not challenge the statements because they were afraid of the repercussions which were a real possibility.

One time a Nazi propagandist came to Schaalmann's class to describe the physical characteristics of the ideal person that Hitler wanted to breed, as I have mentioned in my first chapter. He pointed to Schaalmann as a perfect example. When the teacher told him that he

picked the only Jew in the class, the man rushed from the class with complete embarrassment.

There were a few other incidents although none with tragic consequences. At one point he was taking a train back to Munich after visiting a friend and accidentally boarded a car with a group of SS soldiers who were involved in a drunken celebration. Because he did not look Jewish, they did not bother him, but it could have had a different kind of ending.

At another point he and a group of friends had stopped at a local café for coffee after school when suddenly the door opened and Hitler entered with a group of his entourage. Schaalmann recalls slowly making his exit in order to avoid being noticed.

In the late spring of 1935, Herman Schaalmann graduated from the Maximilan Gynasium and was the last Jewish student to do so. He then headed to Berlin to enroll in the Lehranstalt für die Wissenshaft des Judentums, the Liberal rabbinical seminary. He tried at the same time to register at the University in Berlin but was told that, as a Jew, it was impossible for him to do so although he might attend on an unofficial basis.

Soon after he arrived, he saw on the wall of the Lehranstalt a notice of the opportunity for five students to obtain full scholarships to study at a place called the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, Ohio neither of which he knew anything about. He then met Ismar Elbogen, head of the faculty, in the hall who asked him if he had talked to his father about taking one

of the scholarships. When Schaalmann replied that he had not, Elbogen instructed him to go immediately and do so.

Schaalmann states that it never occurred to him not to do as he was told and he went immediately to his room to write his father. He reports that his father then sought the advice of Rabbi Freudenthal who by that time had retired with his wife to Munich in order to be closer to Schaalmann's mother. Freudenthal knew of Cincinnati because he had a sister living there although I am sure there were other factors contributing to his advice. Rabbi Freudenthal gave a three word answer, "Hermann must go." So the decision was made for Hermann to apply for the scholarship.

Schaalmann reports that there were six interested parties but that the school had already decided that two of them, Wolli Kaelter and Gunther Plaut, would go. The four remaining candidates were to meet among themselves and decide who would get the other slots. Schaalmann has always maintained that as the youngest, he was the one most likely to have stayed behind. Suddenly one of the group announced that he was not going. He was engaged and his fiancé did not want to leave Germany. The choice was then made and it is known that the student who stayed behind perished in the camps.

At this point it is appropriate to provide some background about Cincinnati and the American scene as well the Hebrew Union College. So I will mention some of that here.

Not a lot is recorded about the process of bringing these five students to America, especially in comparison to the "Refugee Scholars" who followed. Faculty minutes of the Hebrew Union College, dated May 29, 1935, recall the President [Julian Morgenstern] reported five students of the Lehranstalt in all likelihood "will attend the College next year." In connection with this the President read a letter from Dr. Elbogen stating that it was possible that some of the students would only attend for a year or so.

Schaalmann recalls that he knew little about the country that was to become his home except from American movies about the Wild West. His story is not unusual. In fact, he tells the story that soon after his arrival in New York he went with the cousin who had greeted him at the dock to a travel agent to buy a train ticket to Cincinnati. Schaalmann waited outside only to see a truck pulled up. A man with a gun went into the agency and came out with a sack. When he described the scene to his cousin, the man explained to him that it was a Brink's truck but you can imagine what he thought.

"As a country of emigration, America did not figure very highly in the first years after the Nazis rise to power...mainly because the gates of the country were nearly closed even though, in theory at least, they should have been half open. Prior to the summer of 1938 the legal quota for immigrants from Germany and Austria was never even remotely exhausted."[5]

What lies behind this situation which cost so many their lives is important- The factors involved speak to the atmosphere which greeted the refugees when they arrived and to the

[5] Ibid, 129

difficulties encountered by the Hebrew Union College in trying to rescue the group of five students of which Schaalmann is a part. It is true as well of the "Refugee Scholars" who came shortly thereafter.

David Wyman gives a place to start in discussing the American scene. When talking of America's hesitancy to take in more Jewish refugees he draws an analogy with the media's poor coverage of the holocaust in general. The deeper causes for the poor media coverage and for the lateness and weakness of America's attempts at rescue, and for its unwillingness to take in more than a trickle of fleeing Jews, were essentially the same ones that determined the nation's reaction to the refugee problem before Pearl Harbor: "nativistic restrictionism [fear of American jobs being taken by foreigners]" and anti-Semitism.[6]

"These xenophobic feelings, which had run very high in the aftermath of World War I, had combined with economic forces during the 1920's to install the quota system, the nation's first broad restriction of immigration...Fear was widespread that the depression would return with the end of hostilities...Veterans' organizations were especially forceful in insisting on the protection of employment rights for returning servicemen."[7]

Anti-Semitism, which began to rise in the 1930's and reached its peak in 1944, was promoted by "Father Coughlin's Social Justice Movement, William Dudley Pelley's Silver Shirts, the German American Bund and Rev. Gerald B. Winrod's Protestant fundamentalist Defenders

[6] David Wyman, The Abandonment of the Jews, (New York, 1998), p 6.
[7] Ibid, p7

of the Christian Faith."[8] Many of these organizations and others sympathetic to the Nazi cause were active in the heavily German city of Cincinnati during the 30's and 40's.[9]

It was to this city that the five German students, of which Schaalmann is one, were brought in 1935. At that time Cincinnati was a city of just under half a million people of whom Jews comprised about 5%.

How did it come about that the "German Students," as they would come to be called, would be brought to America? The simple answer would be that it was a humanitarian reaction to the events occurring in Hitler's Europe. That would be true and a sufficient reason.

However, "The College had a special relationship to German Jewry. The founders had come from its ranks, and to a large extent the Board of Governors was still composed of men whose parents or grandparents had immigrated from Germany. Various American-born members of the faculty, beginning with Morgenstern, had received their doctorates there and had made the intimate acquaintance of German Jews...With the future of German Jewry becoming ever more hopeless, Ismar Elbogan, the head of the Hochschule (now degraded by the Nazis to Lehranstalt) für die Wissenschaft des Judentums, and Julian Morgenstern worked out an arrangement whereby a few students of the German liberal seminary could pursue their rabbinical studies at the College. If the conditions permitted, they would return to Germany after ordination; if not, they would seek positions in the United States. Despite the continuing financial difficulties [of the College] and the ongoing lack of pulpit vacancies,

[8] Ibid, p9
[9] Jonathan D. Sarna and Nancy H. Klein, The Jews of Cincinnati, (Cincinnati, 1989) 138-139.

its board agreed to underwrite fully the expenses of the five young men who arrived from Germany in the fall of 1935."[10] Other students and faculty would follow.

"HUC students in the interwar period were mostly the American-born sons of poor east European families. Their years at the College were not alone scholarly and practical preparation for the rabbinical role. They were also an introduction to the values and ambience of Reform Judaism, with its pervasive German Jewish atmosphere, especially in the older congregations. In Cincinnati students could take pride in their new dormitory and gymnasium and, beginning in 1931, make use of a modern, well-equipped library." [For some it was better than the homes they left behind.] In the Morgenstern years [1922-1947], unlike the period of Kohler's presidency, both students and faculty enjoyed complete freedom of expression."[11] This was especially true in areas of expression related to Zionism. Other issues will be discussed momentarily.

But Reform Judaism was changing and these five new students brought a different flavor to the campus as well. Though not Orthodox, Schaalmann, as well as the other German students, was more traditionally inclined. As has already been described, his family was intensely observant of Shabbat and the holidays. They kept Kashrut and did not ride on Shabbat. Service attendance was regular and Shabbat afternoon was spent in Torah study. Beginning with the preparation for his Bar Mitzvah, he rose early to lay tefillin with his father.

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[10] Michael A. Meyer, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion: A Centennial History 1875-1975, (Cincinnati 1976), 123-124.
[11] Michael A. Meyer, Response to Modernity, (Detroit, 1995), p 302.

Julian Morgenstern, the President of the College, who engineered bringing these students to the United States, and thereby saved their lives, was in this respect very different from Schaalmann. In fact, "the man who would become President of the Hebrew Union College did not even attend a Passover Seder until 1902," which was the year before he was ordained a rabbi. The result of his nonobservant background was that "he would always feel slightly uncomfortable in traditional Jewish settings."[12] Yet Morgenstern began to consider the importance of ritual practice and subsequently wrote that, "Rationalism is alright in its place, and certainly it has its place in religion. Yet no creed can exist entirely without ceremonial." He apparently offered mealtime prayer as a possibility for "expressing our thankfulness to God." He proposed a simple English prayer rather than the traditional Motzi and Birkat HaMazon." [13]

So "for the president, most of the faculty, and nearly all of the students, ceremonial had remained strictly subordinate to the theological and moral message of Judaism. Few faculty and almost no students kept the laws of Sabbath or of kashrut; worship in the HUC chapel was conducted without head covering or prayer shawl, most students coming regularly on Sabbaths (when attendance was required), but rarely to the daily services."[14]

"Given the shifting sentiment [of the movement in general on the subject of ritual[15]], the impact made by the European students on the religious life of the College was considerable. At least for a while they went to services in the chapel with heads covered; they chanted the

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[12] David Komerofsky, "Julian Morgenstern: A Personal and Intellectual Biography" (Cincinnati rabbinical thesis, 1999), p13
[13] Ibid, 17
[14] Michael A. Meyer, HUC-JIR: A Centennial History, (Cincinnati, 1976) 124
[15] See Text of the 1937 Columbus Platform

complete grace after meals and taught others to sing along with them, until the Birkat HaMazon became an established custom in the dormitory."[16]

Given the well known facts as to the degree to which Julian Morgenstern regulated life at the College, it is fair to say that he gave his tacit consent to these new behaviors. Although Morgenstern was known to back down in the face of solid opposition either from the students or the faculty, we can only guess as to his motivations in this situation.[17]

An example in this regard as to the issue of ritual observance is of two incidents Schaalmann related to me about when he was summoned into Dr. Morgenstern's office. Both occasions concerned different rituals. On one occasion the issue was related to the Birkat HaMazon and on the other to the wearing of a kippah. Morgenstern especially challenged him on the Zionist aspects of the Birkat HaMazon. Schaalmann stated that on both occasions he was reminded that he was a scholarship student and that he should know his place. The impression Schaalmann received is that he should not make waves and the memory of the encounter remains vivid more than seventy years later.

Soon after their arrival in Cincinnati, the five German students were invited by David Philipson to attend worship services at Rockdale Temple where he was the rabbi. When Mrs. Philipson arrived to bring them to the Temple in her car, it was the first time that Schaalmann had ever ridden on Shabbat. Once at the synagogue, they were summoned into the rabbi's study and asked to remove their kippot. Lore has it that Dr. Philipson replied to their

[16] Michael A. Meyer, HUC-JIR: A Centennial History, (Cincinnati, 1976) 125
[17] See Komerofsky 33 and 34 for details.

objections by saying, "When in Rome, do as the Romans do." To this Schaalman says that he answered, "I thought we were in Cincinnati." The kippot were taken off.

Although he did not alter his behavior immediately, Schaalmann no longer wears a kippah except if specifically requested. He has also recently found difficulty with the Birkat Ha Mazon. The blessing raises theological issues for him which we will discuss later on when we talk about his theology because it verbalizes the theology that God provides for the righteous. The kippah is simply something he has grown away from. However initially, the rituals apparently provided an emotional anchor for him at a time when he felt alone and quite isolated. He reports in the introduction to his Festschrift, "During my stay at the Hebrew Union College...I experienced the painful transition from one culture to another, one language to another, and one religious life –style to another."[18]

Since he did not have a Bachelor's Degree, the College insisted that he enroll at the University of Cincinnati. His credits from the Gymnasium put him on a senior level but since he did not have any English training he had to enroll in Freshman English. There was also the need to declare a major and a minor. He "took the easy way out" and declared a major in German. He wanted to minor in psychology but there were no spots and so it was suggested that he try philosophy. Schaalmann describes this as the beginning of a lifelong passion for philosophy and a friendship with a philosophy professor by the name of Roloefs who "combined a passion for philosophic learning and religious commitment." [19] It was Roloefs who helped him obtain a graduate fellowship in philosophy, which led to an MA.

[18] Herman E. Schaalman, The Life of Covenant, (Chicago, 1986) xv
[19] Ibid xiv

The faculty minutes of HUC dated May 2, 1938 give permission for Schaalmann to do this graduate work.

The summer of 1936 was a lonely one for Schaalmann as he was the only one of the five who had not made outside connections. He did some work for Dr. Marcus but was the only one in the dorm for the summer. Life was made more bearable by the matron Lillian Waldman Lieberman but he describes himself as being "all alone" at nineteen never having been away from his family before. "It was like walking in a dream." He stated that it was at that point that he began to bury everything within himself as a protection against the pain. Today we call that denial. To this day, he expresses difficulty in sharing his feelings with others, a trait that he carries even at home.

In 1937, Schaalmann returned to Germany for a visit as he had promised his father that he would do. The occasion was the Bar Mitzvah of his youngest brother Manfred. He also became engaged to Lotte Strauss, whose parents were in the steel business. Less observant than Schaalman's family, Strauss went to Würzburg to study with an Orthodox rabbi in preparation for marriage to Schaalman.

During the visit, the danger of the situation in Germany impressed itself upon him and Schaalmann tried very hard to get his family to leave. His father told him that he had fought for Germany and he was staying but that he could take his mother and brothers with him. Since Schaalmann had no way to support them, he could not push the issue with his father. In

addition his mother would not leave his father. However when he returned to the United States, he realized that this would be his world from then on.

In 1938, Schaalmann went to Cuba, along with the other four, so that he could re-emigrate to the United States as he had come the first time as a student. The process apparently went well and he returned to Cincinnati. It was in the same year that he first learned of the concentration camps.

On November 9 and 10 of 1938 a mass destruction of Jewish property especially synagogues took place in Germany. Known as Kristallnacht, the night of broken glass, the destruction was part of a corporate reprisal against the Jewish people because of the killing of a Nazi official in Paris by a Jew Herschel Greenspan. Along with this came a mass arrest of 30,000 men one of whom was Adolph Schaalmann. Schaalmann was taken to Dachau where he was forced to remain until late spring or early summer of 1939.

Herman Schaalmann first heard of his father's arrest while acting as a cantor at the wedding of his friends Elizabeth and Gunther Plaut. Someone handed him a telegram which read, "Father in Dachau, save him. Mother." Schaalmann showed the telegram to Julian Morgenstern who was in attendance at the wedding. Morgenstern made several calls and through a Senator Cohen was able to find out that it was not personal to Schaalmann's father but rather part of a mass action. It was not until he attended a Hadassah convention in Atlantic City in 1945 that the details of the horrors of the camps were spelled out to him by a convention speaker. He remembers going to the bathroom to vomit.

Schaalmann's father rarely spoke of his experience in Dachau, but upon his release he was now convinced of the need to leave Germany. The process of his release is not certain. Schaalmann states that Professor Roloefs was able to intervene on his father's behalf. His brother Manfred describes some leniency being shown to those who had been decorated for service during World War I, which was the case with Professor Schaalmann. He remembers bringing his father's medals to the police station as proof of this.

Family links had always been important in German Jewish families although the freer atmosphere of the Weimar Republic had lessened this to some extent. When the situation worsened for Jews, family links again became more important. "Because they were under siege, people were looking for protection in groups"[20] This was true both for social and family groups.

As the pressure to emigrate grew, family connections became an important asset. "Whether a family could emigrate after 1933 often depended on whether one or more of its members, close or more distant, had settled in other countries and were willing to assist those who remained behind. Whenever possible, families would emigrate together."[21] This was an important factor for the Schaalmann family who were able to immigrate to Brazil as a result of the intervention of Regina Schaalmann's oldest brother's wife who was then living in Brazil. As we have just stated, Schaalmann's father had been rounded up and sent to Dachau following Kristallnacht. Like so many, he had only been released when he could

[20] Ibid Laqueur, 2
[21] Ibid, 2

demonstrate that he would be leaving Germany. What other factors were involved was hard to verify.

In the interim since their engagement, Lotte Strauss had moved with her family who were Zionists to Palestine where they set up a dairy business which still makes cheese and ice cream in Israel. After school let out in the spring of 1939, Schaalmann set out for New York in order to go to Palestine where he was to be married. The plan was that she would return with him to the United States. Just as he was to board the ship, Wolli Kaelter handed him a telegram from his mother which told of his fiancée's death and read, "Be strong, we are with you." It was in this fashion that Schaalmann learned of the death in a swimming accident of Lotte Strauss. To this day he still thinks of her at times.

During the summer that followed Schaalmann reports feeling completely numb. His classmates made arrangement for him to be with one of them the whole time. He was handed off from one to the other in what was a cross country journey. Coincidentally one of the first stops was in Cedar Rapids, Iowa where one of them had an aunt. Cedar Rapids was later Schaalmann's first pulpit after ordination.

The faculty minutes for the years of Schaalmann's attendance are really unremarkable. The student roster for the 1935-36 school year shows Schaalmann and the other four German students as registered. The minutes of March 16, 1936 show Dr. Finesinger as his advisor. It appears that he began in the lowest class but regularly advanced from year to year while also obtaining a BA and MA from the University of Cincinnati.

While initially Schaalmann's grades were only fair, they improved greatly as time went on. The faculty minutes of May 28, 1936 quote Dr. Marcus as stating that he feels Schaalman is a good student but "it may be advisable to speak to him to the effect that it is felt that he can attain a higher standard." Finesinger and Glueck felt the same way. Cohon and Englander were favorable to the idea and a motion was made that Schaalmann be told "that he can do better." By May of 1939, as I have already mentioned, the faculty had no problem recommending acceptance of Schaalmann's request that he be allowed to work on a Masters Degree in Philosophy in addition to his work at the College. June 30, 1940 faculty minutes show a unanimous vote to allow Schaalmann to carry outside work.

Schaalmann's rabbinical thesis was "The Philosophy of Leon Hebreo: Based on the Hebrew Translation of the Dialoghi d'Amore." Diesendruck is listed as his referee.

In the years 1936 and 1937, Schaalmann went to Chicago to serve a German congregation associated with Chicago Sinai Congregation. He reports that on the first day of Rosh HaShanah they used the Einhorn Prayer Book and on the second day they used the regular Mahzor. On October 18, 1937 the faculty minutes record a request by Dr. Mann for Schaalmann to come once a month to lead services at the German congregation. The minutes record that the faculty voted that he could do the High Holiday services but that the other German students should also be given the opportunity to serve that congregation. In 1938, Schaalmann did go back to Chicago for the High Holidays. In 1939-40, Schaalmann served a bi-weekly pulpit in Norwood, Ohio and in1940-41 he went to Henderson, Kentucky.

During the years that Schaalmann was at the College, there was a student/faculty publication known as the Hebrew Union College Monthly. The May, 1938 issue contains a book review by Schaalmann of Solomon Goldman's The Golden Chain. The book was Volume I of what was to be a summary of Jewish literature "beginning with the Bible and ending with Bialik."[22] Schaalmann's major criticism of the book relates to the author's attitude toward to the scientific approach to the Bible, "While he gives full credit to the scientific approach to the Bible in the selections from the earlier Prophets, he inveighs sometimes more vehemently than logically against any criticism of the Pentateuch. He challenges higher criticism on the grounds that it was able to explain the 'obtuseness of the final redactor of the Torah' who overlooked 'contradictions so glaring that they have dazzled the eyes of the dullest professor.'"[23]

In the fall of 1940, Schaalmann reports that "a new chapter opened in my life." His friends had suggested to him that he begin to date. Lillian Waldman received a call to "send one of the German students over for dinner." At the dinner was a young woman by the name of Lotte Stern who had recently moved to Cincinnati from Germany after a brief stay in Danville, Illinois. At the end of the evening, she told him that she hoped to see him again. Schaalmann took this as an invitation and invited her on a date to the art museum where she reached for him because "her hands were cold."

[22] Hermann Schaalman in "The Hebrew Union College Monthly," Vol. 25-No. 6, May, 1938, p 18
[23] Ibid.

By the third date, Schaalmann proposed marriage. Stern initially refused saying that she did not think she wanted to be a rabbi's wife. This may have been because she did not share the traditional upbringing that Schaalmann had. Schaalmann was persistent and took her with him to the Norwood congregation where he acted as a student chazan. This was apparently not a good experience and almost ended the relationship.

By the fourth date, when Schaalmann promised Stern that her mother would always have a home with them, she agreed to marry him. Stern's mother was a widow as her father had died in England where they had waited for permission to immigrate to the United States. Stern accompanied her mother to America and her sister Ilsa went on Aliyah. After Stern accepted Schaalmann's proposal, he then took her to the College and introduced her arround.

Schaalmann reports that placement in those days was a very different issue. He recalls being called into Julian Morgenstern's office shortly before ordination. He describes Morgenstern as flipping through file cards when he entered. He apparently looked up at one point and said to him, "Schaalmann you are going to Cedar Rapids, Iowa." Because of its remoteness, this was not a plum assignment, but it turned out to be a very good place for a young immigrant to learn the ways of America.

On May 24, 1941, Herman Schaalmann was ordained as a rabbi in the chapel of the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati. On May 25, 1941 Herman and Lotte Schaalmann were married in the same chapel using the flowers from ordination. Schaalmann's family, who were then living in Brazil, were not able to attend and did not meet his bride until several years later.

While on their honeymoon, Schaalmann received the call to go and interview in Cedar Rapids. The honeymoon was cut short. In September, 1941 Schaalmann began his work in Cedar Rapids as their rabbi for a salary of $2,000 a year with a $50 monthly augmentation from the Sisterhood.

Although the College's records show Schaalman's name with the German spelling of a double "n", Schaalman maintains that early on he was advised that he needed to use an American spelling which he subsequently did. Therefore, from here on I will use that spelling unless it is a direct quote in which the German spelling is used.

Chapter 3-Cedar Rapids and the Early Chicago Years Including the Founding of Oconomowoc

Cedar Rapids

Herman and Lotte Schaalman moved to Cedar Rapids, Iowa in the summer of 1941 where Schaalman assumed the post of rabbi through the war years until 1949. Schaalman was later to remark that this was plenty of time to "be in golus"[1] in reference to the eight years which he spent in Cedar Rapids.

After he was there a few years, Schaalman suggested to the congregation in Cedar Rapids that he would be willing to stay there if the congregation would build him a house on the edge of town where he could have a garden and raise his family. The congregation turned him down although I am not sure why. In those years, Schaalman reminisced, the placement system was very different, as has been described, and he had no one to advocate for him with congregations. Somehow he later caught the eye of Maurice Eisendrath and that would all change. But for now he was becoming acquainted with the religious life of small town America of which he had no previous clue.

The Cedar Rapids years were years of milestones for the Schaalmans with the birth of daughter Susan on May 28, 1943 and son Michael on April 25, 1948. On April 3, 1944 Herman Schaalman became a naturalized American citizen. On January 23, 1945 Schaalman went to speak at a rural church. On the drive home his car was hit by a drunk

[1] Phone interview with Schaalman of 11-12-06

driver. He crawled out of the car but his right leg did not follow. His wife was framed in the windshield. The result was injuries serious enough to require a hospital stay of 22 weeks, during most of which he was in traction. Schaalman recalled extraordinary kindness on the part of the congregation towards him and his family during his protracted recovery. He still carries scars from his injuries and also attributes Mrs. Schaalman's repeated miscarriages to the injuries she incurred. During his hospital stay, they were able to connect him by radio to the congregation which enabled him to participate in the worship services and to speak to the congregation and community on the occasion of the death of President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

It was fortunate that the driver of the vehicle which hit the Schaalmans was insured, and by a long set of circumstances, he was able to settle the claim with enough money to settle the medical bills and still have a sum left over. With that money Schaalman took his wife and young daughter to meet his family in Brazil for the first time. He had not seen them in ten years.

To this day he can identify with what people go through when they are in the hospital. Despair sets in when things don't go well and you are totally dependent on others. It prevented him from going into the Chaplaincy which was something that he really wanted to do. He wanted to do something for America and in retrospect stated that he feels that he missed something.

During the Cedar Rapids years, Schaalman began a pattern of community involvement which would continue in Chicago. Within a year he was accepted into the ministerial association, an organization which had no Catholic members. He also became vice-president of the local YMCA. He was teaching at two colleges, serving as a Jewish Chautauqua lecturer, hosting a radio program, working for the Red Cross and serving on the local War Board. It was while doing a Chautauqua stint at a Methodist camp that he began to formulate some of the questions which would lead to the founding of Oconomowoc.

While he was in Cedar Rapids, several members of his congregation participated in toast master type clubs. In these groups, the members take turns delivering speeches on various topics some of which they know in advance and others which are extemporaneous. After the speeches they are critiqued and often take part in competitions. Following late services on Friday evenings, it apparently became routine for the Schaalmans to attend a movie with a group of congregants. Often they would go for a bite to eat after the movie and the conversation might turn to a critique of Schaalman's sermons if these men were present. He reports that it almost became comical at times.

Another event of great importance to Schaalman occurred following a trip to Cincinnati somewhere around 1946 when he apparently got into a debate with Emil Fackenheim related to theological differences which will be discussed more fully in the chapter on theology. This encounter was a renewal of a relationship that had begun in Berlin when

they were both students at the Lehranstalt and continued what was to become a long standing friendship between the two men. Schaalman did not know what had happened to his friend and said that in the earlier days he had not been aware of the greatness in his friend that he later admired.

Schaalman reports that when he was ordained, he left HUC as humanist in the fashion of Kaplan and that like Kaplan he was very ritually observant. Kaplan's ideas were popular among the students in those years and he accepted them in his efforts to be part of his new environment. When he went back to Cedar Rapids, he was shaken by his encounter with Fackenheim who was a "covenant theologian". Fackeheim had convinced him of the shallowness and the ultimately indefensible nature of his position. How could he continue to function as a rabbi was the question that he asked himself repeatedly during the long night in his study which followed his return? Then his eyes fell upon Buber's I and Thou and he remembers staying up the rest of the night reading it. His earlier attachment to Buber reemerged, but we will talk about his theological development later.

OSRUI

As I mentioned previously, Schaalman had come to the attention of Rabbi Maurice Eisendrath who was at that time the President of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, now called the Union for Reform Judaism. Eisendrath offered him a position with the Union and from his sixth year on he began working for the Midwest Region of the Union from Cedar Rapids only leaving the position two years later when he went to Chicago. Schaalman recalled staying on an extra year in Ceder Rapids because

his congregants had been so good to him after the accident. He reports that one of the conditions that he placed on accepting the Union job was that he would be allowed to work toward establishing a Union summer camp.

When Schaalman, arrived in Chicago, "He found a city with 12 Reform congregations, but no adult education, few programs for teenagers after bar/bat mitzvah age, no Jewish summer or weekend programs for children and teens."[2] He served as Midwest Regional Director from 1949 until 1955 when he went to Emanuel Congregation as the successor to the long- time rabbi, Felix Levy, who was retiring after 48 years.

During Schaalman's time with the Union he helped established several new congregations, developed a system of committees, and promoted adult education. But the accomplishment which he prizes the most is the establishment of what is now called the Olin-Sang Ruby Union Institute in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin. Since I am not writing a history of the camp, it is not my purpose to provide a definitive account of the history of the camp or how the various creative forces that brought it about should be weighed. Two factors need to be taken into account, however. One is that, as I have just said, Schaalman considers the establishment of Oconomowoc to be his single greatest accomplishment, and as such, some history of its founding is in order. It is, first, a relatively undisputed fact that the impact of Oconomowoc and the sister camps which followed in the American Reform Movement was and continues to be immense. Second is the fact that a well researched and documented book has just been published, which puts the story together somewhat differently. I will come back to this later.

[2] Chicago Jewish News, 1-15-06

The idea of Jewish camping was not new to Schaalman or the other German- born rabbis who worked with him to establish Oconomowoc. (Oconomowoc is how it will be called from here forward and how it is lovingly referred to by the camp's early and loyal alumni.) Summer camping with both Zionist and scouting motifs was popular among Jewish youth in Germany although Schaalman did not attend because his family spent summers together elsewhere.

Jewish camping existed in the United States before the founding of Oconomowoc and its various incarnations have been well documented in Lorge and Zola's new book.[3] "As early as 1946, the American-born Sam Cook had attempted, unsuccessfully, to acquire a permanent a camp site for the Reform movement."[4] "Camp Ramah [Conservative] which opened in Wisconsin in 1947,"[5] with similar goals preceded the actual founding of Oconomowoc by several years.

Schaalman states that he began thinking about a camp for Reform youth in 1943 after spending time at a Methodist youth camp and observing the success of their program. There were 800 young people and 123 pastors. He recalls speaking to his wife and telling her that it "was a pity to waste time preaching Judaism to Christians."

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[3] A Place of Our Own-The Rise of Reform Jewish Camping, edited by Michael M. Lorge and Gary P. Zola, The University of Alabama Press, 2006

[4] Jonathan D. Sarna, "The Crucial Decade in Jewish Camping," in Michael M. Lorge and Gary P. Zola, A Place of Our Own, The University of Alabama Press, 2006, p. 42

[5] Ibid, p 42

Once Schaalman began as Midwest director he began attempting to garner support for the project. "On March 29, 1951, the UAHC Chicago Federation, headed by Rabbi Schaalman, unanimously approved 'the project of building a camp for our youth.' The Chicago lay leader who headed up the project, Johann S. Ackerman, knew that the national body was already 'exploring the field for a camp,' so that NFTY conclaves would not have to wander, but he argued that 'the Chicago Federation does not need to wait, it could be first.'"[6]

It should be noted at this point that, although various communications indicate that Mr. Ackerman played an active role in the establishment of the camp, a letter by Schaalman to Dr. Gary Zola dated November 8, 2006 states that "Bernie [Bernard Sang] was probably the most vigorous and reliable promoter of a camp especially Oconomowoc. Of the $15, 000 (not $16, 000) which I myself had to find and did find to acquire Briar Lodge, he and his brother Philip gave one third immediately. (Bernie was a busy attorney at that time, not an attendant at the camp.) He was as important as Johann Ackerman in furthering the early phases and remained interested until his death about two years ago."

Since Schaalman, by his own statement, "is not in the habit of keeping records," all of this cannot be documented. But the search for a suitable property began in earnest with

[6] Ibid, p 43

one of the provisions which Schaalman insisted on being that the buildings could be used year round. It was his idea that the camp be suitable for winter programming especially for adults. By July of 1951 Briar Lodge at Oconomowoc, Wisconsin was located. At the time it was serving as a boys' camp. A letter to Schaalman dated 7-31-51 from Locke, Schlossman and Bennett [contractors] reported on their visit of 7-18-51 and stated what repairs would be needed and at what cost.[7]

The project proceeded and a letter from Mr. Ackerman to Mr. Harry Lawner, a Dayton, Ohio lawyer who was apparently Chairman of the Camp- Institute Committee, and dated October 4, 1951, states that they "have a letter from the owner outlining the terms on which she will sell it to us, which, I believe, is sufficient for the time being. The terms are a gross price of $63,000.00 with $15, 000.00 down then the remaining $48, 000.00 to be paid at the rate of $4,800.00 per year on September 15th with interest at 4% per annum." An additional $20, 000 was needed to winterize the buildings and provide working capital for the first year's operations, etc. Ackerman continues, "I would suggest that you immediately proceed to get approval for the purchase of the property [presumably from the Union who would own the property but would not be responsible for the debt] on this basis so that as soon as we have the money lined up, we can go ahead."[8]

Schaalman claims in his letter to Zola that there was not widespread and intense interest in forming such a camp and that in order to make it happen he had to "make dozens of speeches to boards of congregations, sisterhoods, and brotherhoods and not only in

[7] American Jewish Archives Collection 648, File 1/1
[8] Ibid

Chicago in order to arouse even scant interest and occasional initial support. Not the least were my strenuous efforts to win over Maurice Eisendrath, an effort in which I received invaluable help from Dr. S. S. Hollender, then the President of UAHC, a resident of Chicago and life-long friend of mine. The very fact that the first contingent of OSRUI campers in 1952 amounted to 37 or 39 young people is clearest evidence of the originally very small interest and support for this venture."

Without broad -based support of rabbis and lay leaders, Schaalman understood that the camp would not succeed. His collaborative efforts are documented in a letter to Rabbi Ernst Lorge dated October 11, 1951,

Now that the holidays are past, I should like to ask for your help, interest and advice. The Camp project of the Union of which you and I have talked is making slow but steady progress. We are now at the point where an additional effort could bring in additional funds to make the purchase and support to attract campers.

In order to achieve these ends, we have called several meetings at the Standard Club during the coming weeks to raise support. I would like you to join me to report on the success of the conclaves from the past few years to demonstrate the need to create the Camp. I also would urge you to invite people who would respond to this project financially.

We have raised a good bit of money that we need to make the down-payment, but we will need to discuss money for the repairs that you and I discussed with Mr. Cole and Mr. Dauber.

Thank you for your effort.

Cordially,

Rabbi Herman E. Schaalman[9]

Although there may have been programs at camp before the actual purchase, specifically NFTY conclaves and Schaalman's annual New Year's retreat for adults, the actual

[9] Ibid

purchase of the camp did not take place until early in 1952. A letter in the American Jewish Archives dated February 29, 1952 from Maurice Eisendrath to J. S. Ackerman expresses Eisendrath's delight at holding the certificate of ownership in his hands.[10]

The camp's first summer sessions took place in 1952 but apparently only occupied the first half of the summer. According to Schaalman, "had it not been that NFTY agreed to take over half of the summer by using the month of August the first three or four years for its national program it is doubtful, as I recall, for OSRUI to have survived financially."[11] Had there been immense local support, that would not have been an issue.

The involvement of rabbis was important not only for the financial backing of the camp but also for recruitment of campers and staff and for faculty. OSRUI differed from Ramah in that at first there was little Hebrew or Zionism. Later that would all change. Unlike Ramah which sought to "mold" its campers and develop leadership for the Conservative movement, Oconomowoc sought to "transform" its Reform campers. There was a heavier emphasis on spirituality and creative worship, which led to changes in the Reform movement.[12] While Sarna does not explain that statement, I would assume that he implies molding the future Conservative leaders toward tradition on the part of Ramah while Oconomowoc has attempted to promote innovative thinking in the future leaders of Reform. For Reform, it would later lead to a transformation of the movement.

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[10] American Jewish Archives, Collection 648, 1/2
[11] Letter from Schaalman to G. P. Zola, 11-08-06
[12] Jonathan D. Sarna in A Place of Our Own, Michael M. Lorge and Gary P. Zola editors, U of Alabama Press, 2006, p 44

As Sarna states and Schaalman independently confirmed, one of the unique qualities of Union Institute is that more than any other Jewish camp, Union Institute emphasized direct contact with rabbis as a central feature of its program.[13] Although Schaalman was the camp's director for its first summer, there was concern from the beginning that directing the camp and being the regional director was too much for one man and after the first summer someone was hired to direct the camp.[14] The most long-standing of these directors has been Gerald W. Kaye who came to the camp in 1970 and remains its director as of this writing. Schaalman, however, continued to serve on the Camp board for many years and has also been an ongoing member of the faculty. Annually he brings a group of adults for a New Year's retreat. Kaye sees Schaalman as a presence who has always been an asset to the camp.

The founders of the camp foresaw that "the educational experience in a summer camp for two or three weeks would equal or surpass what we could give a Jewish kid during a whole year at Sunday school."[15] "Union Institute was established as an educational experiment, but it quickly gained widespread acceptance as a valuable educational resource for the Reform Movement both regionally and nationally. The other camps of the movement looked to Union Institute for programmatic and educational content."[16] Again the active role of the rabbinic faculty is stressed here as a causative factor.

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[13] Ibid p 44 and personal interviews with Schaalman
[14] See letter from J. S. Ackerman to Dr. S. S. Hollender dated March 12, 1952 and located in the camp collection at the American Jewish Archives.
[15] Rabbi Ernst Lorge in A Place of Our Own, Michael M. Lorge and Gary P. Zola editors, U of Alabama Press, 2006, p 55
[16] Ibid p 72

It is this role of faculty at Oconomowoc which apparently well suits Schaalman's teaching style. Camp is not the only place where Schaalman teaches or has taught, but to quote Rabbi Michael Weinberg of Chicago, a former assistant of Schaalman's, "It is a wonderful setting for Herman's style of teaching."[17] That style is apparently simply to talk. Weinberg describes the experience as similar to "sitting at the feet of a Rav,"[18] not dissimilar to the description of Dr. Richard Damashek a fairly recent member of Schaalman's longstanding Shabbat morning Torah study group. Damashek likens Schaalman's teaching style to that of an "oracle who appears somehow both transcendent and authoritative.[19] Damashek's image was that of Moses at Sinai. I will say a little more about "the study group" later. Similar sentiments were expressed by others such as Fran Pearlman, a Reform Jewish Educator who has worked with Schaalman at camp for many years.

In attempting to summarize the role of Schaalman in Oconomowoc's founding, we may find some assistance in Gerald Kaye's reply to my question. While there may have been weekend retreats and conclaves taking place at rented facilities around the area conducted by various other rabbis, "Herman was the fulcrum which brought the various lay and rabbinic forces together,"[20] to establish what is now the Olin-Sang Ruby Union Institute at Oconomowoc. To quote the Lorge/ Zola book, "There can be little doubt that

[17] Phone interview with Rabbi Michael Weinberg, Temple Beth Israel, Skokie, IL, 10-25-06
[18] Ibid
[19] Phone interview with Dr. Richard Damashek of Chicago, IL, 11-1-06
[20] Phone interview with Gerald Kaye, Chicago, IL, December, 2006

Schaalman's tireless work as both the regional director of the UAHC and camp director contributed to the success of the Union Institute."[21]

Even today at past 90 Schaalman continues his fundraising efforts for the camp, serves as faculty, and brings groups for retreat weekends. The large white house which in the early years of the camp served as the kitchen, dining room, library and faculty sleeping rooms has in recent years been completely renovated and dedicated as the Schaalman Lodge. It serves as a library and a quasi- bed and breakfast housing the Lehrhaus, an institute for adult study in which Schaalman also serves as faculty.

Emanuel Congregation

Once in Chicago, Schaalman was no longer an unknown in the rabbinate and he described the interest of several congregations who wished to hire him as their rabbi. In 1955, Schaalman took the position of rabbi at Emanuel Congregation in Chicago to succeed the retiring Felix A. Levy who had served the congregation for 48 years. Levy's nephew Arnold Jacob Wolf had apparently also expressed interest in the position which eventually went to Schaalman. Schaalman remained part-time with the Union for about a year after going to Emanuel until Richard Hirsch could take over at the Union .

The transition at Emanuel was not always smooth; followers and relatives of Levy remained active in the congregation and when controversies arose, opinions sometimes split between followers of Levy and those who supported the new rabbi. Since Levy retired of his own accord, the division is not easy to explain. Years later a lawsuit against

[21] Michael M. Lorge and Gary P. Zola, A Place of Our Own, U of Alabama Press, 2006, 64

Schaalman and four members of the board by the retiring cantor, Handwerger, revived some of the old feeling as one of the cantor's grandchildren had married into the Levy family.[22] Handwerger apparently blamed Schaalman for the board exercising its option not to renew his contract when he turned sixty-five. Schaalman stated that there had been complaints against the man's abilities among some of the Temple's board members but he did not himself oppose him. Handwerger had perfect pitch and accurate Hebrew pronunciation. Both the Circuit and Federal Courts refused to hear the case and the cantor retired without the honors which had been planned for him. He has since died.

However, Emanuel prospered under Schaalman's leadership almost doubling in size so that when Schaalman retired there were 920 families at Emanuel. The growth can probably be accounted for in many ways not the least of which was Schaalman's "larger than life personality" according to Schaalman's former assistant Rabbi John Friedman.[23] As evidence of what he was saying, Friedman provided the information that when he came to Emanuel in 1976 there were 900 families, but only 40 of them were under 40. Despite that, the religious school was so large that it ran both Saturday and Sunday mornings and two school buses regularly brought children from the suburb of Highland Park. Many of these were grandchildren of members whose parents had moved out of the area but who Friedman claims brought their children because of Schaalman.

Schaalman himself names several things which he identifies as accomplishments in his tenure at Emanuel. The first of these would be that he established a system of committees

[22] Phone interview with Rabbi Michael Weinberg, 10-25-06
[23] Phone interview with Rabbi John Friedman, December, 2006

which had not existed before. The committees were more than 12 in number and involved more than 200 people. Schaalman states that he learned the importance of committees from a Max Robert Schrayer who invented the system of congregational committees. According to Schaalman, Schrayer had been president of KAM Congregation in Chicago and in competition with Eisendrath to be president of the UAHC. Schaalman's purpose was to broaden ownership and increase member participation. He hoped for and achieved greater enthusiasm for the work of the congregation.[24]

In connection with the committees, Schaalman stated that he began a system of rotation of committee members thereby increasing the opportunities for people to become involved in the congregation. This helped reduce the situation where people felt that they couldn't have an active role to play.

In the area of worship, Schaalman states that he gradually introduced more "Hebrew culture" by adding more Hebrew to the service. He also both read and translated the Torah at both the evening and morning services in order to stress the importance of the Torah over the sermon.[25] This is somewhat ironic since Schaalman is generally highly regarded both as a teacher and a preacher who almost never has notes when he speaks.[26] The exception to this is when his speech is being printed.

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[24] Phone interview with Rabbi Herman Schaalman of 12-24-06
[25] Ibid
[26] Phone interview with Rabbi John Friedman, December, 2006

The story of how Schaalman began speaking without notes is legendary. While in Cedar Rapids, he preached from a manuscript. His English, he states, was helped by his knowledge of Latin and Greek. After he was at Emanuel for awhile, he was approached by a member of his Torah study group who asked to talk with him. She told him that she wanted to say something which she thought was important and was "willing to risk their relationship." She told Schaalman that when he was talking in the study group he was very natural and what he said was very impressive but that when he spoke from the pulpit he was very stiff which diminished his effectiveness. She suggested that he try preaching without notes. He followed the woman's suggestions and to this day rarely has any written text outside of a few phrases.[27]

Schaalman states that he put a great deal of emphasis on a sense of personal interaction with the congregation. He made it a point to always be accessible and promote a sense of warmth and welcome when people came.

Another congregational achievement is Schaalman's Shabbat morning Torah study group which has preceded Shabbat morning services for 40 years or more and has continued even since his official retirement in 1986. The group meets in Schaalman's study in the temple building. A great many of the dozen or so people who attend have done so from the start. The participants are mostly highly educated professionals who are well read. They are very thoughtful. They vary in ages and some are retired or semi-retired. I have attended the group on some occasions when I have visited Chicago. Like many groups which have existed for some time, it has its own subculture which includes the fact that

[27] Interview with Schaalman, 9-17-06

some of the members have their favored seats which others do not sit in. One member in particular has sat in the same chair directly across the desk from Schaalman respectfully and sometimes not so respectfully, challenging him for years. Schaalman considers his time with this group as one of the high points of his week and usually arrives a half hour early in order to talk with the members who come early just for that purpose.

This group meets only when Schaalman is available and is conducted on a very high level. One of the members, Richard Damashek, whom I interviewed, has in the past suggested that the group meet on its own at times when Schaalman is not able to be there, but without success. He joined the group about five years ago and he, like others I spoke with, feels that he is part of Schaalman's extended family. He expresses that the group comes to hear Schaalman and has identified his "retirement project" as a book on Schaalman's life.[28] Dr. Damashek is an English professor whose reflections on Schaalman will be useful when talking about his theology.

Beginning in 1970, Schaalman had a series of assistants the first of whom was Rabbi David Mersky who served from 1970 to1973. Rabbi Joseph Edelheit served from 1973 to1976. He was followed by Rabbi John Friedman who was at Emanuel from 1976 to 1980. Finally, there was Rabbi Michael Weinberg who was Schaalman's assistant from 1980 to 1985. Both Weinberg and Friedman described Schaalman as someone who showed them how to be rabbis in the best possible terms. They were treated like colleagues by Schaalman, although junior colleagues.

[28] Phone interview with Dr. Richard Damashek, 11-1-06

By the end of Weinberg's term, Schaalman was approaching retirement and the decision was made to hire an associate/ successor. Edelheit, Friedman and Weinberg were all candidates for the position. Mersky left the congregational rabbinate after being Schaalman's assistant. Edelheit was the one chosen for the position. Schaalman officially retired in 1986 although he came out of retirement on several occasions to fill in while Emanuel assessed its rabbinical needs and to help a Milwaukee congregation.

Things did not go well and the congregation gradually lost membership throughout Edelheit's time at Emanuel. The trend apparently continued through the service of Rabbi David Sofian, who succeeded Edelheit. Schaalman claims that he was not aware of the extent of the losses until he had begun attending board meetings while serving as interim rabbi while the congregation searched for Sofian's successor. He was also unaware of the financial losses which the congregation suffered when some of its larger financial supporters went elsewhere. The losses were painful for Schaalman to watch and he appears to grieve when discussing the subject. Sofian was succeeded by Rabbi Michael Tzedek in 2004. He seems to have been able to reverse the trend somewhat. Schaalman reports that the congregation's membership presently stands at less than 500 families down greatly from the 920 families recorded at his retirement.

This not a history of Emanuel Congregation and the factors which led to Emanuel's decline are undoubtedly quite complex. It is not possible to say definitively what accounted for the drop in membership at Emanuel following Schaalman's retirement and that is not my focus. Usually there are multiple factors and there is no reason to believe

that is not the case here. Common wisdom has it that popular rabbis are not easy to follow and as John Friedman stated, "It would have been hard to follow him,"[29] but there were most certainly were other factors at work.

During Schaalman's years in Chicago he taught at Mundelein College, a Catholic School which is now part of Loyola University. He has also taught and continues to do so at Garrett Theological School, which is part of Northwestern University, and at the Chicago Theological Seminary, which is part of the University of Chicago.

He has been a member of the Human Rights Commission of the City of Chicago. The commission, which has legal powers to summon people and to levy fines, is appointed by the mayor. Schaalman has served for around twenty years and considers himself to be the Jewish voice on the committee, which sometimes is in conflict with the Moslem voice although he was not specific about issues. One specific case which he recalls in terms of fines was a job discrimination issue that a woman had with her former employer. Between fines and back pay, she was awarded somewhere between $30, 000 and $40,000.

Schaalman has also served on the Education Committee of the U. S. Holocaust Commission. In addition, he is described by some as a "legend in the interfaith community of Chicago"[30] All of this goes along with the many important roles which

[29] Phone interview with Rabbi John Friedman, December, 2006
[30] Ibid

Schaalman has occupied in the Central Conference of American Rabbis [CCAR]. It is to Schaalman's interfaith activities and the CCAR to which I will now turn.

Chapter 4-The CCAR and Interfaith Work

During his membership in the Central Conference of American Rabbis [from now on referred to as the CCAR], Herman Schaalman has served as the Conference's president (1981-83), and as chair of three committees which took up important issues to the CCAR. These committees were the Committee on Mixed Marriage (1971-73), the Committee on Patrilineality (1979-83) and the Ethics Committee (1983-91).

Mixed Marriage

The issue of mixed marriage has been one of ongoing concern to the CCAR, which passed resolutions in 1909 and again in 1947 opposing rabbinic officiation at such marriages. At the 1971 convention of the CCAR, Roland Gittelsohn, president of the CCAR, in a joint message with the vice-president, David Polish, proposed that the conference strengthen its stand on intermarriage in order to protect members who found themselves vulnerable.[1] There was concern both for the increase of such marriages and for the number of qualified rabbis who were being denied access to rabbinic positions because of their stance on mixed marriage. The Committee on the President's Message rejected his proposal but recommended that the Committee on Mixed Marriage prepare "a full exploration of the issue." They also reaffirmed the 1909 resolution.[2]

The committee experienced a reshuffling over the next few years and Schaalman, who does not officiate at intermarriages, was asked to chair the committee. Kaiserman describes Schaalman as the person "who would be the most influential force on the issue

[1] Mark Kaiserman, "A Historical Analysis of Rabbinical Officiation at Interfaith Marriages in the Reform Movement," HUC, 1997, p45-46
[2] Ibid., p46

of officiation over the next two years [which the committee met][3]...He quickly came to the conclusion that the rabbinate had to be 'an instrument for the preservation of Judaism rather than for anything that seemed to encourage a lessening of the attachment.' He saw officiation as such an encouragement."[4]

In preparation for this section of the thesis, I questioned Schaalman as to why he thought that he had been chosen to head this committee. He reflected that David Polish, the vice-president of the CCAR, was from Chicago and knew and respected him. "They needed someone for this unpleasant committee."

Polish had seen him at work in Chicago as regional director for the UAHC. There were a number of congregational splits in the late 40's and early 50's which caused major ruptures not only between rabbis but also within families who did not speak to each other. Schaalman describes that "I was not known as an ideologue. I was known as someone who was capable of bringing people together in an atmosphere where each side could be heard." Since the mixed marriage issue was feared to be one which might cause a major rupture within the Conference that capacity was of great value. Schaalman also felt that it was his work with this committee which brought him to the attention of the conference resulting in his later assignment as chair of the Patrilneal Descent Committee and eventual presidency of the CCAR.[5] Interestingly, David Hartman had verbalized the same sentiment about Schaalman when I interviewed him in Jerusalem regarding Schaalman's

[3] I phoned Kaiserman and asked him why he had considered Schaalman so influential but after all this time since he wrote his thesis, he could not recall.
[4] Ibid., p47
[5] Personal interview with Herman E. Schaalman, Chicago, IL, 10-26-06

participation in the group of Covenant Theologians, "When Schaalman was in the room, people spoke respectfully toward each other. There was something about him."[6]

Polish, however, did not hesitate in setting guidelines for Schaalman. In a letter dated September 3, 1971 he wrote:

"Shalom, Herman:

As you make plans for your Committee's work, and pursuant to our initial conversation, please bear in mind the great importance of consulting closely with experts representing differing views on the question of inter-marriage. Your Committee will of course draw up its own list of authorities, but among those whom you will want to consider are people like Jerome Folkman, Max Eichhorn, Louis Berman, and Allen Maller...I have added as a third member of the group which officiates under varying conditions at inter-marriages, the name of Joseph Narot who has accepted."[7]

The stage was now set and the Committee "worked intently during eight meetings over the next two years." Most of the meetings were for two days and took place in New York.[8] It consisted of both men who did officiate at mixed marriages and those who did not. The membership of the committee consisted of Herman Schaalman of Chicago as chair; Murray Rothman of Newton, MA; Irwin Fishbein of Westfield, NJ; Neil Kominsky of Los Angeles; Joseph Narot of Miami; Martin Ryback of Downey CA; Paul Gorin of Canton, OH; Robert Shapiro of Marblehead, MA; Benjamin Z. Rudavsky of Brookline, MA. and Joel Y. Zion of Lawrence, NY. Neil Kominsky left for a year in Israel in the summer of 1972 and was replaced by Alan Fuchs of Philadelphia, PA. Martin Ryback

[6] Interview with David Hartman, Jerusalem, Spring 2006
[7] Letter David Polish to Herman Schaalman, September 3, 1971, Schaalman file CCAR office
[8] Herman E. Schaalman in the CCAR Yearbook Vol. 83, 1973 and Schaalman interview of 10-26-06

and Robert Shapiro also left in 1972. They were replaced with Leonard Kravitz of HUC-JIR, NY and Jordan Pearlson of Toronto.[9]

Among those who did officiate was Irwin Fishbein who would eventually produce a minority resolution as well as a list of those who did officiate and presented the names to the Conference. Schaalman described this as an embarrassment to him because he felt that they had produced a resolution which was inclusive, taking a stand against officiation but not providing penalties for those who did officiate.[10] He felt that it was important that the decision of the committee be unanimous in that they would take a stand against officiation but leave the decision to the individual rabbi.

Also, although the meetings of the Mixed Marriage Committee and the Patrilineal Committee do blend together somewhat in his mind, Schaalman recalls the meetings of the Mixed Marriage Committee as peaceful. He describes a minimum of contentiousness without compromise of individual integrity, which he attributed to his aforementioned style of doing things. Some committee members wanted penalties but he felt that unity was important. With this, as with patrilineality, Schaalman expressed the view that "Reform was on the leading edge but that *klal yisrael* was still a consideration."[11]

Later, when summing up the work of the committee in his report to the conference, Schaalman would say:

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[9] Ibid., Kaiserman p 47 and the CCAR Yearbook Vol. 81, 1971
[10] Ibid Schaalman interview 10-26-06.
[11] Ibid., Schaalman interview 10-26-06

A minor miracle happened, at times, during the past two years of work when, despite the sharp differences of standpoint and divergence of practice, there was such acceptance of each other and such sensitive mutual regard in searching for understanding that we experienced, as it were, moments of the presence of Shekhinah." He hoped further that the same atmosphere would prevail during the conference deliberation.[12]

Although Rabbi Joseph B. Glaser, the Executive Vice President of the CCAR in those years, was not a member of the committee, the correspondence in Schaalman's file at the CCAR office reflects an active role on Glaser's part in guiding Schaalman's chairman ship of the committee. Sometimes the input was in the nature of financial constraints on the committee and at others quite a bit more substantive.

It is this involvement which began the relationship between the two men which lasted until Glaser's death. A letter to Schaalman from Glaser dated April 16, 1971 informs Schaalman that the Lenn study contains enough questions on mixed marriage that there is no need to develop a separate questionnaire because "he is quite comprehensive." It goes further:

"It was a great pleasure meeting with you in Evanston yesterday. I am gaining more and more respect for your superb intellectual qualities as well as your most admirable instincts. I look forward to working closely with you this year, therefore, and in the years to come."[13]

The issue of the use of the Lenn Study apparently made the Jewish Post and Opinion and Glaser wrote to Schaalman on September 21, 1972 in an attempt to "clarify the substance of the report":

There was a story in the National Jewish Post and Opinion quoting you as saying that there was not going to be a study or research during our year of exploration of the mixed

[12] Ibid., Schaalman report in the CCAR Yearbook, Vol. 83. 1973, p63
[13] Letter from Joseph B. Glaser to Herman E. Schaalman, August 16, 1971, Schaalman file, CCAR office

marriage issue. We all know that the National Jewish Post and Opinion is not the most accurate journal in the world and I have the feeling that you were terribly misquoted. However, the story does say that you disavowed any study going on and I thought that I would question the correctness of such a statement. Even though we are not planning on conducting any additional research (which is probably what you said) we are going to avail ourselves of whatever statistics and studies we have at hand at the present time and I don't think that any decision has been made by anyone, least of all the Committee which hasn't had the opportunity to meet, with respect to seeking further statistics...you will be hearing from Gunther Lawrence and David Polish with respect to any kind of statements to the press in the matter of the whole mixed marriage issue.[14]

On March 6, 1972, Glaser informs Schaalman that the Report of the Mixed Marriage Committee will be ready for distribution at the March 14th Board meeting. He also states the "Union is pushing too doggone hard on this business of lay involvement." He asks Schaalman to speak to Schindler [Alexander Schindler was then the President of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations] because "I don't seem to be able to get to Alex on very much at all."[15] I do not know how successful Schaalman was with Schindler on this issue but Schaalman stated that the patrilineal issue was in general more contentious and that he felt a great deal of pressure from Schindler on the patrilineal issue because of pressure from the lay people.[16]

The entire morning of the second day of the 1972 CCAR convention taking place at Grossingers was devoted to a presentation of the Mixed Marriage Committee. Seven aspects of the mixed marriage issue were presented by members of the committee in order to reflect the complexity of the issue "and also give an opportunity to a variety of

[14] Letter from Joseph B. Glaser to Herman E. Schaalman, September 21, 1971, Schaalman file, CCAR office
[15] Letter from Joseph B. Glaser to Herman E. Schaalman, March 6, 1972, Schaalman file, CCAR office
[16] Interview with Herman E. Schaalman, Chicago, IL, 10-26-06

views to be heard on the subject."[17] The resolutions committee had decided that a resolution should be drawn from the input of the convention following the presentation.[18]

Schaalman made a presentation which was entitled "The Inclusiveness of Jewish Existence," which reviewed the committee discussion on the subject of *kelal yisrael.* It is significant not only for its content but also because Schaalman clearly states his own view on the subject.

> In any serious discussion of mixed marriage such as was held, for instance, by your committee, the issue symbolized by the term *kelal yisrael* is unavoidable. No matter how often the claim is made that marriage inherently and well-nigh exclusively concerns only the two human partners, it is an inescapable truth that marriage involves the world beyond it as well.[19]

Schaalman then summarizes how the term can be invoked both by those who favor officiation and those who do not. He reviews the history of the term and then offers an alternative paradigm.

> *Kelal yisrael* has then, virtually no *halachic* past, nor is it apparently capable of absorption into a traditionally *halachic* texture in its present usage. Its very inclusiveness renders it vague and imprecise. Surely it includes precisely those who, on strict *halahic* construction, could not be called Jews- for example, the unconverted children of unconverted non-Jewish wives of Jewish Israeli citizens living as fully integrated members of Israeli society, culture, and life.
>
> A distinction is therefore necessary between *kelal yisrael* and terms such as *kenesset yisrael* or *kehilat yisrael* or *kehal adonay*, which latter terms would refer to the halachically committed community in its diverse interpretations.[20]

By creating this kind of distinction,

> The non-*halachic* character of the concept *kelal yisrael* would eliminate its consideration as an argument against mixed marriage. Mixed-married couples and their children would

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[17] Ibid., Kaiserman p48
[18] Ibid., Kaiserman p49
[19] Herman E. Schaalman in the CCAR Yearbook, Vol. 82, 1972, p85
[20] Ibid., p86

be considered within *kelal yisrael*, though not a part of *kenesset yisrael*...the goal would be...to work for the day when *kelal yisrael* will have become identical with *kenesset yisrael.*"[21]

The difference between committee members is from which direction rabbis should work in order to achieve this amalgamation:

Specifically, concerning the issue of mixed marriage [Schaalman writes], some members of your committee as well as other members of our Conference will take their stand in the arena of the *kelal yisrael*, assuming the responsibility of propelling its dwellers towards the *kenesset yisrael.* Others, among them members of your Committee on Mixed Marriage and other members of the Central Conference of American Rabbis including this writer, will take their stand in the *kenesset yisrael*, trying to 'bring near,' to draw into the covenant community, those who will enter eventually from *kelal yisrael* through the established procedures of giur or those who become *gerim* immediately."[22]

He ends by urging the conference not to split itself apart by one side trying to impose its view upon the other. What is important is that we are on the way:

Thus the first generation after Auschwitz, knowing ourselves again linked in the holy task *letaken olam bemalchut shaddai*, we shall not embitter but heal the hurt of our people.[23]

These last themes will repeat themselves in other of Schaalman's writings.

After the convention, the committee went back to work, and by February, 1973 presented the Executive Committee of the CCAR with a resolution similar to the one eventually passed by the Conference.[24] The Executive Committee enumerated five condemnations of rabbis who officiate which the committee did not accept. Two weeks before the 1973 convention, Schaalman distributed the final resolution to members of the conference along with a cover letter labeling it a "center position" accepted by eight of the ten committee members. Four days later Fishbein distributed his minority position.[25]

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[21] Ibid., p87
[22] Ibid., p87
[23] Ibid., p89
[24] Schaalman file at the CCAR.
[25] Ibid., Kaiserman p50

During the weeks leading up to the convention, Schaalman was urged to include penalties and sanctions against rabbis who officiated but refused, "I made it very clear at the time that as a liberal movement I did not think, other than persuasion and calls to conscience...no penalties ought to be used, and no penalties ought to be imposed."[26]

At the convention, Schaalman introduced the resolution by outlining the history of the mixed marriage issue and of the committee's work. In doing so, he underscores the difficulty of the task:

"We pit conviction against conviction and, as is true in this entire issue, there is no solution without pain. The question is who shall suffer it. We know that we are in conflict with each other and that there is dissent." The issue which will cause a great deal of controversy on the convention floor and which will, in effect, be tabled is whether the conference should write guidelines for the dissenters.[27] Schaalman believed that section two, which provided the guidelines was "the bridge between the extremities" and eliminating it took the heart out of the whole thing."[28] The resolution which was passed reads as follows:

The Central Conference of American Rabbis, recalling its stand adopted in 1909, "that mixed marriage is contrary to the Jewish tradition and should be discouraged," now declares its opposition to participation by its members in any ceremony which solemnizes a mixed marriage.

The Central Conference of American Rabbis recognizes that historically its members have held and continue to hold divergent interpretations of Jewish tradition.

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[26] Ibid., Kaiserman p55
[27] CCAR Yearbook, Vol. 83, 1973, p62
[28] Ibid Schaalman interview of 10-26-06 and Kaiserman theisis p65.

In order to keep every channel open to Judaism and K'lal Yisrael for those who have already entered into mixed marriage, the CCAR calls upon its members:

1. to assist fully in educating children of such mixed mixed marriage as Jews;
2. to provide the opportunity for conversion of the non-Jewish spouse, and
3. to encourage a creative and consistent cultivation of involvement in the Jewish community and the synagogue.

"Having fulfilled its mandate of revising the CCAR policy on interfaith marriage, the Committee on Mixed Marriage was disbanded. Schaalman, who had struggled for two years to bring in a unifying resolution, had seen 'overnight, the whole work of the Committee' collapse." It was a profound disappointment to me."[29] Fishbein's resolution and the elimination of section two had meant that the divisions of the conference would continue. Latter, as chairman of the Ethics Committee, Schaalman would deal with issues related to the mixed marriage issue.[30]

Patrilineal Descent

At the post-convention executive board meeting of the CCAR meeting March 29, 1979 a resolution was put forward on the issue of conversion which reads as follows:

We of the CCAR share the concern of the UAHC Board of December 2, 1978 which confronts some of the issues which affect the future of American Jewry. We have long recognized the need to deal with the contemporary influences acting upon Jewish identity.

Thus, we urge the UAHC to join with the CCAR to reaffirm and more actively to implement the Conference position taken in Atlanta in 1973 when it resolved: 'In order to keep open every channel to Judaism and K'lal Israel for those who have already entered into mixed marriage, the CCAR calls upon its members

a. to assist fully in educating children of such mixed marriages as Jews;
b. to provide the opportunity for conversion of non-Jewish spouses, and

[29] Ibid., Kaiserman p72
[30] Ibid., Kaiserman p 76-77

c. to encourage a creative and consistent cultivation of involvement in the Jewish community and the synagogue.[31]

The issue which was coming to the fore was whether equal treatment should be given to the children in these mixed marriage where the father was Jewish and the mother not as in the case where the mother was Jewish and the father not. The base for this question was the traditional understanding that the religion of a child is established in Judaism by the mother.

Schàalman addressing the history of the patrilineal issue at the 1982 convention of the CCAR states as background:

The Central Conference of American Rabbis has had a Committee on *Gerut* for a number of years, and in its deliberations over these years, it has, of course, also taken into consideration the entire issue of Patrilineal Descent. While this committee was in the process of formulating its position, it became clear to our colleague, the president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Alexander Schindler, that the issue had reached a point of crisis. And, thus, at the Toronto convention of the Union in 1979, he called on the movement to take the question of patrilineality seriously...at our first convention following the Toronto Biennial, in Pittsburgh in 1980, by action of the convention itself, we established a Select Committee of twenty, picked by my cherished friend and most capable predecessor in the presidency, Jerome Malino. For reasons best known to him, he asked me to chair it. As soon as feasible after the summer the committee met for two days and achieved what it thought at the time to have been the proper formula for the solution of this problem of a statement of policy on the part of the Central Conference of American Rabbis.[32]

Schaalman was at the time of his appointment the vice-president of the CCAR. I do not believe that anyone foresaw that the work of the committee would extend into his presidency. As Schaalman underscores in his report, the writing of the introduction to the

[31] CCAR Yearbook, March 1979, p107-108
[32] CCAR Yearbook, New York, 1982, p67

policy proved to be more complicated than the formulation of the policy itself. The focus for that evening's discussion was to be the "operative formula" and "not the surrounding text." That night's discussion was to focus on the issue of patilineal descent itself. If changes needed to be made to the policy based on the night's proceedings, the committee would take that up later. For that evening three members of the committee with differing opinions would present their points of view; these were Alexander Schindler, David Polish, and Joseph A. Edelheit.[33]

Because the committee understood that the impact of the resolution extended beyond the North American Reform community efforts were made to meet with groups outside of the Reform Movement to see if some kind of a solution could be reached. Schaalman believes that his own position very much represents a "middle ground" and that he could not be considered a "flaming supporter" of patrilineal descent. He supported patrilineality because of the issue of gender equality but had a great deal of concern for its effects on K'lal Israel.[34] As a result of the latter:

> Two meetings were therefore held: one with our European colleagues last November in Paris, and one with our Israeli colleagues last March in Jerusalem. In both instances we spent the better part of a day going over the proposal, listening carefully and with total openness to their caveats and to their troubles with the formulation, and taking into consideration-especially in the writing of the preamble and frame material-at least some of the suggestions made by colleagues not now residing in the United States or North American continent. Also-and again in order to complete our task to our satisfaction and to be able to say to you that we had left nothing undone of which we could think-Rabbi Glaser and I met informally and off the record with the Law Committee of the Rabbinical Assembly, our Conservative brothers...As you review the material that had been sent to you..., you may possibly find a statement here or there reflecting-though not directly-

[33] Ibid., p67-84
[34] Phone interview with Schaalman, January 15, 2007

some of the thoughts which our Conservative colleagues uttered with regard to this matter.[35]

Schaalman also recalled meeting in New York with a number of Orthodox colleagues who, although they were very polite, indicated that they were unable to give in this area.[36]

After the three presentations, the 1982 convention turned its attention to the consideration of the proposed resolution: "Where only one of the parents is Jewish, the Jewishness of a child is derivable from the Jewish parent, and is expressed by participation in Jewish life."[37] Schaalman then inserted what he hoped would relieve "unnecessary debate" by reminding the convention that "the key word derivable is permissive and not prescriptive; that it opens up a possibility and does not have mandatory intent or language."[38] Schaalman then exercised his prerogatives as Chair by "not like [ing] to recognize any motion to table early in this debate. I think we have come here and are here in such numbers tonight because we want to discuss the merits of the issue. I will therefore set some kind of arbitrary time limit for myself and only after that, with your consent, recognize (if it should be so offered) any motion to table and test the house on that."[39] After considerable discussion a motion was adopted to "refer this entire matter back to Committee for its elucidation on the broadness of its complexity, taking into consideration the arguments that have been presented in the course of this convention."[40]

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[35] CCAR Yearbook 1982, Vol. 93? , New York p68
[36] Phone interview with Schaalman 1-15-07
[37] Ibid., 1982 CCAR Yearbook, p76
[38] Ibid., p76
[39] Ibid., p76
[40] Ibid., p83-84

Over the next year the Committee on Patrilineal Descent met several more times under Schaalman's chair drafting its report regarding the "Status of Children of Mixed Marriages."[41] The presentation of the Committee Report was done by Peter S. Knobel while Schaalman chaired the meeting. A statement followed from MARAM, the Israel Council of Progressive Rabbis, which was delivered by its Honorary Life Chairman Rabbi Moses Cyrus Weiler. Following a lengthy discussion, MAMRAM asked:

> That the resolution be set aside for further consideration rather than that a statement be adopted which is subject to conflicting interpretation.
> It would be precipitous to deviate from time-honored tradition without a more thoroughgoing examination of the traditional sources, the sociological impact, and the internal and external consequences.[42]

After considerable discussion, "the final text of the Report of the Committee on Patrilineal Descent on the Status of Children of Mixed Marriages" was adopted by the Central Conference of American Rabbis on March 15, 1983. [For the full text of the report see the 1983 CCAR Yearbook.][43]

Following the March meeting of the CCAR issues related to patrilineal descent continued to be raised. On July 22, 1983 Schaalman sent a letter calling a meeting of a newly constituted "on-going committee on Patrilineal Descent" which the new CCAR president Gunther Plaut had appointed and which Schaalman had been asked to chair.[44] Correspondence dated January 28 and February 5, 1986 between Elliot L. Stevens, the Administrative Secretary of the CCAR, and Schaalman indicates that at least some of the

[41] CCAR Yearbook, Vol. 94, Los Angeles, 1983 p 144
[42] Ibid., p 148
[43] Ibid., p 157-160
[44] Letter from Schaalman to Members of the Patrilineal Committee, July 22, 1983, Schaalman file CCAR.

concern is related to at what point the "Jewish identity [of such children] becomes effective (established), and until what point it merely remains potential?"[45]

Reflecting on the meetings of the Patrilineal Descent Committee, Schaalman recalled how uncomfortable they were. The Committee contained people whom he respected deeply but the meetings were highly contentious. Four other factors came into play:

1. There was enormous pressure on him from the President of the Union [Schindler].
2. Schindler represented influential lay people.
3. The non-Reform religious community was opposed to patrilineality.
4. It was a different kind of issue than mixed marriage. With patrilineal descent there was "no play possible." Such a departure from tradition created an irreversible condition. With mixed marriage there were grey areas where remedies were possible [The marriage could, as an example, be considered a non-marriage since it was not halachic to start with.]. K'lal Israel, as mentioned before, was a great concern for Schaalman, especially after the Shoah.[46]

In order to achieve some perspective on Schaalman's leadership style, I interviewed Dr Leonard Kravitz of HUC-JIR's who is one of the few members of the Mixed Marriage Committee still available to be interviewed. Dr. Kravitz served on both committees, Patrilineal Descent and Mixed Marriage. Kravitz admits to some bias in favor of

[45] Letters from Elliot L. Stevens to Herman E. Schaalman, January 28, 1986 and Herman E. Schaalman to Elliot L. Stevens, February 5, 1986, CCAR file on Schaalman
[46] Interview with Schaalman in Chicago 10-26-06

Schaalman and describes Schaalman as "first rate" and able to maintain his calm while moving the work of the committee along. By and large, the committee was not aware of being led. Especially in patrilineal descent everyone felt the pressure of the Union in order to resolve the status of the new influx of Russian Jews. It was a pragmatic issue and they were all being pushed to go along.[47] Another member of the Patrilineal Descent committee who did not wish to be identified provided a similar evaluation to Kravitz. He opposes patrilineal descent and expressed the view that Schaalman could have stopped the resolution if had chosen to do so which he did not. The impression was that he wishes Schaalman had done so although he also described the outside pressure to pass the resolution.

Rabbi Alan Fuchs, who served on the Mixed Marriage Committee, talked of Schaalman's diligence, strength and enormous amount of integrity in conducting the business of the committee. The committee represented the full spectrum of opinion and Fuchs described himself as to the left in that he does perform mixed marriages under certain conditions. In the end, Fuchs believes that no one on the committee was completely satisfied but they respected each others position and Schaalman was a part of making that respect happen. Fuchs believes that they were all betrayed by the leadership of the Conference who really sought a complete condemnation of the issue and not a discussion and that the committee had worked in vain. Fuchs described Schaalman as expressing that sense of betrayal to him after the convention debate.[48]

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[47] Phone interview with Dr. Leonard Kravitz of HUC-JIR New York, 2-28-07
[48] Phone interview with Rabbi Alan Fuchs, 2-28-07

Presidency of the Conference

Herman Schaalman was elected President of the Central Conference of American Rabbis in 1981 after spending two years as the Conference's Vice-President. He has frequently reflected that this was an office which he did not seek, unlike some people who actively promote themselves. When I questioned him about this, he stated that he simply had not seen himself in that position although others had predicted to him that he would be.

He, in fact, was sitting on the Nominating Committee which chose him. When it became apparent to him that he was going to be chosen, Schaalman excused himself from the meeting and went to call his wife to ask her how she felt about the prospect since the presidency of the Conference is a very time- consuming responsibility. She obviously agreed and Schaalman was installed as the president of the Central Conference of American Rabbis at its annual meeting which that year took place in Jerusalem. In an "Autobiographical Reflection," Schaalman calls his election as president of the Conference "the single most coveted honor that has come to me."[49]

Schaalman stated that as president he wanted to move the Conference toward talking about issues of theology which he felt had been neglected both in the Conference and at HUC especially when he was a student. "I wanted to talk about God and issues of belief that had too long been sidetracked," he said. He wanted to encourage those who thought

[49] Herman E. Schaalman, "An Autobiographical Reflection," in The Life of Covenant, edited by Joseph A. Edelheit, Spertus College Press, 1986, p. xvii

that the rabbinate should be Torah centered.[50] His installation speech and subsequent presidential messages seem to reflect that emphasis:

When I think about the chain of circumstances that led me from Berlin to Cincinnati-if it were not the kind of hubris or *chutzpa* from which I shrink, I would be inclined to say that it was *Etsba Elohim.* I have often wondered why I was spared; why among the dozens who were equally prepared, equally worthy (perhaps more so), who were then at the Lehranstalt or who then lived in that society of which I was a part, it should have been I that was thrown the lifesaver; and why that gesture of the Hebrew Union College to which I owe my life should have reached out to me.

I have tried, throughout my adult life, somehow to make account and to take responsibility for this fact...But I must confess to you that I've always had and still have that gnawing question in me: just how it is that I should be here when so many could not? And now comes this climactic event. So, when I promise you that I will do whatever God grants me to do, then you will know that it is in the nature of a vow.

For perhaps here, at this moment and in what now presents itself to me, there might lie at least a sufficient answer to that haunting question. So I accept this presidency-first of all, most gratefully for the confidence and the affection and anticipation that so many of you have placed in me; and secondly, in order to prove to myself and to the God Whom I seek to serve that it might have been worthwhile to rescue this brand from the conflagration."[51]

Besides Schaalman's work during his presidency as chair of the Patrilineal Descent Committee, he traveled a great deal conducting the business of the conference. Sometimes both roles became combined. His goal was to establish a greater sense of collegiality both within the North American rabbis but also abroad. He was also intent on getting the feel of those abroad related to the patrilineal descent issue..

Over and over again we judge everything by our standards. We expect Jews in other parts of the world to accommodate themselves and live up to our measure. Not only is this unjust, it is frequently impossible. It is unjust because other Jewries often have far longer memories and deeper in their places and cultures than we do...I felt this particularly strongly during our recent visit within the framework of the World Union for Progressive Judaism to the Dutch, French and German Jewish communities.

There is a real challenge to reach out to Jews in other places on their own terms and in such a manner as they will determine. They want us to be friends and partners but not

[50] Ibid., interview with Schaalman of 10-26-07
[51] CCAR Yearbook Vol. 91, Jerusalem, 1981, p 165-166

satellites, not poor relations. Being much smaller in numbers and often perhaps less sure of their environment than are we, they are especially sensitive to a patronizing attitude. They often draw back and are easily offended by our rash self-confidence and easy assertion that we know how to be a Jew in the contemporary world.

This is particularly true also when it comes to the Rabbinate. We in the CCAR tend to think that the Liberal Reform world turns on us. Above all they need colleagues...The time has come when our whole movement and we individually need to be far more attuned to the opportunities and our obligation with regard to these different Jewries, and help them to meet the single most important deficiency from which they suffer at this time, namely the availability of liberal rabbis.[52]

The following month the "Report of the President" in the minutes of the Executive Committee reflected Schaalman's ongoing concern in the area of patrilineality.

V. REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT (Herman E. Schaalman) The President reported on his strenuous travel activity on behalf of the CCAR, and the concomitant satisfactions of his office. He reported his insight, that "classical" Reform is resurgent, and even feisty, and that we assume that greater tendencies towards traditionalism are accepted even now. He noted his great concern that the universal image of incarnate evil has been identified with Zionism, which he sees as a troubling even threatening phenomenon. The Board discussed the forthcoming convention resolution on Patrilineal Descent. Rabbi Schaalman pointed to strong opposition on the part of almost all European Liberal Rabbis and most CCAR members in Israel. Although some would prefer to keep the statement in the Rabbi's Manual, or defer consideration altogether, by mandate of a prior convention the matter cannot be kept off the convention agenda. One suggestion was that the background statement not be offered for consideration, but only the resolution itself.[53]

Schaalman used his President's Message at the 1982 CCAR Convention held in New York City as a vehicle to express his theology to that point. While the ideas of this address will be dealt with in more detail in my last chapter, they are dealt with here as part of the address. He began with a statement about the need to uphold Reform's authenticity especially in the light of what he felt as internal conflict but also because of those needs which flow from renewed external challenges from Orthodoxy. He traced

[52] President's Message, the CCAR Newsletter, February 2, 1982
[53] Minutes of the CCAR Executive Board, April, 1982

the history of the Reform Movement and praised Jewish liberalism for its embrace of emancipation.

Using Israel, God and Torah as "markers by which we examine ourselves and chart our course,"[54] Schaalman proceeded to his analysis. As to Israel, he asserted that, "We have recovered our link to the totality of Israel, *the kelal*, beyond any effective challenge from within or without...Let our colleagues who still insist on radical personal freedom and individualistic definition of Jewishness which surfaces not unexpectedly in such areas as *kiddushin, ishut* and the like weigh most carefully what ever gain they claim against the possible damage to the elemental components to the totality of Jewry." He however warns against seeing ourselves like any other nation, "Nor should we be less concerned and vigilant about falling into the trap of mere ethnicity...The Jewish people is not like all others...Our vocation, that which we are called, is to be the *am berit*, the covenant people. No other definition is legitimate."[55]

Schaalman, using Leo Baeck's notion, defines the relationship between the State of Israel and the Jews of North America as "the ellipse formed around two foci, two central points, held in tension over against each other with neither claiming nor possessing an inherently permanent priority of status." Other Jewish communities may also relate to Israel and to American Jewry in a similar fashion.[56]

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[54] Ibid., p4
[55] Ibid., p4
[56] Ibid., p5

Schaalman warns that our views of God have become so divergent that "We are in danger of losing each other."[57] On the one end of the spectrum are

> glib God talkers...who know so much as to have God safely tucked in their hip pocket. Of these there are few among us, if any. Rather we are likely to be afflicted with massive uncertainty to the point where it reduces our God talk to stammer of incoherence. Not surprisingly, prayer has been a notable victim. Many a rabbi reads prayers but does not or cannot approach God's presence with open heart and searching soul, a failure usually quickly sensed by others.[58]

Schaalman then deals with what he believes are the two main challenges to belief in God which are the "monopoly of science as the sole discoverer and purveyor of truth" and the *Shoa* which "has upended certainties about God as profoundly as it has about human nature and Jewish destiny."[59] He then lays out his post-Shoah theology as his answer to the dilemma which will be described in the chapter on theology.

As we have already reviewed, the vote on the issue of patrilineal descent was the main focus of the 1983 CCAR convention although the theme for study was issues related to the family. Schaalman's "Presidential Message" went in a different direction. After reviewing concerns related to Israel and its struggle to remain Jewish while assuming national status, he then identifies his view of the role of the rabbi. He sees rabbis as

> meant to find answers to the puzzling and often contradictory questions and demands which our time raises...The dislocations and problings, the bewilderment over often unprecedented problems and questions—all are reflected inevitably within ourselves.

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[57] Ibid., p6
[58] Ibid., p6
[59] Ibid., p6

They can lead to uncertainty over the very nature of the calling. Note that I prefer, perhaps even insist on using the term 'calling' rather than profession.[60]

Having set the stage for his discussion, he disavows the idea of the rabbinate as a profession. By adapting the language of business, we are treated like employees and not rabbis, he claims. "Where in this vocabulary is the reflection of the fact that we ought to be living Torahs, teachers of divinely given words, guides to prayer, models of the sacred dimensions of life? Where does this vocabulary point to our congregations as kehilot kedoshot, as sacred assemblies?"[61]

After he talks about the social action function of the rabbi as not really what needs to be the main focus and "by what at times seems a headlong plunge into the counseling role,"[62] Schaalman states what he believes to be the main tasks of the rabbi.

I think these are our specific tasks, our contributions to life and its searing problems, our unique role which—combining elements of the prophet, priest and guide—could and will restore to our congregations and to us the essential nature of the rabbinate and reconsecrate our relation to our people...Bikerovai ekadesh—by becoming and being rabbis we seek to be near God. We need to know of holiness, and bring near to others sacred moments, sacred times, sacred places, sacred acts. Bikerovai ekadesh—God's sanctity will be renewed by those who sacrifice, sacrifice not the gifts of others but themselves. This is what we need to do, what we are called to do—bikerovai ekadesh. Ve-el penei kol ha-am ekaved—and when in the presence of our people God's glory will thus have been restored, then our people will once again know us and, I am confident, deal with us as kelei kodesh, vessels of the sacred, doers of mitzvoth, containers of the holy, living incarnations of Torah, guides to the priceless treasures of our tradition. And then God's kedusha and kavod—entrusted to us, dependent on us, flowing through people and rabbi—will be present and we will restore and heal our world.[63]

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[60] President's Message, CCAR Yearbook Vol. 93, 1983
[61] Ibid., p 6
[62] Ibid., p 8
[63] Ibid., p8-9

From this message we see Schaalman's view of the rabbinate as a sacred calling which gets lost when we use a business model of contracts and contract negotiation. He feels equally negative about rabbis who see their primary function as counselors. He has never had a contract and feels that when rabbis do they lose their focus as God's partner and as teachers of Torah because they place themselves in a different realm which is not theirs as rabbis. Needless to say, there are others who disagree, feeling that a contract, for instance, is a necessary protection for a rabbi or like Rabbi David Sofian, now of Dayton, OH but formerly Joseph Edelheit's successor at Emanuel, who believes it can be a useful tool for working out the relationship between rabbi and congregation.[64]

As Schaalman reflected back on his presidency, he stated the belief that the conference had made a mistake in not drawing the past presidents in more. He expressed the belief that this lack has led him to feel increasingly marginalized and less engaged in the Conference. There have been many changes including the large number of families who attend conventions causing much less emphasis on the business of the Conference. He now prefers to attend the meetings of NAORRR, the association of retired rabbis which was started under Schaalman's presidency.[65]

Ethics Committee

Immediately upon the conclusion of his presidency in 1983 Schaalman was appointed by the new Conference president W. Gunther Plaut as chair of the Ethics Committee. He

[64] Phone interview with Rabbi David Sofian, January, 2007
[65] Interview with Schaalman if Chicago 10-26-06

succeeded Robert Kahn in the post. He was subsequently reelected by the Conference as a whole and served as the chair of the committee until 1991.[66] It was his goal to set a structure for the whole ethics process which would involve a timely and thorough investigation of the issues which were brought to the committee and thereby bring credibility to the endeavor. There was also the hope that a process could be established in which those who were found in violation of the code could be helped to meaningfully deal with what had happened and be restored to themselves and their rabbinate.

While the work of the Ethics Committee is highly confidential, some things can be gleaned from the published work of the committee. A large number of the cases heard by the Committee involve alleged sexual impropriety. There were also issues of concern between colleagues as well as rabbinic divorces. Schaalman stated that he was concerned with more attention to detail,

> "The committee discussed at great length the need to develop a graduated system of disciplinary actions, etc., in order to make our standards and their enforcement more credible. At the same time, the committee emphasized that it has an educative as well as a disciplinary role. Efforts should be made regularly through every possible avenue of communication, including sessions at conventions, to sensitize our members to our ethical standards and the need for compliance with them.
>
> The increasing number of divorces in rabbinic families led to a discussion of the need to help protect spouses' pension rights. This matter was referred to the Rabbinical Pension Board for further study...
>
> Sometimes difficult relations between the Emeritus and successor and between senior and junior rabbis need to be given greater care, perhaps on the model of the successful Mohonk spirituality seminar."[67]

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[66] Letter from W. Gunther Plaut to Herman E. Schaalman June 22, 1983 and Joseph B. Glaser to Herman E. Schaalman, July 3, 1991, Schaalman file CCAR, New York

[67] Report of the Committee on Ethics and Appeals, CCAR Yearbook Vol. 94, 1984, p101

Mohonk was the name of a retreat center whose model the conference used for a series of rabbinic spirituality retreats that were sponsored by the Conference's Professional Growth Committee. It was through the work of this committee that David Sofian, Edelheit's successor at Emanuel, and Schaalman got to know each other.

After two years of meeting it became evident to the committee that there were

areas of rabbinic life to which we have either paid no attention up till now or in which no clarity of purpose has yet been achieved. I refer to such items as fees, sexual behavior, and the whole question of the nature and perception of the rabbi's presence in the life of his/her congregation and the Jewish and general public. We will proceed carefully and with the proper deliberateness in addressing ourselves to these areas in cooperation with the Rabbinic Standards Committee...

The March [1984] meeting of the Ethics Committee, after lengthy and spirited discussion of the matter, recommended to the Executive Board that the following procedure, called 'Consequences of Infractions of the Ethics Code' become the operating standard of our Conference. After considerable discussion, the Board voted to accept the recommendation of the Ethics Committee as follows:

1. When an infraction of our Ethics Code has occurred to which the offending colleague has not made a satisfactory reply, then the Chairman of the Ethics Committee shall send a letter of reprimand indicating that an infraction of our Ethics Code has occurred to which no satisfactory reply has been received.
2. Should there be another infraction by the same colleague to which no satisfactory reply had been received, then a letter of censure is to follow, which will include the notice that unless a satisfactory response to the infraction of our Ethics Code has been made within thirty (30) days, the Ethics Committee will request the Executive Board to suspend the offending member.
3. After such suspension for a specified period of time without satisfactory resolution to the infraction of the rules, the Executive Board will then proceed to consider expulsion of the offending colleague.

It is understood that within each of these consequences and before any of them are to become operative, ample opportunity will be afforded for personal contact either with a representative of the Ethics Committee or with the entire Ethics Committee. Also, the greatest care will be taken sensitively to review each matter and the escalation of the consequences in each instance. It was felt, however, that it had become necessary to clarify these various procedural steps and to make sure that all of us are aware of them."[68]

[68] Report on the Committee of Ethics and Appeals, CCAR Yearbook, Vol. 95, 1985, p198-199

In 1986 Schaalman stated that the Report of the Committee on Ethics indicated that the work on the revision of the Code of Ethics was "going apace. Within another year we ought to be prepared to submit suggested changes improving wording and content."[69] The Ethics Code was presented to the Conference by Schaalman on June 27, 1991 and approved minus a paragraph on fees for officiating at life cycle events for non-members which was sent back to committee for reworking. In general it was far more detailed than its predecessors and contained additional categories of Personal Responsibility and Avoidance of Commercialism.[70] It has been amended in 1993, 1998, 2001, 2003, and 2004 and can be found on the CCAR website.

Schaalman recalls that the work of the committee was not easy at all because situations were quite complicated and it was not easy to get at the real truth. Often it was a matter of one person's word against another. Besides fee structure and issues related to mixed marriage [such as co-officiation with Christian clergy and rabbis who do mixed marriages officiating for members of non-officiating rabbis], Schaalman recalled dealing with a lot of issues between retired rabbis and their successors as well as alleged sexual impropriety. He offered that rabbis are very vulnerable and shared the situation of a rabbi who was called by a woman who had just attempted suicide. When he got to the

[69] Report of the Committee on Ethics, CCAR Yearbook Vol. 96, 1986, p178
[70] CCAR Yearbook Vol. CI-CII, 1991-1992, p272-279

woman's home, he found that she was only wearing a robe. He tried to help her bandage her wounds and was later accused of sexual impropriety.[71]

Interfaith Relations

Schaalman has always been active in interfaith relations beginning with his years in Cedar Rapids. He recalled how when he first came to Emanuel he was visited by a neighborhood clergyman who was welcoming him to the area. The year would have been in the mid 1950's. At that time there was no regular meeting of the area clergy and together they formed the Edgewater Clergy Association, which still meets.

The issue of Catholic- Jewish relations has been very prominent in Chicago ever since Vatican II although now things have been expanded to include Muslims. Catholic-Jewish relations are also very important to Schaalman who, coming from predominantly Catholic Bavaria, remembers when things were not so amiable between the two faith communities.

I interviewed Sister Joan McGuire who is the Director of Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations for the Archdiocese of Chicago. She recalled first meeting Schaalman at the Council of Religious Leaders of Metropolitan Chicago when she came to Chicago in 1987. This organization was started by the late Cardinal Bernadin in 1984 because of his concern for race relations in Chicago.

[71] Phone interview with Schaalman 1-15-07

After that time Schaalman and Bernadin became close friends and Bernadin relied on Schaalman as his contact with the Jewish community. Schaalman visited the Cardinal often during his illness. Schaalman recalled being invited to the Cardinal's residence for a breakfast meeting and being served what looked like bacon only to be reassured that it was Kosher. Both Bernadin and the present Cardinal have attended Passover Seders at the Schaalman residence.

In 1994 when the Cardinal visited Israel, Schaalman , accompanied him. Schaalman recalled reviewing the Cardinal's planned speech at Hebrew University before he submitted it to the Vatican for approval [It was quite pro-Israel]. In 1996 when Bernadin died, Schaalman conducted a memorial service in Holy Name Cathedral two days after the Cardinal's death and according to his express wishes, which a rabbi had never done before. Since traditional sources forbid a Jew from even entering a church, this was not without its controversy within the Jewish community.

I explored with Sister McGuire and with Father John Pawlikowski, a well known Catholic theologian who teaches at the Catholic Theological Union, about both their relationships with Schaalman as well as Schaalman's with the Cardinal. Sister McGuire described Schaalman as "so faithful, able to articulate a deeper understanding of the issues, intelligent, rational and having a desire to bring people together. She believed that they respected the integrity of each other's faith tradition."[72]

[72] Interview Sister Joan McGuire at the offices of the Archdiocese of Chicago 10-27-06

Pawlikowski regards Schaalman as unique because of his interest in the issues which concern the city of Chicago which apparently others don't show. Their commonalities relate both to their close relationship to the Cardinal as well as their mutual interest in the Holocaust. They have appeared on panels together and he recalls an incident about 20 years ago which took place at St. Francis Seminary in Milwaukee where he was particularly affected by Schaalman's views of God and the Holocaust. Both of them want to stress human responsibility. He described Schaalman as a "soul friend" with whom he has a "deep spiritual relationship across religious lines."[73] He believes that Cardinal Bernadin felt similarly, and had such relationships with some other religious figures such as the Episcopal Bishop of Chicago.

Much of Pawlikowski's relationship with Schaalman has been in the context of other programs such as the revival of the Parliament of the World's Religions, which I will discuss momentarily, and Spertus College. They were apparently involved together during the Auschwitz convent controversy. He notes that people "perceive in Schaalman a deep integrity, a willingness to listen and learn from others." This is theme which repeated itself. He described Schaalman as "cutting edge in interreligious relations."[74] However, Pawlikowski and Schaalman do not see each other outside of specific context unlike Bernadin and Schaalman, and Pawlikowski was quick to add that Cardinal George

[73] Interview with Reverend John T. Pawlikowski in Chicago, August, 2006
[74] Ibid

relies on other links in the Jewish community. Pawlikowski is not himself in George's inner circle as he was with Bernadin.

Sister Carol Francis Jegen, a retired professor of theology at Mundelein College (now part of Loyola University), recalled contacting Schaalman soon after Nostra Aetate in order to bring her students to Emanuel for a visit. She spoke positively about his impression on her students and also hearing him lecture to Catholic educators. As well, she talked of Schaalman's involvement in the Catholic/Jewish Scholars Dialogue which has met five times a year for about the last 15-20 years. She was quite moved by a story Schaalman told of his father's incarceration at Auschwitz in which the inmates were asked to cut the grass. When they asked about tools, they were told to use their teeth.[75]

Sister Mary Ellen Coombe who works with documentation of Catholic-Jewish relations has been involved with Schaalman in many of the same projects already mentioned. She describes that he "is always present to build up relations over the years. He is a senior statesman who has seen it all."[76] .

One of these events was the Parliament of the World's Religions. The Parliament first took place during the Columbian Exposition of 1893 and was the idea of a Protestant minister. As the hundredth anniversary approached the National Conference of Christians and Jews wished to hold another such conference. Initially it started as a small

[75] Phone interview with Sister Carol Francis Jegen 11-15-06
[76] Phone interview with Sister Mary Ellen Coombe 11-15-06

local event with 12 faith communities participating but eventually there were 8,000 people from all over the globe in Chicago when it took place in the summer of 1993. The event was not completely without controversy in that there was debate as to whether Louis Farakhan and his nation of Islam should be allowed to participate. Schaalman was active in the organization of the event and also attended in 1999 when the Parliament took place in South Africa.

In summary, it seems that Schaalman has been extremely active in the leadership of the CCAR taking on the chairmanship of three committees; Mixed Marriage, Patrilineal Descent and Ethics as well as the presidency. He was willing to take on these chairmanships at times, at least with Patrilineal Descent and Mixed Marriage, when there was enormous pressure from the laity in the form of Alex Schindler who was the president of the Union and also the threat of splintering in the CCAR focusing around these issues was very real. In neither patrilineal descent nor mixed marriage did the committees report out as he had hoped, but as I will say again in the Conclusion, nor did the Conference split, which is no small matter.

Schaalman was, and continues to be, active in interfaith and interracial relations. As he will himself admit, he tries to avoid controversy and so he seems to have developed the skill of getting people to listen respectfully to each other even though they do not agree. That theme came up repeatedly in my interviews. Certainly his colleagues in the CCAR often differ with his views on theology and religious practice. It is to his theology which I will now look into.

Chapter 5-Schaalman's Theology

Background

Herman Schaalman, like most theologians, has been influenced by many people who have come into his life either directly or through his encounter with their work. We have already mentioned Fackenheim and Buber whose ideas will figure most prominently in the discussion below. Another group of people must be mentioned here and that is a group of "covenant theologians" of which both Schaalman and Fackenheim were a part. These men gathered together first at Oconomowoc under Schaalman's auspices and later through the leadership of David Hartman in the Laurentian Mountains when Hartman was a young rabbi in Montreal. The group continued to meet until Hartman moved to Israel in 1971. The list of participants is filled with the prominent North American Jewish thinkers of the 1950's and 60's.

Two people of particular interest are Elie Wiesel and Rabbi Irving "Yitz" Greenberg. Greenberg is a modern Orthodox rabbi whose work in the field of Jewish education has been pioneering. Schaalman and Greenberg sat next to each other at lunch one day and began a conversation that went on for hours. Schaalman later expressed the belief that he was the first Reform rabbi that Greenberg had ever met and that he, thereby, broadened Greenberg's view of the Reform Movement.

As for Wiesel, Schaalman recalls that Wiesel was leading the davening one morning in Canada with a kind of depth which he had never encountered. After the service, Schaalman inquired who that was but they did not talk further until later on. Schaalman

went home and read Wiesel's book Night. He has stated that it was his interaction with Wiesel which forced him to begin to consider the theological implications of the Shoah, which until that point he had not done. In addition, Schaalman invited Wiesel to camp where he met other rabbis that gave him an exposure he had not previously had.

It must be mentioned here that Schaalman has consistently rejected the idea that he is a theologian and has often stated that if he is a theologian it is not by intent. He has resisted any suggestion until recently that he write about his ideas so that tracing them in a chronological fashion would be very difficult. His early sermons in Cedar Rapids were written out because he was so unsure of his English but he is not certain where they are if the manuscripts still exist. Schaalman has long since ceased to speak from notes except in specific instances, mostly when the speeches will be reproduced. He has written some articles and has in the last few years been working with a woman, Anita Rifkind, on a manuscript which is in the process of being published and from which I will quote heavily.

Before even beginning to examine Herman Schaalman's ideas, a certain caveat is in order. He nearly always begins such discussions by saying that he does not represent Judaism but rather what he believes to be a Jewishly defensible position. He also affirms that words put limits on what they describe as they limit the character of whatever the words are describing. As such, we, the speakers, are the ones who establish the character of whatever we are describing with the words we use. Since what we are attempting to define is God, who by definition is beyond the limits of definition, we must approach our

task with the caution that our words are only what we can "express, squeeze out of ourselves." We must understand that we cannot fully grasp God. There is a whole philosophical school call the positivists who claim that all God talk is, therefore, an abuse of language which leaves only the choice of silence when it comes to God. Not being willing to confine himself to silence, Schaalman advises us to adopt the traditional phrase, "as it were," to acknowledge the fragility of what we can really say about God.

He begins his forthcoming book, Hineni-Here Am I, by describing the "Foundations" of Jewish thinking which because of his traditional upbringing he did not challenge for a long time. The result was that he comfortably ran on the "accumulated energy and motivation of my early life and on the training [of]...the rabbinical seminaries" and did not for a long time "get to a self- critical examination of my own thinking."[1]

As mentioned in the chapter on his youth, as a teenager Schaalman was part of a youth movement "that held Martin Buber[2] in high respect.[3] Buber was also a bible scholar and two unrepeatable events, Exodus and Sinai, were seen as key in Judaism. These events

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[1] Schaalman manuscript of Hineni, p 1

[2] Martin Buber [1878-1965] was born in Vienna and grew up in Lemberg with his grandfather Solomon Buber a midrashic scholar. Together with Franz Rosenzweig, Buber began a German translation of the Bible which he finished on his own because of Rosenzweig's early death. In 1923 Buber authored I and Thou a philosophy of dialogue. In 1938 he moved to Israel where he lived until his death. "Martin Buber introduced a new way of thinking and relating to others. In doing so, he exposed one of our human weaknesses, namely our treating others as objects, 'using' them as things or relating to them for personal benefit. In his terminology we turn them into an 'It.' As long as we concentrate only on our own selves, we may be able to gain comfort and prosperity in life but will never be able to become genuine human beings. That is only possible through an 'I-Thou' relationship which elevates us to a higher plane of existence. 'The relation with man is the real simile of the relation with God; in it true address receives true response' (I and Thou, p. 103). It is by genuinely relating to others as 'Thou' that we meet our 'Eternal Thou,' God...it is within the context of how everyday life is lived that God is truly revealed." ["The Philosophy of Dialogue of Buber in Finding God, Rifat Soncino and Daniel B. Syme, UAHC Press, 1986]

[3] Ibid Hineni manuscript, p2

will matter greatly in Schaalman's thinking and are described as the pivotal moments in Jewish life until the Shoah.

Schaalman then identifies some other key concepts which will be important to his later discussion. He compares Judaism with Christianity in the matter of revelation and states, "The only thing that a Jew really has to respond to is the singularity of God. The Pharisees' description of many layers to the text becomes an open invitation to see the text as the individual receives it."[4] Thus entitled, Schaalman then deals with the subject of mitzvot. Mitzvot are "accepted as flowing from a revealing God and sanctify every aspect of existence."

The three fundamental aspects of Judaism are God, Torah, and Israel.[5] God for Jews is Creator, Revealer and Redeemer with Creator being most important. The Sabbath celebrates God as Creator.[6] [Compare this with Christianity whose day of rest celebrates the resurrection of Jesus.] Individual revelation ceased with Moses [according to the Bible, although the rabbis identify prophecy as ending with Malachi] and redemption is corporate not individual as in Christianity.[7] Covenant is the key to the profound understanding of the relationship between the Jewish Community and God.[8] Thus there is corporate responsibility and individual responsibility flows from the corporate. The non-traditional Jew needs to review and sort out mitzvot that he/she is willing and

[4] Ibid., p5
[5] Ibid., p6
[6] Ibid., p11
[7] Ibid., p16
[8] Ibid., p17

capable to observe.[9] Tradition, however, holds that the relationship between man and God is one of obedience. It is this idea which ordered life until the Shoah.[10]. After the Shoah, nothing is the same for Schaalman.

In 1935, while Schaalman was a student at HUC, Mordecai Kaplan [1881-1983] who is the father of the Jewish Reconstructionist movement and who was at that time a professor at the Jewish Theological Seminary [Conservative], published his well known book Judaism as a Civilization. "Reconstructionism proposed to shift the center of gravity from the Jewish religion to the Jewish peoplehood."[11] It was hotly discussed at the College and was espoused by the young rabbi in his early years in the rabbinate.

A great thinker of our time, Kaplan advanced a God concept which can be understood within the context of our own human experience. Rejecting God as a supernatural power, Kaplan argued that God is the totality of all those forces which help us become the best people we are capable of becoming. He viewed prayer primarily as the ability to express one's own wishes and to provide an incentive for a program of action. He saw evil as that aspect of the universe which still needs to be conquered through cooperation with those creative forces that make human 'salvation' possible.[12]

Following his ordination in 1941 Schaalman, as previously mentioned, took up a post as rabbi in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Several years into his time there [around 1946], he attended a conference in Cincinnati in which he ended up in a debate with Emil Fackenheim [1916-2003], a former classmate from Berlin who was by that time living and teaching in

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[9] Ibid.,p18
[10] Ibid.,p19
[11] "The Religious Naturalism of Kaplan," in Finding God, Rifat Soncino and Daniel B. Syme, UAHC Press, 1986, p107
[12] Ibid., p117

Canada.[13] The center of the debate was the Kaplanian idea that God is not supernatural and the only kind of religion that is of value is one that can help man live and get the most out of life by identifying as divine or holy whatever in human nature or in the world about him enhances human life...Godhood has no meaning for us apart from human ideals of "truth, goodness, and beauty, interwoven in a pattern of holiness.[14] For Fackenheim, "God remains a supernatural God who has entered history. Faith is a personal decision and a positive answer that an individual can give to questions of ultimate significance."[15] Kaplan's view, as Schaalman would later conclude, turns the relationship between man and God into an I-It relationship using the Buberian terms which Schaalman would adopt while Fackenheim's is an I-Thou. For the believing Jew, Fackenheim will later assert, the only ground for moral behavior is the Voice of a Commanding God.[16]

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[13] For Fackenheim, Jewish theology attempts to provide a coherent account of the Jewish faith based on the assumption that God is a supernatural God who has entered history. Faith is a personal decision and a positive answer that an individual can give to questions of ultimate significance...God is a given. No rational explanation can exist to prove or disprove the existence of God...Fackenheim identified certain key events in the history of the Jewish people, for example, the Exodus...that have created new moral demands...For Fackenheim, the Holocaust is one of those 'epoch-making' occurrences in the chain of Jewish continuity...A survivor of the Nazism, Fackenheim delved into the nature of evil and...[argued that Jews must] remain faithful to Judaism by not giving Hitler a posthumous victory—what he calls the 614th commandment. We do not know, says Fackenheim where God was during the Shoah. It is possible, he argued, that just as God is infinite, so is God's pain...In this post-Holocaust period, our job is to revitalize our faith and bring a sense of humanity to our society.

[14] "Mordecai M. Kaplan" in The Many Faces of God, Rifat Soncino, URJ Press, 2004, p 18
[15] Ibid., "Emil L. Fackenheim," p 73
[16] "Emil Fackenheim" in Encyclopedia Judaica, Second Edition, Michael L. Morgan, 2007

Following the debate with Fackenheim in Cincinnati, Schaalman returned to Cedar Rapids in a state of crisis. He questioned himself as to whether he was philosophically fit to be a rabbi. Fackenheim had convinced him of the shallowness of his approach and ultimately how indefensible it was. His eyes cast upon Buber's I and Thou which was in his study.

It struck me that I was caught in a theological stance, in a religious life, that simply could no longer withstand the facts of Jewish experience and history. As I reread I and Thou that night, 'It was as though a curtain had rolled away. The philosophic foundation for belief became so whole, firm, and clear that I have never again faltered...Buber's principal insight is that we approach the world in two basic "words," I-Thou and I-It. And if we understood both the character, content, and meaning of these basic "words," I-Thou and I-It, then we could hammer together the structure of life. That night I became aware of the fact that I was living in the I-It nearly exclusively.[17]

This opened a new insight to Schaalman:
The dialogic nature of reality became for me a fundamental truth...First it opened me to the possibility of reaching towards God in a way that I had not consciously done in the past: God as 'Thou.' And also it gave me insight into human relations that are fundamental to my whole outlook and being...The other is the indispensable means of my being me; my I depends on the Thou of the other, vice versa...the other is the ultimate risk. The other is not to be controlled, not to be used, not to be manipulated...Much of traditional religion is manipulative...Definition of the other is to be avoided because it sets limits on the other...The other needs to be received in openness with recognition that we might be changed by the other. The recognition of the "other" is immediately the confession that we are not yet what we should be. This mutual defenselessness is the basis of faith. It is faith...I have to remain self. In the Jewish understanding of the mystic experience of God, there is no annihilation of the self, no mystical union in which the human is absorbed into divinity or the Divine Head. Human has to remain human...Ethics then is not simply some kind of construct, but is really the searching for the being, the needs and the gifts of the "other"...We are not to be emptied of our own selfhood when we are with the "other". Quite the contrary: the "other" needs me to be an "other." [This led him to read Biblical texts differently than tradition.] The question became, "What does this text say about God?" It led to a, "more intimate" relationship with God who is "becoming." The human is no longer primarily in the stance of obedience with the guilt of non-performance.[18]

Schaalman was thus in a new stance with his belief system but his next crisis, that of the shoah, did not come until later. Although he distinctly recalled learning of the extent of

[17] Schaalman manuscript p37
[18] Schaalman manuscript p38-41

the shoah in 1945, it was not until his later meetings with Elie Wiesel that he began to confront the theological issues involved.

We can speculate as to the reasons for the delay in Schaalman's response to the Shoah but it is understandable that a believing Jew would have difficulty grappling with it. Fackenheim's response was also delayed.

Schaalman's Response to the Shoah

We know that Schaalman's response to the shoah was articulated in the form of his presidential speeches of 1981, 82 and 83. However, as early as 1966, he was a respondent to the "The Condition of Jewish Belief" symposium which appeared in Commentary Magazine in August, 1966. Question #5 attempted to ellicit from the respondents reactions to the "God is dead" issue which surfaced in that period as one of the responses to the holocaust. Schaalman answered that, "The only meaningful statement about God for a Jew is that 'God is.' He is 'beyond time.' No 'death' or 'incarnation' is conceivable or acceptable. Man cannot define God."[19] Since, Schaalman always reviews the possible theological explanations of why the shoah could happen, the idea that God died and therefore could not prevent the shoah always comes up and is dismissed.

An article which Schaalman wrote dated 9/28/ 98 [I have no indication when or how it was used.] he looks back, tries to answer why he did not deal with the shoah sooner, and

[19] Herman E. Schaalman in "The Condition of Jewish Belief," Commentary Magazine Vol. 42, #2, August, 1966, p207

summarizes his theological quandary quite well. It is not clear what the circumstances of the composition were.

In a long rabbinic life spanning more than half a century one could point to a number of great moments or events which left their imprint on the formation of one's person, values and beliefs. As my life unfolded, and still unfolds, increasingly and with surprising power and insistence one fact keeps asserting itself irresistibly. That fact is the shoa.

Originally, and especially, as a refugee from Nazi Germany, I had assumed that I knew enough and had the capacity somehow to manage the ever present impact of those decisive, horrendous years during World War II. In a fashion which now astonishes me time and again, I seemed able to live life, teach Judaism and represent it to Jews and non-Jews alike largely in the manner which had been taught me by my parents, teachers, books and colleagues. To put it differently, the shoa was part of the story, of the narration, but no more.

All of this has changed radically. It is unclear what produced the change. Perhaps it was the passage of time which allowed what appears to have gone unnoticed or suppressed to ripen until it burst forth. Perhaps it was the slow accretion of more and more information. Perhaps it was a process of maturation, of awakening which took this long. Whatever the reason or reasons, in the last five to ten years a profound, radical turn away from the more immediate past occurred.

It has left nothing untouched. I now know that after the shoa virtually nothing can be the same as it was before. Central to all this is, for me, a radical change in my understanding of God. I grew up with and retained for most of my adult life a belief in a God who was omnipotent, omniscient and always right and just. God was the "King," "Judge," the final Guarantor that all was to be right and proper as the ancient texts and teachers had asserted.

Perhaps imperceptively but none-the-less irresistibly that perception of God crumbled and gave way. In the shoa God functioned in none of the traditional articulations of the divine Being except, possibly, as the avenging, punishing, implacable Judge. There was no mercy; there were no answers to billions of prayers; there was no justice; there was neither life or hope. God had failed. God's part of the covenant with Abraham's descendents ceased to function. Jews were slaughtered and destined to extirpation in a world that had been supposed to be God's domain.

The only way that I, as a believer, could continue to pray, to probe for and seek out God was to understand that God was not limitlessly powerful, but father wounded, suffering together with His covenant people. Yes, God could still be omnipresent, and surely was, had to be at Auschwitz and Maidanek and Buchenwald but not as Power, not in control, but as victim.

Centuries, millennia of contrary teachings and perceptions collapsed into rubble. Not that there weren't hints here and there of the problematic of these articulations. What did the rabbis mean when they declared that the shechina, weeping, accompanied the exiles after the churban in 70 C.E.? Or what of Abraham's challenge to God over Sodom and Gomorrah 'Should not the Judge of the whole earth do justly?" Or Moses' successful persuasion of God not to exterminate the newly consecrated covenantal partner after the Golden Calf? God...could be surprised, hurt, enraged; all signs not of strength but of weakness.

The mainstream of Jewish tradition, however, was firmly set into the perception and vocabulary of omnipotence, omniscience, of unchallengeable justice...

None of this is tenable any longer since the shoa, at least not for me. God now is vulnerable without unvarying control, 'weakened' as it were. God now is not the Protector. Rather, we need to protect God. The roles have shifted. We need to love God, heal God, be present to God more than ever before. God now needs us as perhaps never before.

All of this has profound consequences for me, particularly also for the language of prayer. Is it really God Who determines 'Who shall live and who shall die?' 'Who shall be lowered and who shall be raised?'...Do we 'prostrate ourselves before the King, the King of Kings?' etc.

Equally, do we really want a machiach who miraculously will solve humanity's and usher in 'the end of time?' Do we really want an 'end' rather than an infinitely expandable [a future for humanity which has no end] human future...

In retrospect, as it emerges for me, the shoa, is a moment and event in human hstory comparable in importance and reverberation to the Sinai event, Golgatha and the like. We now live in a radically altered human world in which we need to find new, added, answers for the need to be with each other and for our relation to the Mystery which we call God.

In Schaalman's manuscript and when he writes in other places, as we have just seen, the theme of biblical characters demonstrating behavior that God neither foresaw nor expected, and usually beginning with Adam, occurs repeatedly.[20] This, as above, is used as a basis for saying that God is neither omniscient nor omnipotent. He routinely affirms God as creator but does not feel that "then leads to the assumption that I have such a

[20] Schaalman manuscript Chapter 5, p64

nexus with God that I can ascribe good or bad things to God's actions."[21] The implications which Schaalman derives from this are that,

> petitionary prayer is quite often on the verge of meaninglessness.[the result is a new stance in which] I see myself to be so present to God that God could find in my presence through all that life brings to me, reassurance that humans are not totally worthless, or worse yet, actually an obstacle to what God may have intended when he created...[the goal then becomes that we may] penetrate far enough into the mystery of God so that we can fashion for ourselves a meaningful existence...that we might know what God expects of us in every aspect of our being, , and in every modality of our existence-even our suffering...which may be another aspect of the relationship [with God][22].

We will talk more about this later since Schaalman dedicates a whole chapter in his forth coming book to prayer.

Here it becomes important for Schaalman to examine the basis of human behavior especially as it relates to God under these new assumptions about God. First he looks at morality. "Unless a moral system is anchored outside the human condition there is no valid system of morality available."[23] He cites here the abuses of dictators but also those who supposedly speak in the name of God. This leads to a new orientation toward the concept of mitzvot in which "We are no longer performing mitzvot to be obedient, but rather to bring joy to the One whom we accept as the source of the mitzvot as a constitutive fact of our Jewishness...It truly makes us 'partners.'"[24] Prayer, as one of the mitzvot, "is my return to the Donor [the One who gave me life]."[25] "To be truly human means to be of unlimited hope."[26]

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[21] Ibid., p70
[22] Ibid., p71-72
[23] Schaalman manuscript Chapter 6, p65
[24] Ibid., p67
[25] Ibid., p71
[26] Ibid., p75

Another method of acting out this partnership with God is through Tikkun Olam. While acknowledging that it is only possible for one person to do a fraction of what needs to be done in improving the world, he openly states that his involvement in the many organizations of which he is a part helps combat the despair of not being able to do more.[27] Schaalman states two pre-conditions, "First, we must realize that we are not God, and secondly, that God apparently assigned this task through Adam to all humans."[28] We are not free to give up. Here he quotes Pirke Avot as he does often in his writing, "It is not up to you to complete the work, neither are you free to desist from it." "Tikkun Olam [for Schaalman] is a statement of the ultimately possible-the ultimately necessary, and therefore, of the drive toward that end that needs to be found and released in the human enterprise, step by step."[29]

Here he returns to Buber and states that "what can be learned from Martin Buber, and what needs to be attempted, is to live in unconditional openness and a total willingness to take the risk of vulnerability. Unconditional openness is the ultimate stance for the experience of faith. It is to be present to the Mystery [and]...Towards human beings... [To] Try to let others sense that there are no demands, no preset conditions certainly not by oneself. We need to be as totally there as we can for the other."[30]

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[27] Ibid., manuscript p102
[28] Ibid., p102
[29] Ibid., p93
[30] Ibid., p94

Schaalman finds this to be useful to himself when is talking to mourners. He feels like this presence is what he can best offer them. It is also what he can offer God. "As the Shoah demonstrates, if God could not be able to avert the evil then it becomes very clear that what God demands of us now [and maybe always has] is to be God's instrument, God's other, God's partner.[31] By this he means God will not regret, as the rabbis imagine, having become creator. "God is in pain as a result of the Shoah. Mitzvah becomes the individual not as an obedient servant so much but rather as a helper, as a comforter."[32]

Since, by tradition God has ceased communicating directly, a valid question becomes whether "God Still Speak[s]?" Schaalman asserts that the relationship between the human and the mystery of the divine comes out of the human response to that mystery "because the omnipresence of God is not dependent on any further evidence of God's involvement through revelatory events. [Sinai is a unique event.] God's omnipresence is self –validating through creation."[33]

Having disputed both God's omniscience and omnipotence, and proposed man as the comforter of the wounded God, Schaalman proposes that, following the Shoah, the whole nature of the covenantal relationship has changed. Unable to affirm that the covenant is completely abrogated, he instead speaks for something he hints at when he describes the divine/human partnership with a suffering God.

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[31] Ibid., p94
[32] Ibid., p97
[33] Ibid., p113

And so the question of the Covenant's meaning and continued validity shifts noticeably if not radically. It is no longer God who is expected to, and been assumed to, have shouldered the responsibility and perdurance of this divinely instituted experiment of a different relationship between the human and the divine, it now is ours. We the human partner in the covenantal relation, now shoulder the necessity to become the guarantors, the maintainers of the unique bond unless we are prepared to declare the Covenant at an end, to write *finis* to the experience of the last three thousand or more years that has given us a unique sense of our place in the world. Unless we will say to God that this experiment, also begun so magnificently with Abraham, is a failure and therefore doomed, then we need to rescue it, breathe new life into it by added care and devotion, and, above all, by reassuring God that creation is still valid, that God's intention to fashion a cosmos in which we have a meaningful place and an assignment to help move the creation toward shalom, wholeness, still holds. In a strange, yet stunning fashion, we know now what was perhaps always implicit but has been glaringly explicit today, that God depends on us, needs us, simultaneously and comparably to our need of, and dependence on, God.

For that is the meaning of a life of the Covenant from its beginning and still also now, to be God's indispensable partners in tiqqun olam...we will help advance life to the visionary dream goal, to *shalom.*[34]

In Chapter 11 of Schaalman's manuscript he discusses what he calls the "Fundamentals after the Shoah." In this chapter Schaalman puts forth the basic concepts which he feels are historically of significance in Jewish life and maintains their importance after the rupture of the shoah. Not surprisingly, monotheism as expressed in Torah tops the list. Torah itself is "the marriage contract between God and Israel."[35] Torah is given in human language and one of its greatest gifts is Shabbat, whose uniqueness lies in the concept that it "lifts man out of time and makes him the master of it."[36]

Morality which has been discussed previously in terms of Tikkun Olam and Jewish fundamentals is even more paramount in a post-Shoah age, especially given Schaalman's theology. "Morality is another way to let God know we are here. If we frame our

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[34] Herman Schaalman, "Creation," CCAR Journal, Summer 2004, p122
[35] Schaalman manuscript, p132
33 Ibid., p132

adherence to the moral code as one of the healing gifts we offer back to God who originally gave these gifts to us, then it is clear that morality becomes a sacred act, recognition of the holiness that is its basis."[37] "Morality is understood to be our response to the loving gift of our life and being."[38]

The mitzvah system which has shaped so much of Jewish religious life survives, and "is intended for one overarching purpose, to refine, to gentle the human being."[39] "It is not easy to daily say the Shema and take on the yoke of the commandment."[40] All of these mitzvot are refinements and are accompanied by brachot, blessings. "What is the intent of saying a bracha? It is to be mindful of the involvement of God in whatever the blessing aims at or points to."[41]

"The third fundamental of Judaism that survives the Shoah is the synagogue."[42] Here he launches into a discussion of the historical development of the synagogue especially as an alternative to the Temple which "is inherently non-monotheistic [because] it modeled pagan temples [both in physical structure and ritual]. Also [because the Temple was the only place where God could be worshipped it was not really monotheistic] the God of all humanity could not be focused in one spot. It was a concession to the people to have something concrete."[43] Schaalman postulates the synagogue as the starting point for real

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[37] Ibid., p137
[38] Ibid., p139
36 Ibid., p139

[40] Ibid.,p141
[41] Ibid., p 142
[42] Ibid., p143
[43] Ibid., p144

democracy which only existed in a limited way in the rest of the ancient world. The synagogue was a place where everyone was equal before God.[44]

Fourth among the other "surviving" fundamentals of Judaism is the centrality of the home. The home is the place where "the woman has supremacy in establishing the sacred space. Not only is the home now parallel to the synagogue, it is for the woman the equivalent of the synagogue."[45] Here we have one of Schaalman's few misogynist sounding statements which are part tongue in cheek and part, in my view reflective of his traditional upbringing.

In Chapter 12 Schaalman deals with a subject which he admits is very troubling to him and that is the issue of prayer.[46] "Worship is our repeated assertion and evidence of the awareness that we have been given, in a totally unmerited fashion, the world, life itself...for me worship is a necessity to express what wells up within me...my return to the mystery, my thanks."[47]

Schaalman's ambivalence about prayer really surfaces when he discussed community. He cannot separate himself from the covenant community which is one in which the community prayer takes place thrice daily.[48] But he has serious doubts about prayer especially as it relates to the images of king and subject, master and servant, and father and child. These images portray a one- up status which Schaalman feels does not express

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[44] Ibid., p152
[45] Ibid., p154
[46] Ibid., p162
[47] Ibid., p159
[48] Ibid., p159

the partnership of humans and God. Yet he freely acknowledges his gratitude toward God as creator and never eats without a blessing, an act which clearly puts God above humans at least in one sphere.

He does not feel that God is omnipotent and so in control of human fate. This release of control is the price God chose to pay in launching the human experiment as Schaalman tells the story. However, he prays nightly for people he is concerned about, mentioning them specifically by name even though he no longer believes that God can intervene. When people ask him to pray for them he replies that he will pray "with them" thereby meeting their needs without compromising his integrity. He is not unaware of these inconsistencies in behavior. "So I retain a certain amount of openness to the prayer question, but I must say that the assuredness with which I see so many people using this category of religious observance and practice I just cannot share. There were billions of unanswered prayers during the Shoah."[49]

Chapter 14 is called "The Time to Come," and deals with Schaalman's theological position on Messiah. Schaalman does not hope or pray for the coming of the Messiah. There are several facets here. First is that the coming of the messiah or even a messianic age possibly comes from what he considers to be a more limited understanding of what time is. Tradition speaks of the messiah as marking the end of time.[50] Schaalman does not look for an early end to humanity which, as he views it, is only in its "diaper stage." Secondly, he does not "expect God to provide anything more than God already did.

[49] Ibid., p162
[50] Ibid., p188

Surely the Messiah is the clearest indication of an actual demand on the part of tradition for God to finally deliver an ultimate hope."[51] As in other areas, his "rejection stems from my understanding of the Shoah...[which causes him to] totally reject the notion that Jewish history is the evidence of a just God...Except as a vision of the world redeemed, I no longer believe in the old kind of redemption."[52] "What [asks Schaalman] will happen to God in the absence of a human partner?"[53]

Chapter 15 of Schaalman's manuscript is entitled "The Mystery of the Souls," which deals not only with the nature of the "soul," but also with the subject of the afterlife. This issue, like some others, is one in which Schaalman has not always maintained a consistent belief. I distinctly recall that early on when I knew him, he maintained a concern for the state of my "immortal soul." People are entitled to change their views. At this point in time he prefers to state that "there is something of the divine in each of us. Because even as God is ineffable, so maybe this is also true of us, about what we call 'soul.'"[54] As for an afterlife, "I do not believe that there is anything after death that is identifiable as a given person."[55] "These are fantasies that we humans have created to make it appear that death is not real, that it is just a transition from one form of being into another form of being. It is more real and honest to understand and accept the finality of death."[56] Schaalman expressed that it pained him to be unable to share with his dying

[51] Ibid., p193
[52] Ibid., p194
[53] Ibid., p196
[54] Ibid., p198
[55] Ibid., p199
[56] Ibid., p200-201

friend Cardinal Bernadin his verbalized acceptance of death as a time when he would be with God.

Some Conclusions

As we have seen in this chapter, the vast majority of what Schaalman has written and spoken about in the last twenty or so years is related to the calamity of the shoah as it affects his own belief system and his ideas about the condition of the Jewish people. In his mind, it is not equaled in all of Jewish history and stands as unique as the Exodus and Sinai. Often he departs from his traditional upbringing only with a great deal of difficulty. Maybe that is the real answer as to why it has taken him so long to publish.

Schaalman does concern himself with other issues. He cannot affirm the centrality of Jerusalem as it so often appears in Jewish liturgy nor can he affirm the obligation which our rabbis placed on the obligation of aliyah since he no longer waits for a Messiah. He therefore shifts the issue to the value of Israel as a center for Jewish life and affirms a vibrant existence for Jews in other lands. We have seen, for instance, a kind of separate but equal attitude toward Israel in his Presidential Addresses by which I mean that he affirms Israel's importance but feels those Jews living outside of Israel can lead a meaningful Jewish existence. There is also a great deal of concern expressed for the disadvantaged of all people as b'tzelem Elohim and the unity of a covenanted Jewish people who have recently suffered so much.

Schaalman repeatedly quotes Fackenheim's 614th commandment which exhorts Jews and the rest of humanity "not to give Hitler a posthumous victory," a statement which can be applied in a multitude of situations. Schaalman was a long time friend of Fackenheim and his ideas, especially about the shoah, bear a remarkable resemblance to Fackenheim's. By this I mean to ask the question as to who influenced who? When I recently put the question to Schaalman, he replied by reminding me that Fackenheim dedicated one of his books, "Quest for Past and Future" to Schaalman. Dr. Michael Morgan of Indiana University was a student of Fackeheim's and stated to me that he spoke of Schaalman often although he was not specific about the context. A biography of Fackenheim is due out soon which may shed some light on the issue. Failing that, since Fackenheim is no longer alive, we may never have an answer to my question.

Conclusions

In 1935 the Hebrew Union College, aware of the crisis which was building in Germany, obtained visas for five rabbinical students from the Lehranstalt für die Wissenschaft des Judentums in Berlin to study in Cincinnati. All of the five students remained in the North America. It was my goal with this thesis to chronicle the life, thought, and contributions of one of the five visa recipients, Herman E. Schaalman. What are the conclusions which can be drawn from my work?

Walter Laqueur, in his book, Generation Exodus,[1] attempts to tell the story of this generation, the young German Jews who fled Germany in the wake of Hitler's rise to power in 1933.[2] In it he identifies characteristics which he believes are common to many of these immigrants. One, in particular, applies to Schaalman, which is that "a significant number of young Jews from Germany went to study for the rabbinate, some initially in Germany [like Schaalman] and later abroad, others began their studies in the United States. They did astonishingly well...The influence of this generation of young rabbis in the United States and Canada was considerable."[3] One of them whom Laqueur does not name wrote as follows:

In Los Angeles in 1983 at the annual convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the German born president Hermann Schaalman was yielding the gavel to another president of like origin (Guenther Plaut); and at the same time the presidents of the other three reform movements were all German born as well; the Union of American Hebrew Congregations [now the Union for Reform Judaism] (Alexander Schindler), the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (Alfred Gottschalk) and the World Union of Progressive Judaism (Gerard Daniel). Since that time the president of the

[1] Walter Laqueur, Generation Exodus, Brandeis University Press, 2001
[2] Ibid., p xv
[3] Ibid., p 285

Jewish Theological Seminary (Ismar Schorsch) has also joined the constellation of surprising German Jewish influence.[4]

I must say, however, that no matter how much a part of a pattern Schaalman was, we must focus on the last part of the quotation, which points out the surprising influence of these men.

The first of Schaalman's contributions was the establishment in 1951 of the first of the Reform summer camps which is now known as the Olin Sang Ruby Union Institute and is located in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin. This camp, which opened its doors to campers in 1952, has had a profound influence on the Reform movement not only in North America but also abroad. It set the model for the other Reform camps which soon followed, pioneering in informal Jewish education.

The camp's loyal alumni have formed a pool of highly talented individuals who have become the lay leaders and Jewish professionals of subsequent years. The creative services, emphasis on Hebrew, and music have made an impact on Reform worship and liturgy as campers went back to their home congregations and also assumed positions of leadership.

Many of the camp staff has been Israeli and the camp's emphasis on Israel has helped shift the Reform movement away from its originally anti-Zionist stance.. Campers from Israel and other countries have forged friendships and widened Jewish awareness among

[4] Ibid., p285

the young people. Many friendships have blossomed into more serious relationships making camp a significant tool in the battle against mixed marriage.

The way in which camp has made both Torah study and Jewish observance an integral part of the daily activity has helped shift the emphasis of Reform toward tradition and away from its classical roots. The active involvement of rabbis has also helped enrich this process.

Recently there has been an attempt to document a broader base of support for the establishment of Oconomowoc as well as the previously existing weekend conclaves in a new book which is well documented and edited by Michael M. Lorge and Gary P. Zola A Place of Our Own , "A number of young rabbis in the greater Chicago area who were involved in the movements youth programs had become convinced that Reform Judaism needed to develop a permanent camp of its own. Among those most active in the drive to acquire a camp for the Chicago region were Rabbi Herman E. Schaalman, who was the new regional director of the UAHC, and local rabbis Joseph Buchler, Ernst M. Lorge, Karl Weiner, and Arnold J. Wolf."[5] Here Schaalman is clearly a victim of his own admitted reticence to save documents and to keep records. I have examined both the OSRUI and the Lorge files at the American Jewish Archives and they do show the interest and involvement of others. However they were frequently invited into the process in order to create a broad base of support both financial and otherwise by Schaalman himself.

[5] Michael M. Lorge and Gary P. Zola, "The Beginnings of OSRUI" in A Place of Our Own, University of Alabama Press, 2006, p 57

Schaalman hotly denies that Maurice Eisendrath [then president of the UAHC] was poised to purchase such a camp so that NFTY could have a permanent home. Schaalman insists that it took numerous phone calls and lots of groundwork to persuade the Union to go ahead with the project which they insisted had to be completely self-supporting. He also maintains that Rabbi Samuel Cook, the head of NFTY, was not at all pleased with Schaalman as his "landlord." Schaalman further states that it was he who insisted that the camp which was purchased be capable of being used year round and that it was he who uniquely instituted adult programming which had been non-existent anywhere previously.

Except for the contractor's estimate for winterizing the camp, he has no records to support the uniqueness of his idea for adult programming but that area has not really been researched. NFTY did occupy the second month of the camping season, but not permanently, for its national programs, and most of the records indicated that, without the income from NFTY, the camp would not have made it in those early days. Zola's book documents repeatedly Eisendrath's insistence that the camp have local funding. He was willing to give the Union's name to the project but not its funds which lends support to Schaalman's claims that a lot of groundwork needed to be laid. In any case, past experience had apparently made Eisendrath cautious about the success of the venture.

What appears to me, and is supported by Zola/ Lorge's own words is that, at the very least, Schaalman was the "the pivotal" force behind the establishment of ths important institution of Reform life, "When Schaalman became the new director of the Chicago

Federation of the UAHC, he played a pivotal role in galvanizing the rabbinic and lay parties who had been championing the importance of youth and camping in Chicago for a number of years."[6] Whether or not there were others who he involved in the process, he certainly brought them together in a way that had not happened before. To quote Jerry Kaye, who has been the director of Olin Sang since 1970, "Herman was the fulcrum. Others may have been doing this sort of thing [referring to weekend conclaves being held at rented facilities] but Herman united them."[7] This may not be the claim that Schaalman wishes to make, but many projects flounder without effective leadership. It is not a small achievement.

Another area in which Schaalman made an important place for himself was in the leadership which he took within the CCAR. Not only was he one of the Conference's presidents [1981-1983], he also was chair of three important committees of the conference; Mixed Marriage, Patrilineal Descent, and Ethics.

While Schaalman undoubtedly gained the respect of the conference, which led to his election by the full body to the chair of the Ethics committee after his first appointed term expired, it is the other two committees, Mixed Marriage [1973] and Patrilineal Descent [1983], which I believe are of greater significance. The two issues which the conference took up ten years apart produced resolutions which, although not binding in force, were of great importance to the Reform movement and had the potential for splitting the CCAR. In regard to the mixed marriage issue, it was Kaiserman's opinion that it was

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[6] Ibid., p 58
[7] Phone interview with Kaye in the Fall of 2006

"Schaalman, who would be the most influential force over the next two years [of the committee's deliberation]."[8] Schaalman, who goes to great lengths to avoid conflict, did not officiate but it was very important to him that the committee come to a unanimous resolution. In the end, the Conference passed the committee's resolution but Irvin Fishbein's minority resolution meant that Schaalman had not achieved the solidarity he had hoped for and thought he had. There were people who withdrew from the conference for a while although the conference remained mostly intact.

Schaalman was again tapped to chair a committee ten years later when the Conference took up patrilineal descent, an issue which was of great concern to the laity. The committee was far larger this time and the resolution which was passed fell short of Schaalman's hopes in that it did not include a section which Schaalman felt was important detailing what kind of activities would indicate a commitment to Judaism on the part of a child with patrilineal descent.

Although Schaalman did achieve a degree of success in helping the Reform rabbinate grapple with difficult issues, what seems important is that his peers had the confidence in him and that he was five times chosen to play significant roles in the conferences work. The outcomes of CCAR debate affect the lives of individual Jews and so cannot be taken lightly. The people who occupy these positions have a huge responsibility, and the fact is that Schaalman was the one who was asked and was willing to take on these tasks. We can assume that he was perceived as having something to offer.

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[8] "Herman E. Schaalman, a personal interview, Chicago, IL. June 3, 1996," in Mark Kaiserman, A Historical Analysis of Rabbinic Officiation at Interfaith Marriages p47

Lastly, we have looked at Schaalman's post-shoah theology as it developed over time. By his own description, it is Schaalman's own mix of a host of other thinkers along with his peculiar twist. That is largely true of theologians in general. Unfortunately, he has mostly refused to write about his thinking until recently. He has only done so now because of the constant urging of his wife and his advancing age. He also expresses concern as to the indefensible nature of the written word, which sits out there without his ability to defend it from its attackers. Instead, he prefers the dialogue which occurs when he teaches and takes questions after presentations. The written word also forces the writer to commit to a position and Schaalman has relished his ability to be dynamic in his thinking and in his relationship to God although he might not say it that way.

The problem is that his reticence has cost Schaalman exposure to a wider audience who might have benefited from his spin. Outside the loyal members of his Shabbat morning Torah study, the graduate classes he teaches and his speaking engagements, Schaalman's theological influence is, by his own description, limited. People are hungry for a theology which does not sacrifice reason or bypass faith so I think that is a loss.

In the end, what is Rabbi Herman Schaalman's place in the history of the American Reform Movement? Where does he sit in relation to names like Plaut and Borowitz? I think that he stands as one of the Movement's important leaders who repeatedly took on the urgent and often knotty issues, like Patrilineal Descent and Mixed Marriage, which faced the movement in the Twentieth Century and helped work through solutions that

gave us integrity and provided for our future. He also spear-headed the establishment of the first Reform camp Olin Sang Ruby Union Institute at Oconomowoc, Wisconsin whose existence has transformed Jewish education and practice, and supplied the Movement with dynamic and creative leadership. None of these things happened in isolation but the mark of a leader is the ability to show the way.

Appendix A-Chronology

July 7, 1890—The birth of Adolph Schaalman, Schaalman's father in Bavaria

April 10,1893—Regina Wanschel Schaalman is born in the Ukraine and her family flees the Ukraine to Germany in October of the same year

August 7, 1914—Schaalman's parents are married in Munich, Germany

April 28, 1916—Herman Ezra Schaalman is born in Munich, Germany

July 5,1921—Birth of Schaalman's brother, Ernst Schaalman

August 27, 1924—Birth of Schaalman's brother, Manfred Schaalman

April,1935—Schaalman graduates from gymnasium in Munich

May, 1935—Schaalman goes to Berlin to enroll in the Lehranstalt

August, 1935—Schaalman leaves Germany to enroll in the Hebrew Union College

1936—Serves as a student rabbi for a German refugee congregation at Chicago Sinai

1937—Returns to Chicago for the High Holidays, earns BA Degree in Philosophy at the University of Cincinnati, returns to Germany for Manfred's Bar Mitzvah, becomes engaged to Lotte Strauss

1938—Enrolls in Masters program at the University of Cincinnati, father arrested and sent to Dachau following Kristallnacht on November 10, 1938, went to Cuba with other German students to re-enter the United States

1939—Parents and brothers leave Germany following father's release from Dachau, Lotte Srauss dies in a swimming accident in Palestine, Schaalman spends the summer traveling with fellow students

1939/40—Serves student pulpit in Norwood, Ohio

1940/41—Service student pulpit in Henderson, KY, meets Lotte Stern

May 24, 1941—Ordination, HUC chapel, Cincinnati, OH

May 25, 1941—Lotte Stern and Herman Schaalman marry in HUC chapel, Cincinnati, OH, moves to Cedar Rapids, Iowa to serve congregation there

May 28, 1943—Susan Schaalman Youdovin is born in Cedar Rapids, Iowa

April 3, 1944—Schaalman becomes a citizen of the United States

January 23, 1945—Schaalmans in serious auto accident near Cedar Rapids, Iowa

1946—Schaalman and Emil Fackenheim meet again and debate theology, renew their relationship

April 25, 1948—Michael Schaalman is born in Cedar Rapids, Iowa

1949—Schaalmans move to Chicago where he assumes post of regional director for the UAHC

1951—Schaalman begins the process of establishing Union camp at Oconomowoc

1952—Oconomowoc opens doors to its first campers

1955—Schaalman becomes rabbi at Emanuel Congregation in Chicago, is still part-time with the UAHC

1970—Takes first assistant, David Mirsky

1971-1973—Schaalman chairs the CCAR Mixed Marriage Committee

1973—Takes second assistant, Joseph Edelheit

1976—Takes third assistant, John Friedman

1980—Takes fourth assistant, Michael Weinberg

1979-1983—Schaalman chairs the Patrilineal Descent Committee

1981-1983—CCAR President

1985—Edelheit returns as associate/successor

1986—Schaalman becomes emeritus at Emanuel Congregation in Chicago

1983-1991—Chair of the Ethics Committee

1989—Helps reestablish the Parliament of the World's Religions

1993—Becomes Laureate of the Catholic Church

1994—Accompanies Cardinal Bernadin to Israel

1996—Bernadin dies, leads a memorial service in Holy Name Cathedral, Chicago

1999—Receives Rosenwald Medal

2003—Lincoln Medal as distinguished citizen of Illinois

2004—A Chicago street named for the Schaalmans

2005—A Chicago park named for the Schaalmans, receives Order of Merit First Class from the President of Germany as a distinguished US citizen of German birth, also award from the International Conference of Christians and Jews

2006- Schaalman's 90th Birthday, 65th Wedding Anniversary, 65th anniversary of Schaalman's ordination

Appendix B

Gary Zola
The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives
Hebrew Union College
3101 Clifton Ave.
Cincinnati, OH 45220

~~To Whom It May Concern:~~ Dear Gary,

For personal reasons in to which I will not go in this letter I had the chance to read "A PLACE OF OUR OWN" only now.

On the whole, the book is a credible treatment of Jewish camping in it various aspects. You and Michael, and your collaborators, have done serious research.

All the more unbelievable it is, therefore, for me to understand how such a book could have been produced without consulting me the acknowledged major factor in founding OSRUI. Not only do I recall much material about details, incidents, persons, etc. But talking to me would have avoided a number of mistakes.

The most serious of these, in my mind, is the information about Bernard Sang's role in the history of Olin Sang. Contrary to the book Bernie was probably the most vigorous and reliable promoter and champion of a camp especially Oconomowoc. Of the $15,000 (not $16,000) which I myself had to find and did find to acquire Briar Lodge, he and his brother Philip gave one third immediately. (Bernie was a busy attorney, at that time not an attendant at the camp) He was as important as Johan Ackerman in furthering the early phases and remained interested until his death about two years ago. The very fact that the camp was called Olin-Sang Union Institute should have alerted you to the fact that it was the Olins and Sangs (one family) who were centrally important. Additionally, it was Elsie Olin-Sang who left millions to endow the camp's art and sports buildings and programs.

There are other mistakes. The NFTY conclaves at Camp of the Woods took place in Dewogiac (?), Michigan, not in Decatur.

In the appendix listing the directors of OSRUI there is a significant omission in leaving out the name of Dan (I can't recall his last name at the moment) who upon leaving donated to the camp a major collection of Jewish books which may well be the best such library in any Jewish camp in the country.

It would have been proper in any treatment of the development of OSRUI to mention such other colleagues who took a leading interest and served as faculty such as Joseph Ginsburg z"l, Leonard Mervis z"l, "Spitz" Miller z"l, and Ed Zerin.

The impression which is created in the book that there was widespread and intense interest informing such a camp is contrary to fact. I had to make dozens of speeches to boards of congregation, sisterhoods, and brotherhoods and not only in Chicago in order to

efforts to win over Maurice Eisendrath an effort in which I received invaluable help from Doctor S. S. Hollender, then the President of UAHC, a resident of Chicago and life-long friend of mine. The very fact that the first contingent of OSRUI campers in 1952 amounted to 37 or 39 young people is clearest evidence of the originally very small interest and support for this venture. Had it not been that NFTY agreed to take over half of the summer by using the month of August the first three or four years for its national program it is doubtful, as I recall it, for OSRUI to have survived financially (NFTY's director, Samuel Cook deliberately referred to me as his "landlord" regularly criticizing the camp's physical facilities, staff, and food. His wife, Rhea frequently took their two young boys to a restaurant in town).

In those pioneering years had it not been for steady support by Holy Blossom Congregation in Toronto and Temple Israel in Minneapolis who sent campers in significant numbers OSRUI would have been possibly in very critical condition (major Chicago congregations such as Sinai, Sholom and North Shore Israel were totally under represented in those days).

There is, finally, a methodological issue. I did not know that my friend and colleague Ernst Lorge z"l had kept record which now are in the Archives. Naturally Michael and you and others do and did well to peruse them. There can be no question, in my mind, that Ernst's records are idiosyncratic. It is altogether likely that he kept and selected what he considered important and relevant. His records, no doubt, reflect his judgments and interests. This, in my mind, limits their usefulness.

I'm not in the habit of keeping records. The story of the beginnings of OSRUI, as I know it has been video taped at camp at least twice or perhaps three times. Jerry Kay ought to know where those tapes are since I was never given a copy of them.

If from this letter you conclude that I am less than happy, you would be right.

Stay well.

Rabbi Herman Schaalman
Rabbi Emeritus

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