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Adapting to Intermarriage

Non-Jewish Participation in Bar and Bat Mitzvah Services

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Ordination.
Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion
Cincinnati, Ohio.

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Referees, Rabbis Samuel Joseph
and Dr. Richard Sarason
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Digest

In what ways can the non-Jew participate in a Bar or Bat Mitzvah ceremony? Orthodox Jewish tradition would laugh at the question. Reform Judaism, on the other hand, must confront it regularly and it is hardly a laughing matter. The wrong answer to the question may cause a great deal of friction between rabbis and their congregations and intermarried families in those congregations in particular. This thesis does not attempt to offer the "right answer." In fact, it will be shown that there is no one "right answer." What is appropriate for one congregation differs dramatically from what is appropriate in another. Instead, this thesis offers rabbis and congregations with views spanning the spectrum from extreme particularism to extreme universalism a reference to consult in responding to the various issues raised when a child of an intermarriage celebrates a Bar or Bat Mitzvah. Guidance is offered not only for those congregations seeking to have policies that reinforce traditional practices and actively discourage intermarriage, but also for congregations at the other end of the spectrum whose practices are purposefully less traditional and/or whose rabbis perform intermarriages.

Section I of the thesis discusses the history of the Reform responsa and the current Reform responsa relating to non-Jewish participation in Jewish worship. It was my aim in this section of the thesis to analyze the assumptions made in the responsa and note problems that may arise when rabbis and congregations do not agree with them. Section II presents and analyzes fifty recent and/or current policies held by rabbis and congregations around the country regarding non-Jewish participation in B'nei Mitzvah services. Section III discusses historical and halakhic topics that may help rabbis and congregations struggling with specific issues concerning the roles that non-Jews may

play in their religious services. Finally, Section IV is a guide to help rabbis and congregations determine where their policies and practices fit on the spectrum of policy alternatives.

Acknowledgments

It is amazing, looking back at the path that brought me here, that I ever arrived at this moment in my life. I went to college thinking that I would become a corporate lawyer, graduated thinking that I would become a professor specializing in early Christianity and Judaism of the first century, and came to HUC-JIR knowing more about heretical Jewish literature than about sacred Jewish literature. Yet, there were many in my life who knew, for some strange reason, that I would become a rabbi.

While many are blessed to have had one or two influential Jewish professionals in their lives, I have had a multitude. I must thank several for their role in getting me to listen to my Jewish soul and to choose this path:

Rabbi Jerome Grollman
Cantor Murray Hochberg
Rabbi Ken Ehrlich
Rabbi Howard Kaplansky
Rabbi Jay Goldberg
Rabbi John Friedman
Rabbi Andy Koren

Three people, more than any other helped me along the way, my parents, who raised me to believe that I should pursue my dreams, and my wife, Julie, who has helped me to fulfill them.

I would like to thank all of my professors at HUC-JIR, particularly Rabbis Samuel Joseph and Dr. Richard Sarason, my thesis advisors, my mentor Rabbi in Cincinnati, Rabbi Solomon Greenberg and the members of The Valley Temple, who have provided me with wonderful experiences, and all of those rabbis and regional directors of outreach for the UAHC who sent me policies to be included in this thesis.

Most of all, I would like to thank Julie for putting up with me for seven wonderful, but stressful, years and my daughter, Hanna, who when this thesis is turned in will finally have her daddy back.

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Introduction

Steven Cohen, in the foreword to his booklet, Jewish Outreach: Strategies and Opportunities, states that, "For American Jews, 'continuity' has become the watchword of the day."[1] Assimilation, a lack of Jewish literacy, and declining commitments are seen as "the critical threats to the American Jewish future." Consequently, according to Cohen, "Jewish communities across North America are struggling to find ways to strengthen Jewish identity."[2] Nowhere in Jewish ritual life is this struggle over identity more evident than at a Bar or Bat Mitzvah of a child of an intermarriage.

However, "continuity" is not a sufficiently descriptive term to fully account for the motivating factors at work. Rather, it seems to me, we must look at what American Jews, and in the case of this thesis, American Reform Jews, wish to continue. The assumption made by Cohen is that the kind of continuity that is desired by "American Jews" is one that is threatened by assimilation, a lack of Jewish literacy, and declining commitments. This would lead me to believe that what he believes "American Jews" wish to continue is a certain kind of Judaism and a certain Jewish way of life. In working on this thesis, I have come to question not only whether there is an alternate goal for many rabbis and congregations, but to believe that this alternate has been the goal of these rabbis and congregations for some length of time.

This alternate goal desires not the continuity of a certain kind of Judaism or of a certain Jewish way of life, but the continued survival of the Jewish people. Thus, for them, assimilation is a threat only so long as it robs potential Jews from our midst and a lack of Jewish literacy is a threat only if it causes Jews to believe that Judaism cannot be

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[1] Steven Cohen, Jewish Outreach: Strategies and Opportunities (New York: American Jewish Committee, 1993), p. v.
[2] Ibid.

their religious home. Declining Jewish commitments, however, remain a threat for this type of Reform Jew as well, perhaps the greatest of all, because if Jews are not in our midst and are not committed to raising their children as Jews, the survival of the Jewish people is in question. As one would expect, the differing goals of these two types of rabbis and congregations has a dramatic effect on their policies regarding families where parents are intermarried and particularly in regard to non-Jewish participation in Jewish worship.

If our differences ended there, however, the problem would be difficult enough to solve, but they do not. Reform Jews have no set creed. In many congregations, prayers are said despite the fact that the people reciting them do not believe in their contents. Modern scholarship has not only put many of our traditional beliefs into doubt, but has caused many in our movement simply not to believe in them. Yet, some rabbis and congregations have policies that seem to assume that all Reform Jews do believe in them. Most important among these are the concepts of chosenness, commandedness, and obligation. These topics will be discussed in great detail in the sections of the thesis dealing with current Reform responsa and with current and recent rabbinical and congregational policies regarding non-Jewish participation in B'nei Mitzvah services. What one believes about each of these concepts, or does not believe, is vital to their concept of what Judaism is and to their Jewish identity. Some, even among those in our movement, would argue that one cannot abandon any or all of these concepts and remain a Jew. Others in our movement might argue that these concepts have no place in Reform Judaism and that those who believe in them are therefore not Reform Jews. Most fall somewhere in between.

This thesis is designed to be a guide in the formation of policies regarding the participation of non-Jews in B'nei Mitzvah services rather than a full-fledged analysis of what is currently going on in the movement, something that would require a large-scale survey with hundreds of responses. In regard to the latter, it would be interesting to see whether or not there is a correlation between the performance of intermarriages and the orientation of policy in relation to non-Jewish participation. Even with my small sampling, this appears to be the case, as will be noted later. Additionally, it would be of interest to know whether or not such factors as the percentage of intermarried families, the year of ordination, and the campus of ordination affect the positions taken by rabbis. My sampling is too small to make sweeping conclusions concerning any of these factors.

It would not only be necessary to know the percentage of non-Jewish spouses in the congregation and the orientation of the policy, but also whether or not the policy was made to suit the membership of the congregation or the membership was attracted to the congregation because of the policy. In other words, is an inclusive and welcoming policy the result of a rabbi and/or congregation forming a policy to suit its membership or does it intend to encourage intermarried families to join the congregation? Or are both of these true? I would assume that an inclusive and welcoming policy will attract intermarried families, while an exclusive policy that is not perceived as welcoming might turn them away. However, even if this assumption is correct, I cannot assume that the policy was designed with this in mind. In many cases, policies are based on other things, such as halakhah and minhagim, and not on the needs and/or desires of the member families of the congregation.

In the grand scheme of things, when forming a policy concerning the role of non-Jews at B'nei Mitzvah services, identity and integrity come to the fore. Four identities are at issue at a Bar or Bat Mitzvah that each policy addresses in different ways: the rabbi's, the congregation's, the family's and the child's. I present them in no particular order, and as will be seen, different policies order them in different ways and do so for different reasons.

In this thesis, Jewish identity and its maintenance are discussed at length. What will become abundantly clear in the following pages, if it is not clear to the reader already, is that there is no set concept of Jewish identity among Reform Jews at all and that what may threaten one person's Jewish identity may be the very same thing that reinforces another's. One Reform Jew may perceive that an action carried out by a non-Jew in the context of worship threatens their own Jewish identity, while another Reform Jew may feel that the very same action reinforces theirs. One policy does not fit all by any means. The questions occurred to me, "How does one form a policy that does fit on a congregational level?" and "If one can form such a policy, how might it fit rabbis and congregations that do not believe in chosenness, commandedness, or obligation and who do not believe in Reform halakhah?" I smiled thinking about the Pandora's Box that I had just opened and began work on this thesis.

When I began working, it was my hope to accomplish four things: to examine the history of non-Jewish participation in Jewish worship and its relevance to modern issues, to determine what should be going on in Reform congregations according to the Reform responsa and traditional halakhah relating directly and indirectly to non-Jewish

participation in Jewish worship, to evaluate what is actually going on in those congregations, and finally, to determine the reasons behind differing practices.

In regard to the relevance of the history of non-Jewish participation, I discovered that for the most part, prior to the twentieth century, and even prior to World War II, such history is only marginally relevant in some cases and not relevant at all in others in determining what is going on in many Reform congregations today and/or why it is happening.

Thus, Part I of the thesis deals with the history of non-Jewish participation in the Reform Jewish context after World War II, beginning with the debate concerning the performance of intermarriage at the 1947 CCAR convention, a debate that presents the outlines of the arguments used by rabbis and congregations regarding the role of non-Jews in our midst to this day. Following this, the CCAR Responsa Committee responsa are discussed along with some reactions to them. Part II presents and analyzes numerous current rabbinical and congregational policies regarding this issue. Part III addresses some historical and halakhic topics that may be helpful in the formulation of policies regarding non-Jewish participation. Finally, Part IV of the thesis is a guide to help rabbis and congregations both form policies that are appropriate for their situation and beliefs and to help those congregations determine how their policies might compare with others held by members of the Reform movement.

I offer no opinion as to the "correct policy," but note advantages and faults of each policy regarding how non-Jews and intermarried families, in my view, might perceive them. I criticize the policies from two points of view, one desiring to include non-Jews as much as possible, promoting familial Jewish identity, and one desiring to

form a strong Jewish identity, promoting communal Jewish identity. As will be seen, some policies are able to do both fairly well. Others seem to do far better at one than the other. In the vast majority of cases, what they do and how they do it are appropriate to the kind of Reform Jews and Reform Judaism that they represent. In some cases, there may be tension between the views and goals of the policy and those held by the members of the congregation, a potentially problematic situation that will be discussed.

Section I:
The History of the Debate in Reform Judaism

The Discussions on Mixed Marriage at the 1909 and 1947 CCAR Conventions

In the wake of the Second World War and the Holocaust, the Central Conference of American Rabbis held its biennial meeting in at atmosphere still charged with shock and sadness at the loss of six million Jews in Europe. There was a tremendous amount of anxiety among those present at the convention concerning the continued survival of Judaism and of the Jewish people in the wake of the worst catastrophe ever to befall them. At the convention, a proposal was made to strengthen the current official position of the CCAR in relation to officiation at intermarriages, one passed at the 1909 CCAR convention.

In 1909, Rabbi Samuel Schulman had proposed a resolution saying that "a rabbi ought not to officiate at mixed marriages" on the grounds that such marriages are prohibited by Jewish law and would contribute to the disintegration of the Jewish religion.[3] This resolution was toned down by the Committee on Resolutions, and what was presented to the convention of 1909 and ultimately passed by a vote of 42 to 2 was the following, "The Central Conference of American Rabbis declares that mixed marriages are contrary to the tradition of the Jewish religion and should therefore be discouraged by the American Rabbinate."[4]

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[3] CCAR Yearbook 1909, p. 174.
[4] CCAR Yearbook 1909, p. 184.

Perhaps the deciding factor in favor of the victorious resolution was the statement made by Rabbi Hyman G. Enelow, the Chairman of the Committee on Resolutions, that made the change from "ought not" to "discouraged." He argued:

If we approve of this resolution [the original wording offered by Rabbi Schulman] we do lay down a dogma.... It means... that such a marriage contracted by two people becomes illegitimate from the point of view of the Jewish religion. That is the way I interpret a dogma.... This is the reason we changed the original resolution. We do not want to say mixed marriage is prohibited. We want to meet on the common ground where we all stand together, that is, mixed marriages are contrary to the traditions of Judaism and therefore we do not encourage them. That satisfies the gentleman who believes he ought to decide against such marriages, and satisfies the rabbis who from time to time are called on to officiate at mixed marriages.[5]

At the 1947 convention, numerous rabbis spoke for and against strengthening the 1909 resolution. Rabbis Julian Morgenstern and W. Gunther Plaut were among the more notable, not only because of their stature, but because the positions that they represented at the 1947 convention, for and against the performance of intermarriages by Reform rabbis in certain circumstances, still largely define the positions taken by rabbis today.

Rabbi Julian Morgenstern spoke in opposition to the new resolution, in favor of allowing rabbis to perform mixed marriages for practical reasons. He began his statement by looking at Jewish history, particularly ancient Jewish history prior to Ezra and Nehemiah when intermarriage was "a normal, a proper, and a regularly practiced institution."[6] The actions taken against intermarriage at that time, Rabbi Morgenstern describes as "an expression of the most extreme particularism which ever expressed itself in Jewish history." He continues by connecting that action with the current proposal: " I have the inescapable feeling that this morning's manifest desire to strengthen and

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[5] CCAR Yearbook 1909 pp. 183-184.
[6] CCAR Yearbook 1947 p. 177.

intensify the resolution of 1909 is the expression of a renewed extreme tendency towards particularism in Judaism."

Particularism here should be seen as an in-turning, a philosophy in which Judaism would cease from its outward focus, cease from the philosophy of the "Mission of Israel" to the nations of the world, and instead turn its focus to itself. Furthermore, particularism involves strengthening distinctions between Jews and non-Jews, in this case specifically in relation to marital relationships, but in a larger context particularism, as I will use the term, applies to all rules, or absence thereof, that by their nature serve to clarify and/or strengthen differences between Jews and non-Jews. The opposing point of view is generally termed "universalism."

Universalism, as the term has been used in classical Reform Judaism, is the philosophy that Judaism is the root religion of all Western religions but also the true religion of all religions, which ultimately will be the universal religion. We see this philosophy best exemplified in the paraphrase of the second paragraph of Aleynu, "the adoration," in classical Reform prayerbooks, "May the time not be distant, O God...." In a larger context, universalism, as I will use the term, applies to all rules, or absence thereof, which by their nature serve to blur or abolish distinctions between Jews and non-Jews.

Rabbi Morgenstern felt that the kind of particularism that was being expressed at the 1947 CCAR Convention was "an expression of a mood of despair and a reaction in Judaism today."[7] For Morgenstern, the issue was "an exceedingly practical issue, not one of theory." The question was not what would be the best policy if everything were ideal, but "What is the best thing for us to do at this moment for Judaism and for the Jewish

[7] Page 178.

people?" What would be best for the Jewish people at this time in the wake of the horrific events in Europe? Morgenstern, noting that he himself had not performed an intermarriage in his 45 years in the rabbinate, arguing that in order "not to drive these people [those seeking a rabbi to perform an intermarriage] away hopelessly from Judaism but to strive to hold them close to Judaism, and to try to recover for Judaism and for the Jewish people the offspring of as many of these mixed marriages as possible," noted that if he were starting out in the rabbinate and facing this problem realistically, he would perform an intermarriage under certain conditions.

Morgenstern takes the position that a rabbi must first address the needs of individual Jews and then those of Judaism. Practical considerations outweigh the theory. To put it very bluntly, you can't have Judaism without Jews. Therefore, a rabbi should perform an intermarriage if doing so will benefit the Jewish people by the creation of more Jews even if in the meantime it is in violation of "ism," the theory, of Judaism.

Thus Morgenstern concluded his argument at the convention with the following statement:

> Viewed in the light of history, viewed in the light of what is best for the Jewish people, viewed in the light of saving as much as we can for the Jewish people, it is my conviction that the resolution as amended goes much too far; that we will have said and will have done enough, and just enough, if we reaffirm the resolution of 1909. I would not favor merely allowing it to stand, but I would favor an active and positive reaffirmation of it, because, as I said at the start, we are living in a new age, and in a new age reaffirmation is, I believe, the thing that would be the part of wisdom for us.[8]

Rabbi W. Gunther Plaut, co-editor of Teshuvot for the Nineties, the collection of responsa of the CCAR Responsa Committee published in 1997, spoke some fifty years earlier at the CCAR Convention of 1947 against rabbinic offication at intermarriages and

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[8] Page 179.

for the strengthening of the 1909 CCAR resolution discouraging rabbis from performing them:

> I used to be among those who made exceptions, but ever since I came back from the war, I have come to look at our people in a different light and I have changed my mind. We are in an age which calls for the strengthening of those forces which make for a policy for survival for our people. I am not ashamed to stand on that particularistic platform.... We are taking a step forward when we as Reform rabbis declare that we have certain standards and that liberalism is not identical with lawlessness and that reform is not identical with expediency.[9]

The war, specifically the Holocaust, changed Rabbi Plaut's mind. Jews were killed regardless of their individual practices as Jews, but on account of their ancestry's identification with the Jewish religion, with the Jewish "race." Plaut's position seems to have shifted from before the war when he placed the needs of individual Jews first, to after the war when he put the requirements of Judaism above the needs of the individual Jew. His goal in doing this was precisely the same goal that Morgenstern had in reaching the opposite decision, namely the continued survival of the Jewish people.

Immediately following Rabbi Plaut's statement, Rabbi Bernard Heller spoke out saying, "I can be a liberal and progressive Jew and retain all of the observances provided I do so not because it is merely a blind dictate but because it has meaning and survival value."[10] In both Rabbi Morgenstern's and Rabbi Plaut's statements, survival value is of vital importance, but it is the dispute concerning meaning that ultimately determines with which side of the argument people agree. Those who agree with Rabbi Morgenstern will be those who do not find meaning in the traditional view opposing intermarriage and for the purposes of this argument, will also probably not find meaning in keeping many traditional observances and rules or at least do not agree with the traditional meanings of

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[9] Pages 180-181.
[10] Page 181.

those practices. Those who will agree with Rabbi Plaut will be those who agree with the traditional meanings of the practices and, even more so, are those who believe that there is meaning in keeping traditional practices.

Ultimately, at the 1947 convention, the proposal to strengthen the 1909 resolution failed. What is relevant for the purposes of this paper is that the same issues that were present at the 1947 CCAR Convention are still important today. When we look at the responsa and various rabbinic and congregational policies, we will note that the positions taken by Rabbis Morgenstern and Plaut in 1947 are still well represented in the rabbinate today. Rabbi Plaut's position at that time concerning a desire for particularism is still professed by him today, as will be seen in the responsum in Teshuvot for the Nineties, a discussion of which follows.

Teshuvot for the Nineties

The question posed to the CCAR Responsa Committee was as follows:[11]

> What are the traditional and Reform positions on the participation of non-Jews in synagogue services? We are especially interested in the area of ritual and prayer leadership. (Question submitted by the CCAR Committee on Reform Jewish Practice).

The answer given by the Committee is based on a number of assumptions which it does not appear that all Reform rabbis and congregations hold and may not represent the assumptions held by those rabbis and congregations wishing to use this thesis as a guide for the formation of policy.[12] I will attempt to highlight the assumptions made in this responsum as I explain the Committee's answer.

The Committee begins the responsum with an introduction noting the increasing mixed marriage rate, particularly in the past quarter-century. In this introduction several important assumptions are made.

Assumption 1: "When such couples, often with their children, wish to find a synagogue where they can worship and enroll their offspring for a Jewish education, they will most likely turn to Reform congregations, which are sure to welcome and accommodate them."[13]

Is this in fact the case? Are all Reform congregations "sure" to (a) "welcome" them and (b) "accommodate" them? How do we demonstrate that they are "welcome"? Is it not the case that just how and if we "accommodate" them is in question? We will see

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[11] W. Gunther Plaut and Mark Washofsky. Teshuvot for the Nineties (New York: CCAR, 1997), pp. 55ff.
[12] The Committee's answer was based on a study paper prepared by Rabbi Joan Friedman.
[13] Page 55.

later on that it is not necessarily the case that all Reform congregations are as welcoming to non-Jews to the same degree and some may even be considered fairly non-welcoming.

We must also ask the question, "Are there other options to which couples may turn?" Humanist congregations, for example? Or even worse, must we consider the possibility that such families, if they feel themselves to be rejected by mainstream Judaism, might seek "a synagogue where they can worship and enroll their offspring for a Jewish education" in a pseudo-Jewish environment such as a Messianic Congregation, thus removing their children from our sphere of influence? Might they even go to a Unitarian church for their spiritual needs and choose to educate their children Jewishly on their own? Should we be concerned about these possibilities? Or should we simply write off families who might make these decisions as not being Jewish families?

Assumption 2: "Rabbis are put under pressure to make the widest possible accommodation to the non-Jewish partners, in order to give them a role in the service."[14]

Are all rabbis only pressured to make concessions or are some instead pressured to limit concessions as much as possible? Is it not the case that forces within and outside of the congregational community put pressure upon rabbis from both sides? Pro-accommodation and anti-accommodation? We will see examples of policies later on in this thesis that seem to show that sometimes rabbis are pressured to limit concessions.

[14] Page 56.

The Jewish Tradition as cited by the Responsa Committee

The Jewish tradition does not have a great deal to say about non-Jewish participation in Jewish worship services because this question, "is not one that would easily have arisen before the modern period."[15] The Committee notes that, "when the Temple still stood in Jerusalem, non-Israelites were permitted limited access to it and were also allowed to make offerings, including sacrifices."[16] It also notes that, "These sacrifices, however, unlike the public offerings of the Jewish community, were entirely voluntary."[17]

Issues concerning the obligations of Jews that the Jewish tradition does not place upon non-Jews ultimately will form the basis of much of the halakhic discussions concerning the roles that Jews must play in worship services and roles that non-Jews must not play. In congregations and for rabbis holding the assumption that Jews are commanded, m'tzuvim, and obligated, m'chuyavim, to the performance of certain rituals and the recitation of certain blessings, this responsum offers suggestions regarding the role of non-Jews in Jewish worship. For those rabbis who do not hold these significant assumptions, other rationales governing the acceptability or non-acceptability of non-Jewish performance of rituals and/or recitation of prayers will come into play. Some help in relation to this perspective will be offered later on in this work.

The Committee notes that, "the only period in which there were significant numbers of non-Jews regularly attending synagogues was the Roman period- when

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[15] Page 57.
[16] Ibid. Cited by the Committee as sources are B. Menachot 73b; Yad, Ma'aseh Hakorbanot 3:2-3; and Encyclopedia Judaica 15:979, "Temple".
[17] Ibid.

Judaism was fairly widespread in the Empire.[18]" A vital assumption is made that "It is therefore significant that this question did not arise at that time, which was the very period during which the laws governing Jewish public worship were formalized, including laws concerning participation in public worship."[19] Based on this assumption, the Committee makes a second vital assumption: "In this instance it would appear reasonable to infer that the question never arose because even the possibility of active non-Jewish participation was never admitted, and not because it was taken for granted as permitted."

The fact that there are no laws concerning non-Jewish participation may be the case simply because the rabbis were not in charge of the majority of synagogues and determining their practices. One might use figural representations on mosaic tile flooring in synagogues of this period as an example. The rabbis of the Talmud seemingly would have objected, (though there is the evidence of graven images on sarcophagi of this period even at Beit Shearim in the Galilee), but could not prevent it because they had no control. It is likely, however, as the Committee states that beyond attendance at Jewish worship services and affirmation of what was said, non-Jewish leadership was not a possibility that would have been admitted. The issues of participation, however, and what differentiates leadership from participation are not so clear and dry.

Following this, the Committee makes yet a third assumption: "Just as in the Temple, participation in the form of offerings was open to all, but officiating was restricted to the Kohanim, similarly, participation in the form of attendance and reciting

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[18] The Committee cites the letters of Paul in Christian scriptures and Salo Baron, A Social and Religious History of the Jews, 2nd ed. (New York: Colombia University Press, 1962), vol. I, pp. 171ff.
[19] Ibid.

prayers in the synagogue was open to all, but leadership was still restricted, though according to different criteria."

It seems to me that the time period in question, when there were a large number of non-Jews attending Jewish worship gatherings, is not the time period "during which the laws governing Jewish public worship were formalized" as the Committee states, but rather the beginning of the time period when rules began to be formed dealing with various forms of Jewish public worship; these were not unified in form or application, much less "formalized" as broadly applicable. The Mishnah does not regulate worship in what has come to be the "synagogue" and even where it regulates public worship in general, we can not be certain whether or not those regulations were carried out in all or even many congregations, nor can we grant its contents with any certainty a date of origin prior to its redaction around 220 CE which allows for the excision or setting aside of regulations that might have existed prior to 70 CE or 135 CE and the formulation of new rules and regulations after the events of those traumatic years. Certainly, the Talmud, which was not redacted in its Palestinian version until after 400 CE may not be considered representative of the rules concerning Jewish public worship pre-70 CE, and the Babylonian version, redacted in the mid to late sixth century CE, even less so.

Moreover, the fact that only Kohanim were allowed to officiate in the Temple is factually problematic, there are examples of other Israelites/Jews doing so. There are some significant examples of others doing so. Levites played a role the extent of which we do not know. The Hasmoneans officiated in the Temple as High Priests, yet there are questions as to whether or not they were even Levites, much less Kohanim. The Oniad priesthood, members of whom claimed priestly lineage from Zadok, that had been in

power prior to the Hasmonean revolt went to Egypt, built their own Temple in Leontopolis and officiated there believing that those who officiated in the Temple in Jerusalem were themselves illegitimate. Thus, it is uncertain during what time period(s) the Responsa Committee's statement may apply to the practices in the Temple.

Beyond these concerns, we must note that the separation of roles in relation to sacrifices offered in the Temple and the restrictions regarding entering the sacred space inside the Temple do not automatically transfer to roles that might arise in leadership in communal gathering places, namely synagogues, which originally were not sacred spaces to the same extent or necessarily sacred spaces at all. This means that one may agree with the statement that "leadership was still restricted" with a good deal of confidence, however in all likelihood the extent of the restrictions did not approach the level of those of the Temple.

We know that some non-Jewish pagans who also worshipped Adonai may have even played leadership roles in synagogues, though not necessarily religious leadership roles. We have for example, a great deal of evidence that at least they often played a primary role in the financial life of congregations, as we will see later.

The biggest problem in trying to determine the history of non-Jewish participation by analyzing traditional Jewish sources is that, ultimately, the Rabbinic literature, particularly the Talmuds, may not be seen as providing a factual description of Jewish life prior to their redaction, nor, necessarily, at any point in time. The Talmuds' depictions of events are likely idealized representations and not factual descriptions. As has always been the case, theory and reality often differ.

It is also highly questionable whether or not the authors of the Talmuds had a broadly based knowledge of synagogue practices throughout the world at the time or instead only possessed knowledge of a few local synagogues. Lacking broadly based knowledge of the practices at many synagogues throughout the world one cannot argue that their contents reflect worldwide practices. In other words, the Talmuds may not be used as an authoritative source for Jewish practice around the globe even at the time of their redaction, much less hundreds of years before it. What the tradition tells us is relevant so far as one desires to follow the traditional sources. The question, "What are the traditional and Reform positions on the participation of non-Jews in synagogue services?" which was asked of the Committee did not require this type of historical analysis and in fact only undermines it. What is relevant to the question at hand are the theories and practices described in Jewish sources.

The Traditional Sources in Regard to Non-Jewish Participation

The Committee begins with the laws related to the Sh'liach Tzibbur, "Emissary of the Congregation" in Jewish Law, which they feel most appropriately deal with the question.

The chain of logic used by the Rabbis must be understood in order to understand the traditional beliefs concerning prayers and the rules governing their performance. As the Committee notes, "Recital of the Shema and its blessings, as well as the Amidah, is considered a Mitzvah."[20] "Mitzvah" is not to be defined as a good deed, something that people might do to be pious, but as a "commandment," and something that people are

[20] p. 57. The Committee cites M. Berachot, chapters 1 and 2, passim.

obligated to do. We are thus, introduced to two significant concepts in our discussion of non-Jewish participation in Jewish rituals from this point forward, "Mitzuvateinu," "Our Commandedness," and "Hit'chayvuteinu," "Our Obligation."

The Committee notes that, in addition to the Shema and Amidah, "there are individual prayers which, over the centuries, have become standard parts of the service, such as Aleinu."[21] As obligations, "they are by definition not obligated upon Gentiles, whom tradition regards as subject only to the seven Noahide laws." The distinction is that Jews are commanded to perform these parts of the service, while non-Jews are not commanded to do so. It may be said that the obvious question is, "So what? What difference does it make that non-Jews are not obligated, can they not still participate?" Yes, but in Traditional Judaism, there is a significant difference in the ability to lead the congregation in fulfilling obligations and commandments.

Thus, the Committee raises the question that they see before them, "But, though Gentiles are free to worship with Jews, may they *lead* the service, i.e., function as Sh'lichei Tzibbur even though they are not obligated to recite those prayers?" Later on, we will delve much deeper into the obvious question that arises here, namely, does the traditional concept of the Sh'liach Tzibbur necessarily apply to all Reform congregations and if not, how do we determine the difference between participation and leadership, and which parts of the service should be led/performed by Jews and not non-Jews. The Responsa Committee assumes that the concept of the Sh'liach Tzibbur does apply and therefore does not address this possibility.

The responsum continues with the laws relating to the functioning of the Sh'liach Tzibbur. At issue is the definition of the Sh'liach Tzibbur and what differentiates

[21] Ibid. Arukh HaShulchan 133:1.

participation from leadership in Traditional Judaism. The responsum provides some relevant background information, "Until as late as the tenth century there was a great deal of fluidity in the language of the liturgy (although not in its overall structure).[22] Written copies of the liturgy were rare, and many Jews, if not most, were not familiar enough with the prayers to be able to recite them by themselves."[23] This point assumes that there were fixed prayers that people had to say, something that developed later, and not that prayers were offered relating to the specific needs and desires of those praying, which most likely was the case earlier on. "The leader, therefore, read or chanted them [the fixed prayers] and the congregation had only to listen and respond Amen at the proper time, to fulfill their obligation." Later on we will address the issue of non-Jews potentially acting as Sh'lichei Tzibbur further when we deal with the issue of non-Jewish singers in the congregation.[24]

This obligation-based reasoning leads to the next step which we find in Mishnah Rosh Hashanah, "One who is not obligated in a matter [of ritual observance] cannot enable others to fulfill their obligation [in that matter]."[25] Since non-Jews are not obligated, they do not qualify.[26]

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[22] Historically this is a problematic assumption because we have very few texts to examine in this regard. The only surviving texts relevant to support or oppose this position are from the Cairo Geniza. The argument for uniformity in any way shape or form arises only because the Talmuds give a general outline. We may not assume that this outline was followed even in communities well versed in the contents of the Talmuds, much less that the contents of services resembled those described by the Talmud in communities out of their sphere of influence.

[23] The Committee bases its argument on a lack of extant copies. This is functionally an argument from silence.

[24] There are numerous reasons why congregations employ leaders for prayer. To list them all here would be impossible. Among those reasons are tone of voice, reading skill, the ability to be heard above a large group, a sweet singing voice and honor due the leader chosen or due his family. That one might fulfill his or her obligation by listening is only marginally relevant.

[25] M. Rosh Hashanah 3:8.

[26] As the Committee points out, this is the central point in the debate over whether or not women may be rabbis or cantors. See page 73, note 9.

This brings up an enormous question that some in our movement will ask. Are Reform Jews obligated to Mitzvot? Are they M'tzuvim, commanded? For those for whom the answer to either or both of those questions is in the negative, this responsum is not as helpful as it is to those who believe that Jews are commanded and that we may distinguish between those things in our tradition that are commanded of us and those things that are not. This distinction is highly present in the policies that will be discussed later on. The CCAR Responsa Committee, however, attempts to base its responsa in the Halakhah as much as possible and it its view, Jews are both commanded and obligated. Thus, these questions do not arise, here. I only state them to point out where some Reform Jews might find problems basing their practices on this responsum.

The Committee continues its responsum by noting that a significant consideration is the emphasis on communal worship in the Jewish tradition.[27] Due to the value placed upon communal worship, it is noted that "it has always been considered more meritorious to recite one's prayers with others rather than alone." The Committee quotes a passage from the Babylonian Talmud, Berakhot 8a, which is of vital importance, "Said the Blessed Holy One, 'Everyone who engages in Torah and in the practice of deeds of loving kindness and who prays with the community- I consider such persons as if they had redeemed Me and My children from among the nations."[28] Interestingly, one could make a drash on this particular statement that would argue in favor of non-Jewish participation simply by including non-Jews in "everyone," though in doing so it would be necessary to conclude as well that "the nations" represent those who would do Jews harm. That is, however, not the traditional view of the statement, which is taken to refer

[27] Page 58.
[28] Page 73, note 10.

to Jews alone with the significant word being "community." "Community" is taken to indicate "public."

Next the Committee notes the tradition that D'varim Sh'bikdushah, matters involving a high degree of holiness, may only be recited in public.[29] Public is traditionally defined by the concept of Minyan, a minimum of 10 adult male Jews.[30]

Now we apply this reasoning to Psalm 82:1, "God stands in the divine edah," with "Edah" equated with "Minyan," with the conclusion that wherever a Minyan is present, God is present. The Committee notes that:

> The constitution of a Minyan for worship, therefore, is a reaffirmation of the relationship between God and Israel. Within the Minyan, Israel collectively expresses its relationship with God, and the members of the Minyan reaffirm their membership in the covenant community. Minyan thus defines a Jewish community in a spiritual sense, as opposed to an organizational or institutional sense.[31]

This all leads the Committee to the following conclusions:

1. When this community gathers for communal prayer, it must be led by one who is a "full member of the community", which is defined by the Committee as someone who is obligated to participate in fixed prayer.[32]
2. This is restricted to free adult Jewish males, upon whom tradition places the obligation for public worship and restricts the function of Sh'liach Tzibbur.

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[29] B. Berakhot 21b; B. Megillah 23b; and Shulchan Arukh Orekh Chayim 55:1ff.
[30] We obtain our definition of a Minyan from a midrash found in Bavli Berakhot 21b and Megillah 23b in which the word Edah, "community," in Numbers 16:21 is interpreted in light of its use in Numbers 14:26. In Numbers, 14:26, we find the following statement, "How long shall that wicked community [edah] keep muttering against me?" The wicked community is composed of the ten spies who brought back evil reports. Thus ten is an edah. Applying this to Numbers 16:21, "Separate yourselves from the midst of this community [edah]" meaning ten. Then a second midrash connects Numbers 16:21 now interpreted in light of Numbers 14:26 with Leviticus 22:32, "That I might be sanctified in the midst of the Children of Israel." The midrash tells us that we should equate Children of Israel with the Edah in Numbers 16:21 based on the use of the word "midst" and that therefore the community in Leviticus 22:32 must also be made up of ten.
[31] Page 59.
[32] Ibid.

Now the problem presents itself, "While we have no exact precedent in halachic tradition that would even respond to our she'elah, there are passages that *may* appear analogous."[33] This is indeed the problem facing rabbis and congregations today. Which passages we deem applicable and how we apply them are at issue.

The Responsa Committee first looks at the rule concerning the recitation of the Birkat HaMazon. In Mishnah Berakhot 8:8, we find the following statement: "One answers 'Amen' after a Jew who blesses, but one does not answer 'Amen' after a Samaritan [Kuti] who blesses, unless one hears the entire blessing."[34]

Here the question is "What is the reason behind this difference?" M. Berakhot does not expound upon this statement. For purposes of this study, it is of interest for us to consider the reasons for making such as distinction. One might argue that the difference is based solely upon ethnic background, that the issue here is based on position or status within the community, were it not for the last phrase of the quotation, "unless one hears the entire blessing." This rider seems to indicate that the issue concerning the rabbis is the content of the blessing and not the qualifications of the one reciting the blessing.

A Jew might be presumed to have said a blessing appropriate for Jews to say, whereas a Samaritan would not necessarily be presumed to have said an appropriate blessing. Therefore, a Jew should not simply say 'Amen' to the blessing offered by a Samaritan, unless he heard the blessing and deemed it appropriate.

The Responsum continues by distinguishing between types of non-Jews during the time before the redaction of the Mishnah, namely between Samaritans on the one

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[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid.

hand and other types of non-Jews who were pagan on the other.[35] During the Middle Ages, when Jews lived in Christian and Muslim lands, the Halakhah was reexamined and often modified.[36] Christians and Muslims were not seen as idolaters, but the rabbis during the Middle Ages continued to refer to them in the same terms that their predecessors used to refer to pagans: even calling them "Ov'dei Kochavim u'Mazalot," "worshippers of stars and constellations."[37] Rabbinic authorities have generally applied the mishnah cited above to non-Jews in general.[38]

R. Yonah Gerondi (c. 1200-1263) is cited as offering a particularly articulate statement:

> 'A Samaritan': The reason that if one hears only the mention of God, one is not to respond "Amen" is that perhaps the [Samaritan's] intent is [still] toward avodah zarah [idolatry]. But if one hears the entire blessing, then one should respond "Amen," since then it is proven that [the Samaritan's] intent was not toward avodah zarah when he said the blessing.
>
> And there are those who say that only with a Samaritan may one respond "Amen" after hearing the entire blessing, but not after any other foreigner, since it is certain that they are referring to false gods only; and now since [the rabbis] have decreed that Samaritans are to be considered like any other foreigners, even if one hears a blessing from their lips, one is not to respond. But it appears to my teacher, may God preserve and bless him, that one should respond even after a foreigner, if one has heard him recite the entire blessing. For since we then see that he is making the blessing in this matter in God's name, even though he does not really know God, but thinks that his false god is the Creator even so, since his intention was to praise God, and we hear the blessing from his mouth, we answer "Amen."...
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> R. Berechiah said, 'I answer "Amen" after anyone who blesses, because it is written, "You shall be blessed from all peoples.' [Deut. 7:14]. That is to say, he used to answer "Amen" to all the other nations, because the Holy One of Blessing is in the mouths of all nations. And even though they do not recognize him, since

[35] Page 60.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Page 73, note 17. The responsum cites Maimonides [Yad, Berakhot 1:13] as prohibiting responding to a Samaritan or an AKUM, under which he places all Gentiles, except Muslims [Yad, Ma'achalot Asurot 11:7 and Teshuvot HaRambam, ed. Freiman, no. 369]. He was less generous toward Christians [Avodah Zarah 9:4].

> their intent is to bless God's name, and we hear the entire blessing from their mouths, we answer "Amen" after them.

One issue of relevance to the study at hand in Rabbi Yonah's statement is the issue of intent. Rabbi Yonah's conclusion is that as long as the intent of the speaker was not toward avodah zarah, we should respond with "Amen," even if we know that he thinks that his false god is the Creator.

However, the responsum points out that there are notable exceptions. Rabbeinu Asher and his son, R. Jacob ben Asher, author of the Tur, state that it is permissible to respond 'Amen' after a nochri, a foreigner, as long as one heard God's name mentioned.[39] It is Rabbi Moshe Isserles in his commentary on the Shulchan Arukh who explicitly states that a Jew should not say "Amen" after any AKUM, meaning any non-Jew, even if the Jew hears the entire blessing. The Hafetz Hayim in his commentary to the Shulchan Arukh written around 1900 agrees with Rabbi Isserles on the grounds that while we do not assume that a non-Jew is referring to an idol or a false god it is only optional to respond "Amen" to the blessing of a non-Jew.[40] All of this said, however, the Responsa Committee concludes in a footnote that "If one analyzes all these and other references, one sees that while a wide range of attitudes toward the religiosity of non-Jews is expressed, the trend is mostly toward acceptance of a Jew responding 'Amen' to this kind of prayer."[41]

The Committee then turns the discussion in a different direction by noting that there is a fundamental difference between what to do after a non-Jew has recited a

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[39] Page 60 and page 74, note 18. Yonah is one of the commentators used in the standard edition of Alfasi's Halakhot.
[40] Page 73, note 17. Hafetz Hayim is Rabbi Israel Meir Kagan. The Hafetz Hayim's opinion concerning the option of a Jew to respond comes from Mishnah Berurah to Orekh Hayim 215:2.
[41] Page 73, note 17.

blessing and whether or not to allow the non-Jew to lead the blessing in the first place. In the Committee's opinion, statements from traditional sources concerning how we should respond to the blessing of a non-Jew are not relevant to the question concerning whether or not we should invite a non-Jew to lead the blessing. The Committee therefore argues that "this discussion can not serve our Teshuvah," namely the question of what are the traditional positions on the participation of non-Jews in synagogue services.[42]

While I agree that these are two separate issues, I do not believe that the question concerning our response to the prayer of a non-Jew versus that of a Jew is irrelevant, certainly not to those congregations seeking a more universalistic and inclusive stance. Rather, I would say that in the grand scheme of things it shows some acceptance of non-Jewish recitation of prayer as evidenced by our tradition, something extremely relevant and vital to the question asked. If one were reaching for any evidence from tradition that might support a lenient position, it seems possible to me that one could use this argument in support of it. That said, the tradition is clearly not referring to Jewish leadership of prayers, but only their recitation, and therefore is not direct support for non-Jewish leadership of prayers in the context of communal worship. That said question asked of the Committee was not a narrow one concerning the invitation of non-Jews to lead parts of services, but a general one concerning how the tradition deals with participation.

It appears that because the Committee does not agree with the conclusion it drew from the traditional Jewish sources concerning the acceptability of the recitation by a non-Jew of spontaneous prayers, as evidenced by the placement of that conclusion in a footnote rather than in the body of the text, that the significance of this conclusion is wholly disregarded. On page 62 of the Responsum, we find the Committee attempting to

[42] Page 61.

undermine its own conclusion as regards prayers said by non-Jews, that "the trend is mostly toward acceptance," as follows:

> The logical impossibility of using these cases as a precedent in such situations is highlighted by a passage in the Mishnah Berurah.[43] There we find that the logic of the above-noted permission to respond "Amen" applies even when the blessing has been spoken by an apostate Jew (assuming that his intent, too, is toward the Creator). Clearly, such a ruling would never have been made le'chatchilah. In fact, the Arukh HaShulchan states specifically that none of this applies to a situation when a Gentile recites a fixed berachah, but only when he has simply declared the praise of God.[44]

In my view, in the case of the apostate Jew, one could easily argue that because the apostate is expected to have known the prayer, he would have been more likely to have recited it correctly rather than less likely. Furthermore, even if this were not true, one could argue that precisely because a blessing is fixed, the Jew responding "Amen" would be responding to his understanding of the fixed blessing and not necessarily responding to the leader at all, something that we often do in services when someone leading a prayer speaks incorrectly or with garbled Hebrew. Finally, however, we must turn back to the very passage cited by the Committee as being the most articulate statement on the issue, R. Yonah Gerondi's statement that "For since we see that he (the non-Jew) is making the blessing in this matter in God's name, even though he does not really know God, but thinks that his false god is the Creator even so, since his intention was to praise God, and we hear the blessing from his mouth, we answer, "Amen."[45]

Of some relevance here for the purposes of this thesis is the question of what to do about non-Jews who believe what Jews believe, but have not undergone formal

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[43] 15:12.
[44] Orekh Chayim 215:3.
[45] Pages 60-61.

conversion.[46] While particularistic policies have no problems with this issue, since such people are not Jews and that distinction prohibits them from recitation of these blessings, universalistic policies which allow each individual in a family the right to determine what they may or may not say in good conscience will often allow non-Jews to recite the particularistic blessings if they themselves agree with them. The statement, "thinks that his false god is the Creator even so," may be summarized as follows, "can recite the words while maintaining his/her integrity." Again, I stress that our traditional sources are not speaking about fixed blessings, but spontaneous ones. Nonetheless, one policies have left the halakhic framework it may be necessary to seek out reasons to either include or exclude certain types of non-Jewish vocal participation in services including various types of blessings and the arguments found above may be of relevance to that discussion.

The responsum continues with a discussion of the Torah service. The Committee notes that this is something which requires a Minyan.[47] However, it does not necessarily follow that only the members of the Minyan, meaning adult free males, could participate in the actual reading of the Torah, and a baraita states:

> All may come up as part of the seven [Torah readers on Shabbat morning], even a minor or a woman; but our Sages say that a woman should not read for the sake of the honor of the congregation.[48]

Notably the Reform Jewish tradition clearly disagrees with the sentiment that a woman should not read "for the sake of the honor of the congregation." That said, does this apply to non-Jews? Or are there congregations wherein even that restriction might not apply "for the sake of the honor of the congregation?"

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[46] See Larry Hoffman, "Non-Jews in Jewish Life-Cycle Liturgy," in Defining the Role of the Non-Jew in the Synagogue" (UAHC, 1990), pp. 65-82, p. 70ff.
[47] Mishnah Megillah 4:3.
[48] Bavli Megillah 23a.

Ultimately the Responsa Committee's view of non-Jewish participation in traditional sources is summed up as follows:

> Halachic tradition considers participation in communal ritual as an outflow of obligation. The absence of obligation disqualifies a Jew from leading the congregation as a Sh'liach Tzibbur. By long standing practice, being called to the bimah for an aliyah partakes of the same principle.

The absence of obligation disqualifies a Jew, more so a non-Jew, from being a Sh'liach Tzibbur. However, one must question the sentiment of this in the Reform context. For those rabbis who do not believe that Jews themselves are M'tzuvim, "commanded," or M'chuyavim, "obligated," does this reasoning necessarily apply to prayer leadership in their congregations? Notably, it is by "long standing practice," by Minhag, not by law, that this traditionally applies to aliyot. This means, that this practice may vary from place to place and may have varied even in antiquity.

Reform Perspectives: The History of Reform Responsa

The Responsa Committee cites earlier Reform responsa to support its views. "In 1969, Rabbi Solomon Freehof was asked whether a non-Jewish stepfather of a bar mitzvah might receive an aliyah and recite Torah blessings. He suggested that the Jewish grandfather should do it instead."[49]

The Freehof responsum itself, in some contradiction, states:

> First of all, he can certainly be called to the Torah, since the Bible is sacred to Jews and Christians alike, but the question would be whether he can sincerely recite the blessings over the Torah. We should not require him to pronounce words which he does not believe and thus make of the blessing an insincere formality... We might perhaps write out a special blessing for him somewhat as follows: "Praised be Thou, Lord our God, King of the universe, Who has given this sacred law unto all his children that we may learn, observe, and serve Him in righteousness."[50]

In other words, Rabbi Freehof does not suggest that the grandfather say the Torah blessings at all. Rabbi Freehof, later on in the responsum, does suggest that the grandfather should be able to say the Barukh Shep'tarani blessing, a blessing understood to mean, "Now I am rid of the responsibility for this person's obedience to the law," which is traditionally said by the Jewish natural father at a Bar Mitzvah.[51]

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[49] p. 63. Solomon Freehof, "Gentile Stepfather at Bar Mitzvah," Current Reform Responsa (Cincinnati: HUC, 1969), no. 23, pp. 91-93.

[50] Freehof, page 91.

[51] Freehof, pages 92-93. See also Lawrence Hoffman, "Non-Jews and Jewish Life Cycle Liturgy," in Defining the Role of the Non-Jew in the Synagogue (UAHC, 1990), p. 67. Rabbi Hoffman expressly notes Rabbi Freehof's suggestion and comments on it extensively:

> In 1969, Rabbi Freehof was asked about a non-Jewish stepfather "who has adopted the child and been truly a father to the boy. It seems wrong to keep him from participating as a father in the Bar Mitzvah ceremony of the son. What may or may not a Christian stepfather do in the ceremony?" Freehof noted some ritual acts and words that a Christian can do or say in good conscience — such as being called to the Torah, which has sacred significance for Christians too, since "the Bible is sacred to Jews and Christians alike." But he distinguishes also a category of words and actions that Christians presumably cannot perform or recite without compromising themselves--such as saying the standard Torah benediction which affirms, "who has chosen us and given us Torah." Being neither a Jew-by-Birth, nor a Jew-by-Choice, "this stepfather cannot truthfully recite the blessing," Freehof concluded, so he suggested rewording the blessing with a more

The two blessings, namely, the Torah blessings and Barukh Sheptorani, are not necessarily connected and need not be performed by the same person. The issue that arises here is that in congregations where an alternate benediction is not acceptable, and in cases where the non-Jew in question does not affirm the content of the blessing, someone other than the stepfather should be called up to recite the blessing.[52]

In 1979, the Responsa Committee was asked, "To what extent may non-Jews participate in a Jewish public service?" The Committee responded to the question as follows:

> It would be appropriate to have that parent participate in some way in the service, but not in the same way as a Jewish parent. For example, he or she should not recite the traditional blessing over the Torah... (The Committee recommended that, instead, a special English prayer might be read by the Gentile).[53]

Notably, this would be in line with Rabbi Freehof's suggestion in the 1969 responsum that a non-Jew might read a reworded blessing. Thus, the 1979 Committee offers the conclusion that a "special English prayer might be read by the Gentile." It is of significance that neither the 1969 or 1979 rulings prohibit or even discourage a non-Jew from reciting a blessing over the Torah, but only from compromising their own beliefs if reciting the traditional blessing would do so. Unstated here is that it may also be the case that such would violate the community's beliefs as well. I say "may" only because there are congregations where the prevailing view is that the blessings have performative meaning alone.

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universalistic affirmation, such as "Praise be Thou who has given His sacred law unto a11 his [sic] children."

[52] See Hoffman, page 70, who notes that non-Jews may not necessarily disagree with the sentiment of the traditional blessings over the Torah.

[53] Page 64. Notably the same text as in the 1969 Freehof responsum.

In the 1979 responsum, the Committee notes, in regards to a non-Jew handling a Torah scroll or reading from it: "There was nothing improper about a non-Jew handling a Torah or reading from it; it is not subject to ritual uncleanliness (Ber. 22a; Yad, Hil. Sefer Torah X.8; Sh. A. Y. D. 282.9)."[54] The Committee also presents the contradictory statements concerning non-Jews studying Torah found in Baba Kama 38, "On the one hand we have the phrase that non-Jews who studied Torah deserve death, and on the other hand, an individual who studied in this fashion is considered equal to the High Priest. In the latter section, we hear of a Roman emperor who sent students to study Torah from the Rabbis."[55]

Later in the 1979 responsum, the Responsa Committee states that non-Jews, who fall into the category of "B'nei Noach," may participate in a public service in any of the following ways: "through anything that does not require a specific statement from them, i.e. standing silently; through recitation of special prayers added to the service at non-liturgical community-wide services, commemorations, and celebrations (Thanksgiving, etc...); and through recitation of prayers for special family occasions (Bar/Bat Mitzvah of children raised as Jews, at a wedding or funeral, etc.)."[56] The Committee adds that all such prayers should reflect the mood of the service and be "non-Christological" in nature.

In 1980, Rabbi Freehof was asked a question about whether or not a Gentile might bless the Shabbat candles or recite Kiddush and he answered in the negative.[57] In the 1984 responsum to the question, "May a Non-Jew Light the Shabbat Eve Candles?" we find the question in relation to the mother of a Bar/Bat Mitzvah. The Committee

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[54] "Participation of Non-Jews in a Jewish Public Service," ARR, no. 6, pp. 21-24, p. 22.
[55] ARR, p. 22.
[56] ARR, pp. 23-24.
[57] "Gentiles' part in the Sabbath Service," NRR, no. 7, pp. 33-36.

responds, "Though to say the blessing in a home is indicative of the home being a Jewish home, we can not apply this reasoning to the Friday evening service, nor to any segments of the service that use such phrases as "who sanctified us with His commandments."[58]

How did we move from a fairly inclusive point of view in 1969, allowing a non-Jew to read an alternative blessing, to a more exclusive view by the early 1980s, which does not seem to even consider this possibility? According to Rabbi Hoffman, Rabbi Freehof's perspective changed over the years. By 1980, Rabbi Freehof ruled that "it would be contrary to the spirit of tradition for a Gentile to perform such parts of the service [blessing the Shabbat candles or reciting the Kiddush] as constitute the special announcements of the Jewish-covenant Sabbath." Moreover, Rabbi Freehof went so far as to offer that "the simple human fact is that the Jewish Sabbath can have no sacred meaning to a Christian," since the Christian Church at one time publicly rejected the Sabbath and instead adopted Sunday as the Lord's Day.[59]

Rabbi Hoffman questions this conclusion. He notes that:

> Actually, the trend in Christianity lately is just the reverse: to take the Jewish Sabbath more seriously, as part of a Christian's total biblical heritage. That does not mean that Saturday has the same sanctity for a Christian as it does for a Jew. But it need not have "no sacred meaning at all." Besides, in the context of a Jewish community in which non-Jews have taken a stand as parents of Jewish children, surely it is unlikely that they have no feeling for the Sabbath at all. There is a certain presumption here to the effect that since they have not chosen to become Jewish, they must not yet have decided to affirm what Jews affirm. That may or may not be the case.[60]

Rabbi Hoffman continues his discussion by noting that conversion is often a lengthy process and that some people slowly become Jews over a very long time. This means that a non-Jew may not necessarily be compromising his or her beliefs in the

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[58] Jacob, W. "May a Non-Jew Light the Shabbat Eve Candles?" CARR, pp. 247-248, p. 248.
[59] Hoffman, page 69.
[60] Hoffman, page 70.

performance of rituals or recitation of prayers. Rabbi Hoffman continues by raising the same objection to the contention that certain phrases in the Jewish liturgy are always problematic for non-Jews to say, such as "who has chosen us..." or "commanded us...."[61]

Hoffman raises several issues that are directly relevant to the responsum at hand:

> Perhaps some non-Jews can speak of being "chosen" too; certainly they ought theoretically to be able to say they are "commanded." Not for nothing have they decided to raise their children as Jews, to guarantee their Jewish education, and to nurture their Jewish souls. While some may do this out of convenience or out of respect for their Jewish spouse, others may well do it out of religious conviction, arising from the way they see themselves standing before God.[62]

So the question before us is "Who should be making the decision as to what would be compromising the speaker's religious views? The Rabbi/Congregational Policy or the potential speaker?" And this is particularly important in light of the fact that the person is question, if we are talking about a non-Jewish parent, has decided to raise their child as a Jew. Rabbi Hoffman continues by questioning Rabbi Freehof's assertions concerning a non-Jew's lack of belief concerning the Jewish Sabbath:

> Moreover, why can't a Christian "announce the coming of the Jewish Sabbath to a Jewish congregation," and is that, in fact, the only thing that the Kiddush and the candle-lighting blessing do? For a long time now, some of our congregations have hired non-Jewish singers as choir members and soloists, and until 1985, no one objected when they sang the words in question. The difference was, of course, that a non-Jewish parent is assumed actually to be praying with us, while a hired soloist prays for us. But in so far as we see the reader merely announcing Shabbat's arrival, why should non-Jewish parents who have freely demonstrated at least some affinity for Judaism in their decision to bring their children to this Bar/Bat Mitzvah point in their lives be more disadvantaged than a soloist who comes here only as a matter of professional interest? If our concern is announcing Shabbat, then, we have the precedent of the soloists, and if our concern is the theological content of prayers that affirm the speaker is "one of us," we should at least ask the parents whom we encounter in this role what they think -- not what we think -- they can affirm in good conscience, since, perhaps, despite their

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[61] Hoffman, page 71.
[62] Ibid.

> decision not (or not yet) to undergo the formal conversion ritual, they are far enough along the road to Jewish identity that they can make the particular affirmation that the prayer in question contains.[63]

Here we face another issue. The Responsa Committee does not believe that non-Jews should be leading the singing in the congregation and therefore this objection raised by Rabbi Hoffman would be null and void. What should happen is that Jews should be leading the singing of the blessings. The problem raised by Rabbi Hoffman, however, is that what should be happening in our congregations is not what is happening or what has been happening. In relation to the latter, namely what is happening and what has been happening, Rabbi Hoffman is correct in his sentiment that it would be extremely awkward and problematic for a rabbi to argue that it is acceptable for a non-Jewish soloist to lead the congregation in prayer, but not for the parent of the B'nei Mitzvah to do so.

Rabbi Ted Riter points out in his rabbinical thesis that in 1983, the Responsa Committee was "seriously divided on the role a non-Jewish parent could/should play in a child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah."[64] "The majority," Rabbi Riter notes, "sought complete or partial exclusion of the non-Jewish parent." However, "there was a dissenting voice in favor of full inclusions with some prayer modifications." Notably, this dissenting voice represents the view held by Rabbi Freehof in 1969, as noted by Rabbi Hoffman. However, where once adapting the service to meet the needs of non-Jewish inclusion was the priority, now as Rabbi Riter notes, "The consensus holds that it is inappropriate for a

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[63] Ibid.

[64] Theodore Riter, "Role of the Non-Jew in Reform Synagogues" (Rabbinical Thesis HUC-JIR, Cincinnati, 1997), page 117.

non-Jewish parent to lead major segments of the service, recite Berakhot, or make statements that proclaim "we" or "us"- in reference to the Jewish people."[65]

Rabbi Hoffman notes some important differences that led to the change in perspective from 1969 to 1983:

> Whereas Freehof's initial responsum of 1969 was inclusive in intent, trying to find ways in which a non-Jewish stepfather might participate without moral compromise in his son's service of Bar Mitzvah, here [in the 1983 ruling] both the questioner and respondents take an exclusive perspective, seeking the limits to what such parents may do. Moreover, whereas Freehof's early responsum addressed the issue as a conflict for the Christian parent — what might the stepfather say without personally perjuring himself by asserting a doctrine of Jewish faith with which he could not agree — the Committee of 1983 looked at the issue more from the perspective of the congregation at prayer, and the integrity of the service of worship which they, as Jews, were attending.... Freehof's question of his texts was how the service could legitimately be changed so as to allow a non-Jew to participate without personal anguish. The 1983 Committee's question to the same Jewish texts was how to limit such participation, so as to protect the legitimate interests of Jewish tradition and the Jewish community celebrating it in its Shabbat liturgy.[66]

In 1969, the Responsa Committee was asked to be inclusive and responded to the questions how can we include this stepfather and more specifically how can we give him an aliyah. In 1983, this entire perspective had changed. No longer was the Committee interested in allowing participation and in determining how to do this responsibly, but instead the Committee was now interested in limiting such participation. The Committee altered its desire from seeking to include non-Jewish parents to seeking to exclude them.

In line with this reasoning, Rabbi Walter Jacob, then head of the Responsa Committee, wrote in 1985 in regards to non-Jewish soloists and choirs that it is acceptable to have them if they sing "with" the congregation or perform solo pieces that are not "essential elements of the service," but that efforts should be made to organize a

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[65] Ibid. Jacob, "Non-Jewish Participation in a Bar/Bat Mitzvah," CARR #160.
[66] Hoffman, page 69.

Jewish choir because the "Kavanah" that they will have will be more important that their lack of ability to sing as well as the non-Jewish soloists and choirs.[67] In 1994, the Responsa Committee went further, referring to the presence of non-Jewish soloists and choirs in Reform synagogues as follows: "We note this fact with regret and consider it an anachronism for our time, and in retrospect, an historical error."[68]

In other words, the 1980s and 1990s witnessed a dramatic move toward particularism and exclusivity on the part of the Responsa Committee and a move away from the universalism and inclusivity expressed by Rabbi Freehof in 1969. Not only is the suggestion offered by the Committee now not to amend the text and allow the non-Jewish parent to recite a blessing over (or in proximity to) the Torah, but to not allow the non-Jewish parent any part in leading any blessing. Not only that, but they decided that non-Jewish professionals should not be allowed to lead blessings either. In both cases, the Committee decided that non-Jews would be acting as Sh'lichei Tzibbur and therefore must be members of the "covenant community." The Committee concludes as regards Sh'lichei Tzibbur and obligation that:

> Liberal Judaism has always seen itself as part of the total flow of historic Jewish life, and its Responsa Committees have tried to maintain this connection. Therefore, the fact that certain terms and categories of Jewish tradition are no longer familiar to most Reform Jews is a regrettable fact but in itself not decisive for the decisions we reach... Thus such categories as sheliach tzibbur or chiyuv (obligation) are not on the tongues of most of our members, but they belong to the underpinnings of the very traditions upon which our movement is founded.[69]

Several points must be made here. First, while Liberal Judaism has indeed seen itself as "part of the total flow of historic Jewish life," it sees itself as at least to some degree divergent from it. Second, while it is true that categories of Jewish tradition that

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[67] Ibid. Jacob, "Non-Jewish Voices in Congregational Choir," CARR #132.
[68] See Teshuvot page 66.
[69] page 65.

are no longer familiar to modern Jews may be useful in helping us make decisions today, it is also true that the reason that some of these categories are not familiar is that they are not seen as applicable to modern Jews. Not all Reform Jews would agree with the concept of Chiyuv, "obligation," for example. Some would argue that we as Reform Jews, unlike Orthodox Jews, are free to choose whether or not to follow the Torah and the Halakhah. They would argue that we are not in any way obligated. Certainly Reform Jews throughout the years have not felt obligated to observe Kashrut, nor to many other "mitzvot" as found in the Torah and rabbinic law codes.

Finally, is it in fact the case that Reform Jews believe that such obligations "belong to the underpinnings of the very traditions upon which our movement is founded?" I would contend that more Reform Jews would argue that it is precisely the lack of such obligations that form the basis of Reform Judaism.

The Committee acknowledges the daunting problem that faces American Judaism, "We live in a time of unprecedented religious freedom-a freedom that not only allows Jews to exercise their religion without restraint, but also to choose the level on which they want to be Jewish. The lure of a secular, non-particularistic, leveling environment is for many Jews irresistible."[70] They face a Jewish population that is free to choose; i.e. not "obligated," and one that often strives to be universal and not particularistic.

All of this stems from one over-riding concern, "The increasing incidence of mixed marriages adds to the undeniable fact that Jewish identity is being seriously eroded." The Committee believes that Jewish survival is being threatened by assimilation, syncretism, and a general blurring of boundaries. Universalism and inclusivism then may be seen as the enemy in action.

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[70] Page 65.

Like Rabbi Gunther Plaut at the 1947 CCAR Convention, the Responsa Committee, now headed by Rabbi Plaut, argues for particularism and against universalism. "We see it as our task to stem the tide of Hefkerut, and to cast the growth and development of our movement into a framework of continuity rather than sectarian separation. If each Jew makes Shabbes for him/herself, in the end no one will make Shabbes at all."[71] Thus, "Shabbes" (and the choice of Ashkenazi pronunciation is clearly of importance in suggesting a connection to tradition), includes the traditional framework for participation in Shabbat morning services.

The Sh'liach Tzibbur in Reform Jewish Life

The Committee continues the responsum by describing the role of the Sh'liach Tzibbur in Reform Judaism as they see it: "When Jews assemble for prayer and ask a rabbi or cantor to lead them, they do this in the time-honored way of placing Sh'lichei Tzibbur into positions of special responsibility. They represent the community and guide it in carrying out its religious obligations."

Several assumptions are made here that need be noted: 1) The community has religious obligations; 2) that Rabbis and Cantors are asked to lead them and are not required to do so for there to be a service; and 3) that the Rabbi and Cantor are there to assist the people in carrying out obligations and not to serve some other purpose freely elected by the congregation in attendance.

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[71] Ibid.

Non-Jewish Choristers and Soloists

A major problem confronts the Responsa Committee, namely the "fact that in many congregations (and in earlier days, in nearly all of them) non-Jewish choristers and soloists have occupied positions which seemed to make them into Sh'lichei Tzibbur."[72] The issue seems to be the question of whether or not these people appear to be "Sh'lichei Tzibbur." It seems to me that it is quite possible that these congregations do not see these individuals as anything but singers and do not give them the authority suggested by the term "Sh'lichei Tzibbur." However, as mentioned earlier, the Responsa Committee reacts vehemently against them. Referring to the presence of non-Jews hired as professional singers by congregations, the Committee states, "We note this fact with regret and consider it an anachronism for our time and, in retrospect, an historical error."

The Committee continues by arguing that there was at least a vestige of embarrassment for congregations to have such singers:

> How else would we explain the strange dichotomy: that the same choristers in their own Christian congregations sang as proud members of the congregation and guided it in worship, and could not only be heard but also be seen doing it. However, in Reform synagogues these same singers were carefully hidden away in choir lofts or behind screens, as if the purpose was to produce beautiful music which came from unidentified, unseen persons. One listened, so to speak, to the music and not to those who made it.[73]

There is clearly a difference between a vested Cantor and a Christian soloist, beyond simply the title by which they are called. I doubt if any congregations would prefer to have a non-Jewish soloist to a vested Cantor, though there may be some. The question is whether or not equal authority is given to the Christian soloist. I do not believe that that is the case. As the Responsum states, "Their voices provided lovely

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[72] Page 66.
[73] Ibid.

music- but they, as persons, were never considered representatives of those present."[74] The problem is that this statement undermines the point that the Committee has been trying to make. If these people were not and are not considered "representatives" of the people present, they were not and are not considered Sh'lichei Tzibbur by the people present either. Significantly then, their role is understood by all present to be something other than Sh'lichei Tzibbur. The Committee offers what seems to be the logical solution, "They enhanced the aesthetic environment, but they were not part of the congregation who prayed and, most important, they were not expected to pray with it. They were there to sing, and nothing else."

The conclusion offered, that "Sh'lichei Tzibbur must be members of the covenant community and they can not yield this responsibility to others," seems to be irrelevant after having just proven that these non-Jewish singers are not considered Sh'lichei Tzibbur.[75] In this light we must ask whether or not a non-Jew parent reciting a Torah benediction or a candle blessing is perceived to be a Sh'liach Tzibbur in these congregations either?

The question then becomes, in regard to singers, what is the problem with having people sing who are not considered by anyone present to be Sh'lichei Tzibbur and therefore need not fill that role? Additionally, what is the problem having a non-Jewish parent recite a blessing if they are not considered to be a Sh'liach Tzibbur? In my experience at The Valley Temple in Cincinnati where we often have a non-Jewish soloist, it is clear that the Rabbi, at all times, and not the soloist, at any time, is the Sh'liach

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[74] Ibid.
[75] Page 67.

Tzibbur. The soloist is musician there to enhance the aesthetic environment of the service, not a religious leader or representative of the community at prayer.

The Torah Reading and Ritual

The Sh'liach Tzibbur is of vital importance here as well. The Committee begins, "The possibility of a non-Jew participating in the public Torah reading is simply beyond the pale of Tradition's imagination."[76] If the question being answered by the Committee is indeed, "What are the traditional and Reform positions on the participation of non-Jews in synagogue services?" It would seem that this answer would be enough. However, the Committee seems to have desired to justify that position to congregations and rabbis that allow for some participation by non-Jews. Thus, they write, "Can we extrapolate from this to find an answer to our concerns?" What concerns? The problem of non-Jewish participation in Torah reading and ritual in some congregations.

"The answer," we are told, "lies in the traditional acknowledgement that the public reading of Torah is an essential community act... Participation in the Torah reading is one of the most potent symbols of inclusion in the Jewish community. It was precisely for that reason that Jewish women had to fight twenty years ago not only for the right to be called to the Torah and to read from it, but even to carry or even touch the scroll. The same emotional response is behind the new tradition of passing the Torah from family member to family member to the bar or bat mitzvah. Access to the Torah symbolizes full inclusion in the Jewish community. That is precisely why bar/bat mitzvah is celebrated the way it is."

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[76] Ibid.

The first question that must be raised is, is it true that "The same emotional response" lies behind the passing of the Torah? My perception of that ritual is not that it is one of connecting to the Torah, but of symbolically passing the Jewish tradition on l'dor va'dor, from generation to generation. Second, is it necessarily true that "access to the Torah symbolizes full inclusion in the Jewish community" for every community? If this much is true, what qualifies as access to the Torah? Does "access" refer to carrying and touching the scroll, to receiving an aliyah and/or reading from the scroll itself, or only to reading from the scroll itself? Is there a hierarchy of "access?" Some congregations might even include opening the ark in this category and restrict such access to Jews alone. Finally, is this "precisely why bar/bat mitzvah is celebrated in the way it is?" At a traditional bar/bat mitzvah, one could easily argue this. The student's bar/bat mitzvah consists of an aliyah to the Torah. This act does symbolize "full inclusion in the Jewish community," including responsibility for the commandments. However, is this necessarily the case in a Reform context? As we will see later on, the answer to this question is not simple.

The Committee continues, "For this reason (that the act represents full inclusion in the Jewish community) a non-Jew should not be called to the Torah for an aliyah."[77] Yet there is disagreement over whether or not this is a good or bad thing for purposes of outreach and it is disputed in our own Reform Responsa, namely Freehof's 1969 responsum, "Gentile Stepfather Called to Torah."[78]

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[77] Ibid.
[78] Solomon Freehof, "Gentile Stepfather at Bar Mitzvah," CRR, no. 23, pp. 91-93.

The Community

> The reading of the Torah requires the presence of a community, because it is one of the central acts by which the community affirms its reason for existence, i.e., the covenant whose words are contained within the scroll. To be called to the Torah is to take one's position in the chain of privilege and responsibility by which the Jewish community has perpetuated itself.[79]

There are assumptions here that are vital to grasp in order to fully understand the basis of the Responsa Committee's position which may not necessarily represent the beliefs of all rabbis and congregations in the Reform movement. First of all, we find the assumption that the Torah reading is one of the central acts by which the community affirms its reason for existence," namely "the covenant whose words are contained within the scroll."

Many rabbis would not necessarily agree that the Torah is in fact a "covenant" that binds Jews to God, nor view it as full of Mitzvot, "commandments," to which Jews are M'chuyavim, "obligated." It would be minimally questionable, for these rabbis to say that this covenant is the "reason for existence" of the Jewish community. They would argue for some other reason for existence, which will be discussed later.

The Committee notes, "In many congregations the pressure to grant non-Jews aliyot comes in connection with the celebration of bar/bat mitzvah. The reasons for this may be found in the ways our movement has both deliberately and unintentionally given the public Torah reading an altogether different context and meaning than the one just outlined."[80] The problem for the Committee is twofold. The Committee both disagrees with the current context and meaning behind the Torah ritual and with the practices in congregations wherein they are present. The Committee's arguments against current

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[79] Pages 67-68.
[80] P. 68

practices are not based on the current context and meaning given the Torah ritual and the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, but on their traditional context and meaning. This requires, "reeducating our people to the real significance of what they are doing."

This statement would seem to imply that rabbis in the field, who are conducting these services, much less their congregants, do not know "the real significance of what they are doing." I doubt that all of these rabbis would agree with this sentiment. What is being noted here is significant for other reasons, however. This statement points out that there are rabbis and congregations whose policies differ greatly precisely because they place a different significance on the service, with a different meaning, and in a different context. Is it the case that that significance, meaning, and context are wrong, or are they simply different? The Responsa Committee clearly believes that what is currently going on in many synagogues, and the reasons behind what is going on, are wrong and not simply different.

The Committee suggests a root cause for this move away from traditional significance, meaning, and context. Our movement removed the Torah reading from the public.[81] The "Ritual Directions" found in I. M. Wise's Divine Service of American Israelites for the Day of Atonement, is particularly cited by the Committee:

> The sections from the Pentateuch are read in a style agreeable to modern delivery and without calling any person to it. The minister and two officers of the congregation have to do all the mitzvot connected therewith.[82]

This was done to speed up the service and to increase the decorum of the service. However, as noted by the Committee, in practice, these rules, "ensured that the individual congregant had little personal access to the Torah scroll, and learned not to view an

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[81] p. 68.
[82] Cincinnati: Bloch, 1891.

aliyah as something which the regular worshipper should be honored to do."[83] Reinforcing this separation was the "devaluation of bar mitzvah." Thus, over time, "any common understanding of the significance of the public Torah reading atrophied, and in some cases, disappeared altogether."

Again, it is of note that what is being discussed is the loss of a "common understanding" concerning the Torah service. The question that must be asked is whether or not it is the case that this common understanding was simply lost, or whether it changed over time. This is relevant because something lost may be found or replaced. Something that has been changed may not necessarily be restored to its original form. Replacement may not be an option. Thus, it may not simply require "reeducation," something which could reinstate a lost practice, but "transformation," something far more difficult, in order to change the state of the Torah service to something else, to bring the modern Torah service and its altered significance, meaning, and context into line with tradition.

Some congregations are undertaking such a transformation and re-appropriating some traditional practices. However, in these congregations, it is often the case that "the aesthetic element" takes priority over the "spiritual."[84] It is interesting to note that the Committee here is arguing that the "aesthetic element" is not part of the "spiritual." I would think that many congregations would be concerned with the aesthetic element precisely because it is beneficial to their spirituality, specifically to creating a spiritual atmosphere. The Committee seems to understand this point of view: "Rituals are seen to 'enhance' our religious lives. Thus, any ritual becomes fair game for 'enhancing' the

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[83] P. 68.
[84] P. 69.

experience of the congregation—including non-Jewish participation, if that end is served thereby." It seems to me that, in fact, often times in these congregations the "aesthetic element" takes a back seat to the spiritual element. Hearing anyone, Jew or non-Jew, recite a blessing poorly or only read in English something that the congregation as a whole knows well and normally sings in Hebrew does not at all improve the "aesthetic element" of the service, but precisely the opposite. Yet how often do many congregations afford such people the honor of doing so, such as having a non-Jewish parent recite the blessing over the candles at a Shabbat service honoring a bar or bat mitzvah? When we discuss such congregations and their policies in detail later, we will see some of the reasons behind those practices.

All of this comes to a head at one event in Jewish life, Bar Mitzvah. The Responsa Committee turns its attention to this topic. Three problems arise: first, there are congregations in which the only Shabbat morning services held are B'nei Mitzvah; second, that because of this and because no weekday morning services are held, any service "at which Torah is read is a 'bar mitzvah service,'" meaning that the context of Torah reading is dramatically different from the traditional context; and third, that it is deemed to be "the child's and the family's service," at which, like any other life cycle event, "the family chooses the participants."[85]

Of these three points, the first and the third are vital components of the argument against the relevance of this responsum. In congregations where there are no ongoing Shabbat services, i.e. those without B'nei Mitzvah, one must question whether or not it is reasonable to argue that the primary reason for the service is Shabbat and not the Bar or Bat Mitzvah. The significance of this is that if the primary reason is in fact the Bar or Bat

[85] P. 69.

Mitzvah, one is far more likely to agree with the third point, namely that the service is a life cycle event and not a congregational service.

Clearly, the impact of this upon congregational policies in relation to these issues is manifold and profound. The Committee states that "since this is the popular context, it is easy to see why so many of our people consider it quite natural that non-Jews, and especially a non-Jewish parent, should be asked to take an active part on this occasion as well."[86] We will have a detailed look at numerous rabbinic and congregational policies that argue precisely for such a level of participation later on in this work.

It is argued that it is necessary "to preserve or recover the central elements of the Jewish service" in order to safeguard "the integrity of the congregation whose members are and remain representatives of the total community of Jews." Many congregations would argue that such participation in no way jeopardizes the "integrity of the congregation." Furthermore, there are many congregations that have non-Jewish members, some even at very high percentages if non-Jewish spouses are considered. Many of these congregations might disagree with the statement that "this view in no way denigrates the non-Jews in our midst." The Committee follows this with another statement that might be questioned by such congregations: "We should of course be sensitive to the Gentile parents who are committed to raising their children as Jews, and to acknowledge their commitment, but do so without violating the community's integrity." One might argue that severe restrictions upon the actions of non-Jews, even more so of non-Jewish members, would itself violate the community's integrity. The dispute here must be about the "community" to which we are referring. The Jewish community as a whole is one option, the Jewish community within a specific

[86] Ibid.

congregation is another, a third would be the community of members including non-Jewish spouses, and yet a fourth possibility would be the community gathered for the event in question. The integrity of each would be kept or violated in different ways.

The Responsa Committee realizes that the sensitivities of non-Jews and Jews differ. They state, "The nature of our service can and must be communicated to them with full respect for their (the non-Jews') integrity. While they have chosen to remain non-Jews, the congregation chooses to be Jewish and sets the parameters of its services."[87] The question is what those parameters should be. What are the boundaries that must be set? We shall see in analyzing policies later on in this paper that many rabbis and congregations put great weight on maintaining the religious integrity of the speaker, be that person Jewish or not. However, they will differ on who determines what will violate an individual's integrity, the rabbi/congregational policy or the non-Jew himself or herself.

The Responsa Committee now offers some suggestions for what role a non-Jewish parent may play at a Bar or Bat Mitzvah. "What the congregation can accord the Gentile worshipper is proximity and recognition."[88] What is meant by proximity and recognition is silent accompaniment. For example, a non-Jew may accompany a Jew to the bimah for an aliyah when the Jew is called. The Committee believes that "Boundaries of this sort will help the celebrant understand that the sacred occasion is observed with full respect both to Jewish tradition and to the non-Jews in the child's family."[89]

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[87] Page 69.
[88] Page 70.
[89] Ibid.

The Committee cites a letter written by Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler, president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations on December 7, 1993 to the Board of Trustees which attempts to offer some more specific guidance:

> We should be as welcoming as possible, yet boundaries need to be drawn... My colleague [Rabbi] Norman Cohen of Hopkins, MN, established a pattern which concretizes to a "T" what I have in mind:
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> When a non-Jewish spouse is supportive of the Jewish upbringing of the children, he involves them in a number of ways in the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony. While the non-Jewish partners do not actually pass the Torah, they stand with the Jewish spouse and Norman says to them quite clearly: 'The Torah is passed from your grandparents to your mother who, with the loving support of your father, passes it on to you.' And when the Jewish parent is invited to do the Torah blessing, the non-Jewish parent stands with him/her and recites the following words:
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> 'My prayer, standing at the Torah, is that you, my son/daughter will always be worthy of this inheritance as a Jew. Know that you have my support. Take its teachings into your heart and, in turn, pass it on to your children and those who come after you. May you be a faithful Jew, searching for wisdom and truth, working for justice and peace.'
>
> In this and like manner, we can meet our two-fold obligations: to be true to the integrity of our tradition, even as we respond to the sensitivities of those non-Jews who have not yet embraced Judaism, but who nonetheless have agreed, and indeed are determined, to rear their children as Jews.[90]

The details of this policy will be examined among many others later in this paper. What is important to show now is that such a policy appears to represent the suggestion of the Responsa Committee in regards to non-Jewish participation. A non-Jewish parent accompanies a Jewish one and stands silently next to them while not actively participating. Obvious problems arise when the non-Jewish parent is the sole one responsible for raising the child as a Jew, in the case of the death of the Jewish parent or simply in the case of a divorce where the non-Jewish parent has custody. One may change the symbolism of passing the Torah or eliminate it, so that it does not symbolize

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[90] p. 75, n. 38.

the transmission of tradition, but the transmission of identity. However, that would dramatically alter the significance, meaning, and context of the Torah itself and the ritual surrounding it, something which the Responsa Committee clearly argues against.

This is precisely the problem with the next issue that the Committee confronts, namely the issue of handling the Torah and the honors of Hagbah and G'lilah, specifically. Since many non-Jews also attribute a great deal of respect to the Torah in their own traditions, "why then should they not be permitted to lift the scroll high and acknowledge their respect thereby?"[91] The answer given by the Committee is that "aliyot are reserved for the Jewish members of the worshipping congregation." This is obviously a problem if the worshipping congregation is solely in attendance for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah; i.e. watching the theater of the ceremony and not truly worshipping at all. The Committee also brings up the problem of Mar'it Ayin, how others might perceive the act. The assumption by the Committee is that such an act might be perceived in a bad light for the congregation and the honor due the Torah. However, it may in fact be the case that to deny a parent an honor traditionally assigned to a parent might well be perceived in a bad light by those in attendance. The conclusion given by the Committee is that "Worshippers will be hard put to make a distinction between one type of Aliyah and another; therefore it is better to keep the lines clear, so that the essential elements of integrity and obligation not be obscured."[92]

In other words, the Committee would not be opposed to a non-Jew performing the act of raising the Torah or dressing the Torah were it not for the possibility that such acts would shed a bad light on the congregation. This is significant for rabbis and

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[91] Page 70.
[92] Page 70.

congregations who would like to push the envelope of inclusion rather than exclusion. Those wishing to grant non-Jews as large a role as possible may find support for giving non-Jews these two significant honors in this responsum, though it is clearly attenuated support.

The Conclusion given by the Responsa Committee

The Responsa Committee notes that many of the questions concerning non-Jewish participation in Jewish worship services arise in connection with B'nei Mitzvah celebrations.[93] Many in attendance, if not the vast majority, will see the service as a "symbolic rite de passage" and this view will be heightened in congregations that do not ordinarily hold Shabbat morning services. In these congregations, "the service is all too often a form of religious theatre, with actors filling prescribed roles" and "for many participants, a 'bar/bat mitzvah service' is merely a symbolic performance." "As in Shakespeare's plays," the Committee notes, where "men played the role of women... why should non-Jews not assume the role of Jews?"

Several issues arise here. The first is that in many of the congregations wherein the Bar/Bat Mitzvah is perceived to be a symbolic rite de passage, it is in fact a symbolic rite de passage. In other words, the perception is accurate. Secondly, even in the symbolic rite de passage, it is not necessarily the case that what is done in the service is "merely a symbolic performance." It is in fact, for many, a meaningful performance showing familial support for the identity of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah as a Jew. In such services, one might also ask whether the roles in question are those of Jews or those of family

[93] Ibid.

members. In other words, do we assign the roles by saying, "A woman lights the candles," and assume that the woman be Jewish, or do we say, "The mother of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah lights the candles," in which case we seem to care only that the mother do it and not whether or not she is a Jew. We could be more specific and say, "the mother lights the candles if she is Jewish, but another Jew does it if she is not," if we desire that only Jews perform the ritual, but that would look awkward in a meaningful performance showing familial support for the identity of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, while nonetheless appearing appropriate at a worship service. What is most decisive is the difference between what rules might apply, and how, if the celebration is a performance rather than a Jewish service primarily.

The following statement is telling of the Committee's point of view: "Our religious services must afford those who attend an opportunity to stand in the presence of the Living God, and do so as a covenantal congregation... despite all obstacles, the essential element of mitzvah must not be lost sight of."[94]

Rabbi Lawrence Hoffman offers a different analysis of the problem, "If a congregation sees a ritual as an affirmation of its covenantal status, the ritual is reserved for Jews, and for Jews only. But if it is symbolic and affirms the spiritual worth of the participant, whether Jew or non-Jew, we may insist that all parents say it, especially a non-Jewish parent who had an easy option of denying this child's Jewish education, but did not do so."[95]

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[94] Page 71.

[95] See "Non-Jew and Jewish Life-Cycle Liturgy," in Journal of Reform Judaism, Summer 1990, pp. 1-16. (Rabbi W. Gunther Plaut wrote a response to his exposition, ibid., pp. 17-20.) See also Rabbi Hoffman's "Worship in Common: Babel or Mixed Multitude?" in Crosscurrents: Journal of the American Association for Religion and Intellectual Life, 40:1 (Spring 1990).

Most telling of all as regards the Responsa Committee's motivation is the following statement concerning this responsum and the Committee's role in general:

> In the view of this Committee, there is a clear and present danger that our movement is dissolving at the edges and is surrendering its singularity to a beckoning culture which champions the syncretistic. Jewish identity is being eroded and is in need of clear guidelines which will define it unmistakably. To provide such markers is the task of the Responsa Committee.[96]

We return to 1947 and to the words of Rabbi Gunther Plaut at the CCAR Convention of that year, "We are in an age which calls for the strengthening of those forces which make for a policy for survival for our people. I am not ashamed to stand on that particularistic platform.... We are taking a step forward when we as Reform rabbis declare that we have certain standards and that liberalism is not identical with lawlessness and that Reform is not identical with expediency."[97] We shall see later on, that just as there were contrary opinions strongly represented at the 1947 convention, so today there are similar opinions present.

Rabbi Joan Friedman's Address to the 1994 CCAR Convention[98]

The CCAR Responsa Committee based part of their 1994 responsum on an unpublished paper written by Rabbi Joan Friedman.[99] In honor of her work, she was asked to deliver an address at the 1994 convention. In that address, rather than discussing the specific halakhic topics upon which the responsum was based, Rabbi Friedman discussed what she saw as the situation in Reform congregations today that warrants

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[96] Page 72.
[97] CCAR Yearbook, 1947. Pages 180-181.
[98] "The Role of the Non-Jew in the Synagogue: Challenges and Choices" address given by Joan Friedman (CCAR Yearbook 1994, published 1995), pp. 25-32.
[99] Teshuvot, page 55.

change and discussed the practical implications of making those changes. Her point of view represents those desiring a move toward Tradition.

For Rabbi Friedman, the question concerning what role non-Jews might play in Jewish worship begs the question concerning what role Jews play. "Traditional Judaism, of course," she argued, "with its concepts of mitzvah, chiyuv, and minyan, tells people very clearly. To be counted in a minyan is to be part of a network of shared and reciprocal responsibilities."[100] In Traditional Judaism, Jews are M'tzuvim, "commanded," and M'chuyavim, "obligated," and these concepts are clearly understood by Jews belonging to those congregations. Reform Jews, as opposed to Traditional Jews, either do not consider themselves to be M'tzuvim and M'chuyavim, or do not understand the practical implication of these terms.

Furthermore, whereas in a Traditional Jewish congregation worship services were based upon Halakhah and the fulfillment of Mitzvah and obligation, the operative principle for Reform Judaism, and particularly early Reform Judaism, was something wholly different. Rabbi Friedman noted that Jacob Petuchowski wrote in his book Prayerbook Reform in Europe, that "the operative principle for the nineteenth century reforms of worship service was Erbauung, 'edification.'"[101] She continues noting the purposes of such a service and their impact upon some traditional aspects of Jewish identity:

> The service's purpose was to edify, to uplift, to move the worshipper to a sense of his or her proper relationship to God... Categories of mitzvah, chiyuv, and minyan, whether intentionally or not, were largely eliminated from the discussion of public worship, which instead focused on the text of the prayers and the aesthetics of their setting. By carefully orchestrating the service and turning responsibility for it over to a class of professionals, the responsibility of the

[100] Page 26.
[101] Ibid. See Jacob Petuchowski, Prayerbook Reform in Europe (New York: WUPJ, 1968).

> individual worshipper, the personal obligation, that sense of being a necessary presence in a shared enterprise—all this was allowed to atrophy, or vanish.[102]

Several significant points are made here that affect whether or not one sees the situation of modern Reform Judaism as does Rabbi Friedman. She argues that concepts of Mitzvah and obligation have atrophied or been allowed to vanish. It seems to me that the passivity of this result is in question. I would argue, in fact, that in many congregations and for many Reform Jews it is the case that religious obligation has been vehemently rejected. Mitzvah, for them, does not refer in any way to laws laid down in the Torah or by the rabbis, not to a "commandment" but to a good deed.

The latter point, may as Rabbi Friedman noted, be the result of a process in which over many years the responsibilities for Jewish worship have been handed over to "Jewish professionals," who unfortunately are all too often seen as "Professional Jews," meaning people who act like Jews for a living, whereas their congregants only act like Jews on occasion, holidays and life cycle events most notably. This is best shown by the story of the congregant who asks the rabbi why he does not keep kosher while the congregant himself picks up a few more shrimp. There are reasons for "Jewish professionals" to serve the roles that they do serve in congregations, most of all, experience, knowledge, and ability. This, in addition to the fact that it saved time, is why Isaac M. Wise desired to limit access to the Torah service.[103]

Another point made by Rabbi Friedman is that discussion of the texts of prayers have been placed above the concepts of Mitzvah and obligation. This raises a significant question that was discussed in the previous pages, particularly in reference to the 1969

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[102] Ibid.
[103] Isaac M. Wise's Divine Service of American Israelites for the Day of Atonement (Cincinnati: Bloch, 1891).

Freehof responsum concerning a non-Jewish stepfather at a Bar Mitzvah, namely, is it wrong to change the text of a prayer to accommodate a practical reality or must practice accommodate the traditional prayer?[104] Whereas in 1969, it appears that Rabbi Freehof was extremely willing to accommodate changes in prayers, the 1994 responsum and Rabbi Friedman's address argue the opposite position. This dispute is quite clear in the following statement from the address:

> Why should the non-Jewish parent of a bar or bat mitzvah be barred from the bimah, as is the case in some congregations? As far as I know, there is no inherent holiness in that piece of flooring. Conversely, why should a non-Jewish parent be called to the Torah to do that which is the quintessential act of full inclusion in the Jewish community? Neither makes any sense in the service as town meeting; but in theater, the crucial question for everything that happens on stage is what effect will it produce on the audience.[105]

Rabbi Friedman argues that there is no reason why a non-Jewish parent should not be allowed on the bimah, but in fact either side could argue this point. The reason that some congregations do not allow non-Jews on the bimah is not because "that piece of flooring" is holy, but because the act of ascending to it, to a position of leadership and honor within those congregations is seen as holy and/or because it is seen as awkward in those congregations for a group of Jews at prayer to be directing their prayers at non-Jews, literally. This could even be true in the case of Jewish worship as theater. Moreover, I am not sure that all Reform Jews would agree with the statement that "the quintessential act of full inclusion in the Jewish community" is an aliyah. In some communities, an aliyah may be the quintessential act of inclusion in the family service. The issue as I see it is if the service is a town meeting, who lives in the town that is meeting? If the "town," meaning the congregation, is populated primarily by members of

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[104] Solomon Freehof, "Gentile Stepfather at Bar Mitzvah," CRR, no. 23, pp. 91-93.
[105] Friedman, p. 27.

the Bar or Bat Mitzvah's family, the sensitivities relating to inclusion and exclusion will be dramatically different than if the "town" is made up primarily of Jewish members of the congregation. In larger congregations, the question will become, Who are the residents of that town and who are the guests? If it is the family's service and not the congregation's service at which there happens to be a Bar or Bat Mitzvah then non-Jewish participation is necessary. This problem is the next discussed by Rabbi Friedman.

> The manner in which bar/bat mitzvah is celebrated today is both derived from, and reinforces, this model of service as theater. The vast majority of our children now celebrate becoming a bar/bat mitzvah. However, many congregations only hold Shabbat morning services when there is a bar/bat mitzvah, and the vast majority of our congregants only attend Shabbat morning services when there is a simcha, and in our large congregations there is rarely a Shabbat without one—all of which contribute enormously to reinforcing the perception that this is a special performance of sorts. As Hillel said, 'Go and see what the people are doing'—and overwhelmingly the people think that a Shabbat morning service at which Torah is read is a 'bar mitzvah service'—in fact, is 'the child's/family's bar mitzvah service.'[106]

The question that must be answered by rabbis and congregations is whether or not they agree with this point. Congregations may see B'nei Mitzvah as special performances and want to see them in this way more than as worship services. If they see the performance as "the child's/family's" performance, and wish to do so, then the question is why would they act as if the Bar or Bat Mitzvah is something else? Why would they wish to modify the performance so that it is less like theater and more like a service? Rabbi Friedman continues:

> Few people have any sense that the child is participating in an ongoing ritual, that this is actually a Shabbat morning service at which there happens to be a bar/bat mitzvah. Since this is the popular context, it is easy to see why so many of our people cannot understand why the non-Jewish parent 'can't participate fully in his/her child's service.

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[106] Pages 27-28.

Now the question arises as to whether or not in these congregations there is no sense of Bar or Bat Mitzvah as an ongoing ritual because in those congregations it is in no way intended to be that. The perspective is dramatically different. In those congregations, it may be that the child is participating in a Bar/Bat Mitzvah that happens to be a Shabbat service. Sometimes it is not even an evening or morning Shabbat service, but a Havdallah service. The issue that Rabbi Friedman raises poses problems for congregations who wish for Shabbat morning services to be primarily Shabbat morning services, even when there is a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, and who encounter problems when Jews coming from congregations where there were no regular Shabbat services now bring that perspective into their midst.

As Rabbi Friedman notes, it is easy to see why people do not understand why non-Jewish parents cannot "participate fully in their child's service." The problem that faces rabbis and congregations today is that if indeed the Bar or Bat Mitzvah is primarily a performance and not a service, then the question must be, Should non-Jewish parents, who are vital to the family, and leaders of the community at the service, namely, their friends and family, be restricted in their participation, and if so, keeping in mind this community and its perspective, what are the appropriate boundaries? I suggest that these are not necessarily the same boundaries as would be appropriate in a congregation holding regularly scheduled Shabbat services at which their happens to be a Bar or Bat Mitzvah. We will see examples of ideas for policies in such congregations later on in this thesis.

In many B'nei Mitzvah services, during the Torah service, a ceremonial passing of the Torah takes place. The exact meaning of this ritual differs from congregation to

congregation. No matter what the meaning, however, the ceremony itself seems to be of great importance. Rabbi Friedman states that:

> The parent who hands the Torah to his or her child is not merely indicating, by this gesture, that he or she has seen to the child's Jewish education (if that's what it's supposed to mean, anyway); he or she is also taking a significant role in the public religious life of the Jewish people. Access to the Torah is a powerful symbol of inclusion, as any Jewish woman will tell you.[107]

Several points are made here that must be pointed out. First, as I noted before, the symbolism of the passing of the Torah is in question. This is not insignificant to Rabbi Friedman's argument. She points out that the ceremony may be an indication that the parent(s) participating in the ceremony have "seen to the child's Jewish education." Significantly, many rabbis see the ceremony much more literally. The parents literally are passing Torah from generation to generation. The question then becomes whether or not a non-Jew may do this. We will see some answers to this question later on. Other rabbis take the passing of the Torah one step further and say that it symbolizes passing Judaism on from one generation to the next, fully requiring that only Jews may participate. Still other rabbis understand this ritual far more generally and see it as symbolically passing on the traditions of the family from generation to generation, in which case not only would the ceremony not be restricted to Jews alone, but Jews and non-Jews alike would be encouraged to take part. There are many positions that are taken with differing symbolism, as we will see later when we analyze specific policies.

Rabbi Friedman continues by stating that, "He or she is also taking a significant role in the public religious life of the Jewish people." The question must be asked, what happens in those congregations that do not meet regularly for Shabbat services and see the service as the family's "performance?" In such a case, would not the non-Jew simply

[107] Page 28.

be taking a "significant role" in the public life of his or her own family and how that family functions in a Jewish context, something that they clearly have a right to do. The perspective differs dramatically.

The lynchpin of the argument, however, is Rabbi Friedman's conclusion concerning the passing of the Torah, "Access to the Torah is a powerful symbol of inclusion, as any Jewish woman will tell you." By this, she means that being able to hold the Torah is a profound symbol of the status of Jewish women in the Reform Jewish community, where they may have felt excluded in an Orthodox community where such access would be denied them. However, it seems to me that many an intermarried family would argue this point exactly. They would say, perhaps, that "access to the Torah is a powerful symbol of inclusion," that for non-Jews to be able to do things like the passing the Torah would make them feel included and, more significantly, that the opposite may be true, that denying them access to it would make them feel excluded. This is obviously a disputed point. Some would argue that intermarried families and particularly non-Jews in those marriages would not object to restrictions imposed on worship and in fact would expect them. Differences in how rabbis and congregations respond to this concern and similar concerns will greatly affect their policies concerning the role of non-Jews in worship.

It is obvious to Rabbi Friedman that:

> The presence of a sizeable number of non-Jews in a synagogue inevitably affects the nature of what goes on in that synagogue... All it takes is for any one of us to look out over the congregation and say 'we Jews.'[108]

Clearly, this is the case. The first question before us all then, in my mind, must be can we do anything about this social situation? If the answer to that is negative, then we

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must ask whether or not we can or should continue to say "we Jews" when referring to all of those in attendance at our services. It seems to me that the problem here is that there is cognitive dissonance created by the distance between the theoretical practices of Judaism as rooted in Halakhah and represented in traditional rituals and prayers and the reality represented by the practical situation of the Jewish community and very non-traditional Jewish households.

This brings us to a major concern posed by Rabbi Friedman, the increasing "tendency to resolve these questions by simply blurring or even erasing the distinction between Jew and non-Jew."[109] In congregations that are more conservative and possess policies that significantly restrict the role of non-Jews in the synagogue, this is not a tremendous ongoing concern, but one that has been resolved. In congregations where the opposite is true, congregations that are more liberal and either have no policy or one that is slightly restrictive of the role of non-Jews, this will indeed be a major concern. The question is not whether or not there must be distinctions between Jews and non-Jews, but how great the distinctions must be.

Rabbi Alexander Schindler wrote in his response to Walter Jacob's paper "The Non-Jew in the Synagogue" presented to the UAHC Executive Board on February 8, 1993:

> Everyone is agreed that we should welcome non-Jews into the synagogue.... The second thing we are all of us agreed upon is that boundaries have to be drawn. That we are not a religious community where anything goes, and therefore anything goes. So boundaries have to be done. There are only two questions. What do we have to do to make the non-Jew feel welcome? Or, let us say, not to make him feel unwelcome. And the second question is, where should the boundaries be drawn?[110]

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[110] Alexander Schindler, presentation to the UAHC Executive Committee on February 8, 1993, pp. 147-154 of the transcript of the meeting, p. 147.

How have we been going about the process of blurring these boundaries? According to Rabbi Friedman:

> One way this is done is to emphasize not the Jewishness of the individual, but of the environment. We have diligently and rightly encouraged intermarried couples to 'keep a Jewish home'—but the unanticipated result is not a wave of conversions to Judaism; rather it is the reinforcement of a popular perception that 'you don't have to be Jewish' to do Jewish things, an attitude that inevitably travels from home to synagogue. Increasingly, then, when someone says 'we Jews' in synagogue, it does not mean 'we who are Jews' but 'we who are in an environment where Jewish things are done. From there it is not far to the idea that Jewishness, and therefore participation in the synagogue, is determined by whether one adheres to some vaguely defined set of habits and practices.[111]

It is true that we encourage intermarried couples to keep a Jewish home and to do Jewish things, but we do not do so in order to get the non-Jewish spouse to convert. The goal as expressed by Rabbi Morgenstern at the CCAR convention some fifty-three years ago has been the goal all along, namely to keep the children Jewish.[112] As Alexander Schindler wrote:

> I feel that we have to do everything we possibly can to draw the non-Jewish spouse of mixed marriage into Jewish life for two reasons, in the hope that they themselves will initiate the process of conversion to Judaism,... and also, at least, at the very least, dramatically to increase the chances that the children of these marriages will, in fact, be reared as Jews and share the destiny of the Jewish people.[113]

If the non-Jewish parent ultimately converts, wonderful, but the biggest goal by far is to keep the children Jewish. What lengths we might go to get a non-Jew to feel welcome in a Jewish environment must then pale in comparison with those we might go to ensure that the children feel included in the Jewish community.

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[111] Ibid.
[112] CCAR Yearbook 1947, p. 178.
[113] Schindler, page 148.

Are we giving roles in B'nei Mitzvah services to non-Jewish parents in order to make them feel included in the community? Perhaps, we are. Some would say that we are helping the Jewish spouse to feel more comfortable about "marrying out." Again, perhaps we are. However, it seems to me that, far more important than either of these reasons, those congregations and rabbis that give roles to non-Jewish parents do so in order to make their children feel more included in the community. Rabbi Schindler put this well in his address to the UAHC Executive Committee in 1993, "So far as I am concerned, I don't want anything done that will in any sense hurt the self-image of the child that is being reared as a Jew and given the idea that somehow he is not quite fully a Jew." The goal for all involved is to make the Jewish experience for the child one that will strengthen their love for Judaism.

Rabbi Friedman noted that

> We have a large and growing class of people who are not Jews, but on whose behalf some 'associate' status is increasingly expected, within a Jewish population for whom Judaism is, increasingly, a religious identity to be chosen or affirmed individually to the extent that it is personally meaningful, within a larger societal context which regards externally imposed distinctions as inherently negative—and all of this then is dropped into synagogues where the default paradigm is that of theater.[114]

For many Reform Jewish families and in many congregations this is in fact an accurate view of religious life. The questions that we must answer are "Can we alter this situation" and "how?" Is Reform Judaism not "a religious identity to be chosen or affirmed individually to the extent that it is personally meaningful?" It seems to me that this is a fair assessment of what most Reform Jews take to be the basic truth.

Rabbi Friedman states that:

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[114] CCAR Yearbook 1994, Page 30.

> To be fully a member of the kehila kedosha is something quite other than to pay membership dues to an organization and to use the services of its physical plant. To be fully a member of the synagogue is to be a member of an assembly of Jews. And to be a Jew means to be a party to the covenant made at Sinai.[115]

Does being a Jew mean being party to the covenant at Sinai? This is a problematic statement. If the answer is yes, then we as Reform Jews are in violation of that covenant on a number of grounds, including laws relating to Nidah, Kashrut, Homosexuality, Shabbat, and others, unless we do not mean all of the Covenant, in which case we have the problem of determining what parts of the covenant we need to be party to and what parts we do not, and the further problem of who determines the answer to that question. If we ourselves determine the answer to that question (which in my mind is the only possible answer, though we may do so with the help of rabbis and other authorities), we then return to Rabbi Friedman's point above concerning choice of the extent to which we act as Jews, and find it necessary for us to determine that extent individually.

Rabbi Friedman argues that, "In the long run our integrity as a Jewish movement—to say nothing of our continued existence as Jews—will depend on making that distinction clear again (the distinction between Jew and non-Jew)."[116] "The way we do that is not to make the non-Jew feel excluded, but rather to make the Jew feel responsible and needed." This is a great insight and one that must be addressed, by every Reform congregation. It is certainly important that Jews feel that they themselves have a role in the synagogue and that that role is a special one. The question is what distinctions may be imposed that do not "make the non-Jew feel excluded" and more importantly that help to ensure that children of intermarriages will feel that their families, and not just they themselves, are welcome in the religion that they will ultimately choose whether or not to

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[115] Page 30.
[116] Page 30.

identify with and to what extent to identify with it. Because, if they do not feel that their families are welcome, they themselves may choose to identify with their family and not with their religion. This is the risk that we face.

Rabbi Friedman offers her view of what a non-Jew should not do in a Jewish service and her reasons for that view:

> It is inappropriate participation when a non-Jew creates cognitive dissonance for the congregation by speaking words or performing acts that themselves say 'we Jews.' Thus, for example, a non-Jew should not be called to the Torah for an aliya. The public reading of the Torah takes place within the context of a minyan because it is one of the cardinal acts by which the community affirms its existence and its reason for existence, namely, the covenant whose words are contained within the scroll. To be called to the Torah is to take one's position in the chain of privilege and responsibility by which the Jewish community has perpetuated itself. A non-Jew, no matter how supportive, does not share that privilege or that responsibility as long as he or she remains formally outside the Jewish community... Even if the individual read an altered blessing it would still cause cognitive dissonance, because the very act of being called to bless the Torah in public is one that says 'we Jews.'[117]

Rabbi Friedman's suggestions are a good representation of how a congregation might bring Traditional Jewish ideas and practices into a Reform context. We have already discussed the nuances of the Torah service, minyan, and the use of "we" and "us" in prayer language. A significant idea is raised here, which was mentioned by the Responsa Committee earlier, namely that the reason for the community's continued existence is the "covenant whose words are contained within the scroll." What happens in communities that do not believe that the covenant was given by God and feel that they are not M'tzuvim, "commanded," and M'chuyavim, "obligated," to it? The covenant then cannot be their reason for existence. What instead is? The answer to that question will drive what goes on in those congregations and that will necessarily be quite different

[117] Page 31.

from those congregations who would agree that the covenant and its contents are the reason for theirs.

Rabbi Lawrence Hoffman's View[118]

Rabbi Lawrence Hoffman, having looked at the responsa extant prior to 1990 regarding non-Jewish participation in Reform Jewish services, tried to address the question of the grounds on which we decide the issue. He noted that historically it has been the content of prayers that has been of particular importance and that logical inconsistencies, arising from sociological/identity-based inconsistencies, seemingly arise when non-Jews recite prayers that mean "that God had chosen us and commanded us; that God had sanctified a Shabbat that we greet, announce, and observe; and so forth."[119] It was these perceived logical inconsistencies that led Jews to reject non-Jewish participation. However, Rabbi Hoffman notes, "it now turns out that texts have more than one meaning."

The texts are ambiguous and allow for multiple interpretations. Prayers are particularly designed with this in mind. They are "composed in such a way that they unify many individual worshippers together through their act of praying as a group." They are designed to include as many of those present as possible, excluding as few as possible. As Rabbi Hoffman points out, "In order to do that, liturgical texts tend to speak with deliberate vagueness, lest any particular worshipper's meaning be so substantiated, while rival reading of other worshippers be implicitly denied, to the point where group

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[118] "Non-Jews and Jewish Life-Cycle Liturgy" (UAHC, 1990). pp. 65-82.
[119] Page 72.

solidarity is threatened."[120] This will clearly bring up questions of vital importance when dealing with a group that is diverse, and specifically a group including a large number or even a majority of non-Jews. It may be a possibility to consider changing the exclusive language that would be awkward and/or illogical for non-Jews to say to preserve "group solidarity" when the group is not primarily or exclusively a Jewish one.

Rabbi Hoffman notices something different here, that ambiguity leads to multivocality. Multivocality, in turn, leads to the possibility that a particular text may indeed resonate with a non-Jewish speaker. "The multivocality of prayer language lies behind my claim earlier that we might consider asking non-Jews what they mean by a given liturgical prayer," Rabbi Hoffman argues, "As non-Jewish members in the Jewish community, they stand mid-way between two alternative reading publics, representing, respectively, the Christian consensus and the Jewish consensus. It may be that on any given issue, they find themselves reading liturgical texts with a Jewish reading strategy." In other words, while there most likely will be some prayers and blessings that will be inconsistent with a non-Jewish parent's beliefs, there will be others that may well be consistent. Thus, if our sole concern is whether or not a non-Jew would be compromising

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[120] Rabbi W. Gunther Plaut, "Some Comments on Lawrence A. Hoffman's Essay" in Defining the Role of the Non-Jew in the Synagogue (UAHC, 1990), pp. 83-86, p. 84, questions Rabbi Hoffman's conclusion:

> Is our liturgy so planned as to elicit multivocality by design? Does it not rather derive its ambiguity from the fact that congregants understand it differently because of their humanness rather than because of the authors' intent? The Midrash, applying this experience to the revelation at Sinai, says that God spoke with one voice but the Israelites heard the words in different ways. This points to an important difference. We may create liturgy to be purposefully ambiguous and have on occasion done so. But on the whole, our liturgy attempts to be reasonably straightforward, except that -- because it consists of words -- it lends itself to various or even many understandings. To take but one example: the word God may be interpreted by the congregation in a multiplicity of ways, which does not, however, concede that the authors of the liturgy were willing to have God mean a life force that has no relationship to Israel – even though some hearers may interpret the text in that fashion.

their beliefs to recite a certain prayer, we should ask them what they think that it means and whether or not they would feel comfortable saying it.

This same concern is often not shown toward Reform Jews. As I noted earlier, while Tradition may tell us what a portion of the service means, how it is significant, and in what context it should be taken, Reform Jews do not necessarily share the same view of that meaning, significance, and context. Rabbi Hoffman seems to agree with this, saying, "The same question of what we mean by a text should be put to ourselves as well. Regardless of what the "experts" tell us a text means, we may say it in our prayers with other meanings in mind. At the very least, discussion of meanings makes for a fascinating process of belief clarification; and in the end, it soon becomes clear whether some non-Jews, no non-Jews, or all non-Jews might be able to say the prayer in question, and why."[121]

As I mentioned earlier, Rabbi Joan Friedman noted that in order for us to determine what role non-Jews should play in the synagogue, we must first determine what role Jews should play. A similar view must be taken here. In order for us to determine what prayers and rituals mean to non-Jews, we must determine what prayers and rituals mean to Reform Jews. I stress "Reform" here, because I do not believe that Reform Jews necessarily interpret these in line with Tradition, something that the Responsa Committee believed required "reeducating our people to the real significance of what they are doing."[122]

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[121] Page 73.
[122] Teshuvot p. 68.

Rabbi Hoffman notes that beyond the ambiguity of prayers and the halakhic considerations discussed earlier, there is an even more important characteristic of liturgical language. He argues that:

> If you ask people what a prayer means to them, you will often find that they do not even refer to its content. Instead they will say something like, 'For me, that prayer asserts my solidarity with the Jewish people,' or 'My parents said that prayer, so I say it; it is my connection to my past.' People sometimes even recite prayers with which they disagree completely. Sometimes they are in Hebrew, so they do not have to face up to what the prayers mean. Other times, they sing them, so that they can relate positively to the melody while ignoring the content. Too much dissonance is hard to live with, so we "cheat" on translations, or provide paraphrases that let people read English versions (at least) of prayers that offer the chance of a positive interpretation.

Thus, we must not necessarily equate content with meaning. Furthermore, we can not assume that the words themselves convey any meaning at all. The action itself may be what conveys the meaning, as Rabbi Hoffman notes, conveying "solidarity" or a connection to a Jewish past. People may even recite prayers with which they disagree on account of other concerns. This process is made easier when the speaker does not understand the words that he or she is saying, and even simpler still when a translation intentionally alters the content of the Hebrew text. The importance of Rabbi Hoffman's point is that it would undermine the argument that non-Jews can never say prayers that use "we" or "us," because doing so would conflict with their belief system. He continues:

> Ritualized language is very highly performative, and only slightly informational. Its truth or falsity is generally not even an issue. People engage in it not so much to tell truths as to perform tasks.... The question regarding non-Jews' participation in Jewish rituals is therefore only partly dependent upon the "truths" that they may or may not say with a clear conscience. More important are the performative meanings to the prayers in question, the tasks that liturgical units are intended to perform, and whether those meanings will be undermined if a non-Jew says the prayers that bring them about.

Returning to Rabbi Friedman's address for a moment and her contention that a Bar Mitzvah in many Reform synagogues has become a performance and is not, in its essence, a service, we find an interesting argument developing. Her argument was that the Traditional meaning and significance do not work well in the ceremony as theater, but do in the context of a worship service. Rabbi Hoffman seems to be arguing here that the performative meaning and significance are equally as important, if not more important, that the "truths" inherent in the content of the prayers. In other words, one would argue that even in a Traditional service, the performative meaning and significance could outweigh the "truths" that are said.

Rabbi Friedman seems to touch on this when she discusses the meaning and significance for her as a woman related to having access to the Torah. It is not what is said in the Torah service, not what is said in the blessings over the Torah, not what is said when the Torah is passed, but the performative meaning and significance given to these actions. Michael Meyer, for example, suggests that this meaning is based on identity:

> They are concerned for Jewish survival and believe that religion is an important vehicle for ensuring it. Aside from high holy days, they gather in synagogues in large numbers only when a family member or friend celebrates that ritual of Jewish continuity and survival which is the Bar or Bat Mitzvah ceremony. Those assembled rejoice that another link has been forged in the chain. As the Torah scroll is passed from grandparent to parent to child, symbolic testimony to the continuity of Jewish identity is rendered in the midst of the community.[123]

The problem that we face is that we do not all find the same meaning in the same ritual actions and prayers. We do not even grant Bar and Bat Mitzvah in general the same meaning. Is it, as Rabbi Jeffery Salkin states in his doctoral dissertation, that Bar/Bat Mitzvah is special because "it is the only life cycle ceremony that also occurs as part of

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[123] Michael Meyer, Jewish Identity in the Modern World (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1990), p. 80.

the regular congregational worship service. It is therefore linked with the life of the worshipping community. It is, in fact, pivotal to the life of the worshipping community."[124] Or is it, as Rabbi Hoffman would have us believe when he states in reference to congregations in which at least one Bar/Bat Mitzvah takes place virtually every Saturday morning:

> Shabbat morning worship has virtually ceased here; in its place is a programmed bar or bat mitzvah ritual designed to reinforce individual family systems. Saturday after Saturday, a different family plays the role, inviting its own network of watchers for the occasion.[125]

In the context of a congregation that holds normal Shabbat services without a Bar or Bat Mitzvah and at which B'nei Mitzvah are seen as part of normal Shabbat services, Rabbi Friedman's view and that of the Responsa Committee may be given significantly more weight than in a congregation that only holds Saturday morning services when there is a Bar or Bat Mitzvah and for whom the ceremony is not a worship service, but a life-cycle event performance.

Rabbi Plaut makes this abundantly clear in his response to Rabbi Hoffman's contention that the performative nature of ceremonial actions is the more important:

> Thus the transmission of a sefer Torah during a Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony is a performative act that speaks loudly to those participating in it. I would agree. But Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremonies are not only for the family, they are also ritual dramas performed before the congregants who are shutafim (participants) in the observance. Should we not aim at having the essence of the celebration create as common a basis for everyone as we can possibly do? There will still be the individual with his/her own reaction patterns, but hopefully there will also be a large common ground. And that common ground, with all the respect we have for the non-Jewish parent's sensitivity, must first and foremost be the way in which a Jewish congregation expresses its love for God. Torah and Israel.[126]

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[124] Jeffrey Salkin, Appropriating a Liturgical Context for Bar/Bat Mitzvah (Princeton Theological Seminary, 1991), p. 70.
[125] Lawrence Hoffman, The Art of Public Prayer: Not for Clergy Only (Woodstock, VT: Skylight Paths, 1999), p. 102.
[126] "Some Comments," p. 84.

There is a cognitive disconnect between Rabbi Plaut's position and that of Rabbi Hoffman. This disconnect is centered on the context of the service. Rabbi Hoffman sees the ceremony as a performance, wherein the common ground of the audience is the life cycle event. Rabbi Plaut does not agree with this and thus contends that the common ground should and "must" be "the way in which a Jewish congregation expresses its love for God. Torah and Israel" (emphasis his).

Rabbi Plaut's statement concerning the role of the Responsa Committee from his 1990 article is also highly informative:

> The nature of our Committee on Responsa, as I understand it, is to begin by asking what Halakhah has to say about a problem and then proceed to inquire whether there is a Reform Jewish principle that would compel us to disagree. If there is not, we will reassert the conclusions upon which our tradition has based itself.[127]

I believe that there is a Reform Jewish principle that would indeed compel some to disagree with the Halakhah and it is the exact same principle that Rabbi Morgenstern argued in opposition to Rabbi Plaut at the 1947 CCAR Convention, namely, that we should do whatever we can to keep the children of intermarriages Jewish. For Rabbi Morgenstern, this even meant that rabbis should perform intermarriages, something that Rabbi Plaut wholly disagrees with. We see this principle in effect as the guiding principle of Reform Jewish policy in regard to Patrilineal Descent.[128] It is not that there is no

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[127] "Some Comments," p. 85.

[128] See CCAR Yearbook 1983, pages 144ff. In his presentation to the convention, Peter Knobel stated that:

p. 145 "In response to those who would argue that the effect of this resolution is to make non-Jews of those whom the Halacha would recognize as Jews, we can only say that the Halacha is based on sociological assumptions which no longer obtain, namely, that the woman would return to her people and her offspring would be part of the Jewish community. It is now equally likely that the child of a Jewish mother or a Jewish father will be raised as a Jew or a non-Jew...."

Reform Jewish principle that could compel us to disagree with the Halakhah, rather Rabbi Plaut and many other rabbis, disagree with that particular Reform Jewish principle.

Rabbi Joseph Glaser, then Executive Vice President of the CCAR, in response to Rabbi Hoffman's article, clearly expressed this concern, "But can we abide that some seem to make an equation of the interests of the family at issue, on the one hand, and the demands of a stream of Judaism already beset with the problems and stresses of the vagueness and ambiguity necessarily characteristic of such a radical movement as ours?"[129]

It seems to me that the answer to this question for many Reform rabbis is and has been for over fifty years, "Yes, we can." In fact, not only is the answer, "Yes, we can," but "Yes, we have to." A rabbinic mentor of mine once said, "There are rabbis who prioritize the 'ism' and there are rabbis who prioritize the 'Jew'." What we are seeing in this debate is the conflict between those two points of view. On the one hand, we have those who argue that for Judaism's sake, we must follow the Halakhah, preserving Traditional Judaism, even if it poses problems for individual Jews and their families.

Also of significance is Peter Knobel's statement concerning the Committee on Patrilineal Descent's opinion regarding "mixed marriages":

p. 145 "Our refusal to officiate at mixed marriages is not based on the halachic status of the children of such marriages, for if it were, we would be willing to perform them in the case where the mother is Jewish. Our opposition is based on the inappropriateness of such ceremonies and their effect on the viability and vitality of the Jewish community. Our concern is not lechatechila but bedi-avad."

This is significant because this opinion is extremely particularistic and would be wholly rejected by a Universalist. A Universalist would argue that it is precisely the concern for the status of the children of such marriages and concern for the survival of the Jewish community that motivates the performance of such marriages and necessitates that children of a Jewish father and non-Jewish mother be considered Jewish.

[129] Rabbi Joseph B. Glaser, "Jewish Life-Cycle Liturgy and Non-Jews," in Defining the Role of Non-Jews in the Synagogue (UAHC, 1990), pp. 87-88, p. 87.

Rabbi Glaser's point of view is made even clearer in his report, "The Gathering Crisis of Intermarriage," in which he wrote:

> Authenticity has its price and we are talking here about just that- authenticity- without which we will have lost our center and put in jeopardy our very continuity. What is the point of conversion to Judaism? What is the point of marrying in? And what is the point of refusal to officiate at intermarriage?[130]

On the other hand, we have those who argue that for the sake of individual Jews and their families, we must do what is best for them even if it poses problems with the Halakhah and brings us into conflict with Traditional Judaism. Rabbi Schindler, then President of the UAHC, taking a universalist position, argued that allowing non-Jewish participation does not bring us into conflict with Halakhah at all, clearly opposing several positions taken in the Teshuvah that we examined earlier:

> Even the strictest Halachic approach to Jewish life offers more than ample room to allow non-Jewish partners to join in most of the ceremonial and life-cycle events. Halacha permits non-Jews to be in the synagogue. Nobody disputes that. It permits non-Jews to sing in the choir. We've done that in Reform Judaism for umpteen years. Yes, we encourage voluntary choirs. There's no problem there. There really is no impediment in Halacha which would bar the non-Jew from reciting blessings over the Sabbath and festival lights. And there certainly isn't any restriction which enjoins the non-Jew from touching the Torah. What is this? I mean, the Torah is their heritage too.... So, we can do a great deal more. I would do a great deal more. But in any event, let us structure those life-cycle rites, especially the Bar Mitzvah, since this seems to be the point, in such a way that we don't have to distinguish between the two [Jew and non-Jew].[131]

These approaches have the same ultimate goal, namely to do what is best for the survival of the Jewish people and of Judaism. Simply put, one side argues that there will be no Jews without Judaism and the other side argues that there will be no Judaism without Jews. The consequences of these different approaches are profound and are evidenced by what we have already discussed and by what will follow in this thesis.

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[130] Joseph Glaser, "The Gathering Crisis of Intermarriage" (Letter sent to "Colleagues", May 19, 1993).
[131] Schindler, pp. 153-154.

Section II:
Some Current and Recent Policies of Rabbis and Congregations

Introduction to Current Rabbinical and Congregational Policy Possibilities

What follows are policies, some partial, some complete, that I have gathered from the HUCALUM listserver, the CCAR Bulletin, and from other written sources. They are included here as case studies, examples of what policies relating to non-Jewish participation in B'nei Mitzvah services might look like. While not a large enough sampling to provide an accurate picture of where the movement as a whole stands in regard to this issue, there are enough policies and ones covering a wide enough range that we may determine what the spread of possibilities is and see where policies might fit on the spectrum.

Rabbi Theodore Riter, in his 1997 rabbinical thesis, "The Role of the Non-Jew in Reform Synagogues," chose to arrange policies into four categories: More Inclusive, Inclusive, Exclusive and More Exclusive.[132] "More Inclusive" policies were those that allowed non-Jews to participate in "all rituals with liturgical changes." "Inclusive" policies were those that allowed non-Jews to participate in "all rituals without liturgical changes." "Exclusive" policies were those that allowed "Universal prayers and readings only." Finally, "More Exclusive" policies were those that allowed "no leadership" by non-Jews. Looking at the responsa, discussions at CCAR Conventions, and addresses, as well as the various policies included in this thesis, I do not believe that these categories are descriptive enough to evaluate the inclusion or exclusion of non-Jews in services.

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[132] Riter, p. 126.

For example, some policies that require non-Jews to recite alternative blessings may be more exclusive than other policies allow them to recite the same blessings that Jews recite, while not providing an alternative. Requiring a non-Jew to recite an alternative blessing publicly distinguishes the non-Jew from a Jew, generally demonstrating that they are not included in the "us" of particularistic blessings, and is something designed to exclude non-Jews from the "us." The most inclusive policy, in my mind, would allow the non-Jew to read either an alternative blessing or the traditional one. A policy that allows a non-Jew to participate, but requires that he or she read an alternative blessing, is more inclusive than a policy that does not allow him or her to read a blessing at all, but less inclusive than one that would grant him or her the choice of which blessing to read. For many it is inconceivable that a policy would allow non-Jews to read particularistic blessings and/or that they would wish to recite them, but as Rabbi Hoffman argued, and many others as well, some non-Jews will desire to do so. Denying them this opportunity is more exclusive than allowing it to them. Thus, in my view, a policy that requires liturgical changes for non-Jews is often more exclusive than one that makes no changes. Additionally, there are policies that do not allow non-Jews to lead any portion of the service, but allow them to receive numerous honors and/or grant them numerous other opportunities to participate, thus being significantly inclusive.

It seems to me that there is a second dimension involved. In addition to a spectrum from inclusive to exclusive, which I base on the level of non-verbal participation as well as the quantity and quality of speaking parts permitted to non-Jews, there is one from universalistic to particularistic. Particularistic policies seek to define and strongly enforce boundaries between Jews and non-Jews and generally affirm the

particularistic content of blessings, restricting recitation of those blessings to Jews alone. Universalistic policies might allow non-Jews to recite these blessings (in some cases the only blessings allowed are the candle blessings). Other factors generally apply as well which will be discussed in detail below.

Inclusive to Exclusive

Policies will fit on a spectrum from inclusive to exclusive within these possibilities. Inclusive policies will be those that go out of their way to include non-Jews, even creating liturgical opportunities in order to accommodate them in the case of particularistic policies, or in the case of universalistic policies, place no bounds on their participation, and/or create additional opportunities for participation. Exclusive policies will be those that go out of their way to exclude non-Jews, even seeking reasons not to allow such participation. This means that when there is a dispute concerning whether or not a non-Jew should be able do something in a service, an inclusive policy will more likely allow it, while an exclusive policy will generally not grant permission.

In every policy there is some expressed desire to include a non-Jewish parent in the ceremony, and on the whole it is clear that even the most particularistic and most exclusive of these policies is far more welcoming of non-Jews than the vast majority of non-Reform Jewish alternatives. All of the policies in this thesis seem to grant respect to non-Jewish parents and thank them for helping to raise their child as a Jew or allowing it to be done.

Though there is a tremendously broad range of policy alternatives represented in this thesis, the majority of rabbis who contributed state that their policies have worked

and that people are generally happy with them. Rabbis seem be forming policies with which their congregants can agree. I do not believe that this should be surprising, but I do believe that it may help to quell the fears of some lay leaders in the movement that rabbis and congregations are speaking different languages and heading in different directions on these highly contentious issues. Where there are problems it may be that rabbis are trying to transform congregations from one end of the spectrum to another, such as moving them from particularism to universalism or from exclusivism to inclusivism, or the reverse, processes that would induce a great deal of anxiety and perhaps anger and resentment as well. Ultimately, those policies that will be successful are those that fit the needs and desires of the congregations. Though only a limited number of policies are included in this thesis, they speak volumes about how we can involve non-Jews in Jewish worship and about what is going on in Reform Judaism today.

Problematic Policies

Before proceeding, I must note that there are two types of policies that are problematic for my filing system, policies that fall between the unambiguous extremes. The first are policies held by universalistic rabbis and congregations that because of concerns for awkwardness and the comfort level of their congregants, restrict all blessings with particularistic language to Jews alone. I have chosen to sort policies by what they do, rather than what motivates them. Thus, these policies are found among the particularistic policies. The second kind are policies held by particularistic rabbis and congregations that allow non-Jews to recite particularistic blessings, generally the blessings over the Shabbat candles, because they wish to encourage intermarried families

to keep a Jewish home and hope to promote conversion of the non-Jewish spouses in the congregation. Again, since I have categorized policies by what they do, these policies are to be found among the universalistic polices in this thesis.

What are Particularistic Policies?

Particularistic policies desire to maintain, if not to enhance, the differences between Jews and non-Jews. The rules and regulations of Judaism, meaning traditional halakhic considerations, are enforced in some cases even if such enforcement will not benefit the individual family nor the individual Jew. The view of such policies as regards Jewish survival is "There will be no Jews if there is no Judaism." Judaism here is defined as Jewish tradition and a connection to halakhah in particular, though interpreted through the social and egalitarian lenses of the Reform movement. Such policies generally seek to fight assimilationist tendencies and the blurring of distinctions between Jews and non-Jews. There is sometimes an expressed concern that Reform Judaism is ceasing to be Judaism or is on its way out of the Jewish realm. Intermarriage often is the explicit enemy and some rabbis and congregations may even go so far as to establish a policy that makes non-Jewish participation difficult in order not to encourage intermarriage by members of the congregation or even to actively discourage it. However, some Particularistic Inclusive policies, which will be discussed later, are held by those who perform intermarriages. The idea of "Chosenness" is especially important to this type of policy as are the concepts of "Commandedness" and "Obligation."

Particularistic policies require that the reader of a blessing with particularistic language be someone who is included in that language, so that a non-Jew may not say, "who has chosen us," "who has commanded us," or "who has given us." The performative meaning of a blessing is either not considered at all in the formation of policies or is put second to the meaning of the content of the prayers.

An interesting problem arises. A faithful non-Jew may agree with the content of a particularistic blessing, but some Jews themselves may not. A fundamentalist Christian, for example, may well believe that God chose the Jews and gave them the Torah at Mount Sinai through Moses. Furthermore, he or she may believe that as a Christian that inheritance is now his or her own. Many Reform Jews, on the other hand, may well disagree and argue that the Torah was written by human beings, perhaps with divine guidance, perhaps not, and that Mount Sinai and Moses were likely not involved. Of these two, who may more authentically say, "Who chose us from all peoples and gave us his Torah?" That fundamentalist Christian, believing every word of this statement, may even include him- or herself in the "us."

I am not saying that we should only call up fundamentalist Christians for aliyot, not by any means, but we should be aware of the problems and concerns that may arise should we restrict recitation of blessings to those who believe in their content. It may be advisable in cases wherein rabbis and congregations desire that only Jews recite traditionally particularistic blessings that alternative blessings are provided that might allow Reform Jews who do not believe in "Commandedness," "Chosenness," and/or "Obligation," to recite blessings that do not violate their own integrity. In universalistic policies, the performative meaning is often much more important that the content. In those congregations, Reform Jews who do not believe in the content of the blessings may still recite them and not violate their integrity because they may agree with the performative meaning, even if they disagree with the content of the blessings.

Ultimately, particularistic policies seek to place boundaries around the identity of the congregation and in so doing must also place boundaries around issues affecting

integrity. They themselves answer the question, "What do we as Jews believe?" instead of letting each individual Jew answer that question. Particularistic policies largely avoid the pitfall created by the ambiguity of familial and individual Jewish identities and reinforce the congregation's or the rabbi's views of Jewish identity. Thus, though there are drawbacks, most notably a substantial risk of alienating families with a non-Jewish parent, there are also substantial benefits to this kind of policy, namely the protection and fostering of a strong Jewish identity.

Particularistic Exclusive Policies

Included in this chapter are the following policies:

1. Policy of Rabbi Harvey Fields of Wilshire Boulevard Temple of Los Angeles, CA.[133]
2. Policy of Rabbi Sally Priesand of Monmouth Reform Temple of Tinton Falls, NJ.[134]
3. Policy of Rabbi Adam Fisher of Temple Isaiah of Stony Brook, NY.[135]
4. Policy of Rabbi Robert A. Seigel of Fresno, California.[136]
5. Policy of Rabbi Samuel Stahl, Senior Rabbi of Temple Beth El of San Antonio, Texas.[137]
6. Views of Rabbi Barry Block, Associate Rabbi-Successor of Temple Beth-El in San Antonio, TX.[138]
7. Policy of Rabbi George Stern formerly of Temple Beth Torah, Upper Nyack, NY.[139]
8. Policy of Rabbi Eric Gurvis as detailed by Rabbi Cathy L. Felix Interim Rabbi of Temple Emeth of Teaneck, NJ and citations from Rabbi Eric Gurvis' written policy.[140]
9. Policy of Rabbi Eric A. Silver of Temple Beth David of Cheshire, CT.[141]
10. Written Policy of Temple Anshe Sholom of Hamilton, Ontario.[142]
11. Written Policy of Temple Emanu-El of Atlanta, GA.
12. Written Policy of Rabbi Richard Agler of Congregation B'nai Israel of Boca Raton, FL.[143]
13. Written Policy of Rabbi Daniel Pernick of Beth Am Temple of Pearl River, NY.[144]
14. Written Policy of Temple Adat Shalom of Poway, CA.
15. Written Policy of Temple Beth Orr of Coral Springs, FLA.
16. Policy of Rabbi Allen Freehling of University Synagogue of Los Angeles, CA.[145]
17. Policy of Rabbi Bruce Kahn of Temple Shalom of Chevy Chase, MD.[146]
18. Written Policy of Temple Shalom of Chevy Chase, MD.
19. Written Policy of Temple Sinai Congregation of Toronto, ON.
20. The Role of Non-Jews In Jewish Reconstructionist Federation Congregations.[147]

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[133] Rabbi Harvey Fields, "Non-Jews at Jewish Celebrations" in Defining the Role of the Non-Jew in the Synagogue (UAHC, 1990), pp. 89-91.
[134] Rabbi Sally Priesand, "The Role of the Non-Jew and the Temple Constitution" in Defining the Role of the Non-Jew in the Synagogue (UAHC, 1990).
[135] Email sent 1/4/00 10:37:34 AM Eastern Standard Time.
[136] Email sent 1/4/00 7:24:45 PM Eastern Standard Time.
[137] Letter sent January 10, 2000.
[138] Email #1 sent 7/15/00 8:19:55 PM Eastern Daylight Time. Email #2 sent 7/16/00 3:41:39 PM Eastern Daylight Time.
[139] Email sent 7/12/00 2:35:12 PM Eastern Daylight Time.
[140] Email sent 7/12/00 2:44:07 PM Eastern Daylight Time.
[141] Email sent 7/13/00 6:36:36 PM Eastern Daylight Time.
[142] Policy adopted September, 1999. Pages 9-10. Rabbi Irwin Zeplowitz.
[143] Excerpts from the policy.
[144] Approved by the Board of Trustees on March 21, 1995. Amended (fourth paragraph) by the Ritual Committee on February 13, 1997. Excerpted.
[145] Email sent 9/11/00 7:34:57 PM Eastern Daylight Time.
[146] Email sent 7/12/00 6:57:44 PM Eastern Daylight Time.
[147] This report was released in February, 1998.

What qualifies a policy as Particularistic Exclusive?

Particularistic Exclusive policies are ones that seek to strongly define the role of the Jew in worship services and tend to expand that role to encompass virtually the totality of the worship experience. If roles are allowed non-Jews, generally those roles are ones that are peripheral to the service and are significantly limited in scope. Some admit no leadership role whatsoever even in the context of universal prayers or specific prayers that would not compromise the integrity of either the speaker or the service if they were said by non-Jews. Often the kind of participation that these policies do allow is silent accompaniment. Additionally, Particularistic Exclusive policies often stress physical differences between Jews and non-Jews, such as requiring that Jews wear tallitot on the bimah, but forbidding a non-Jew from doing so. Some policies go so far as to not allow non-Jews to sit on the bimah. The extent of the inclusion of non-Jews in Particularistic Exclusive policies is very limited. Below, I will discuss what I see as possible questions regarding the various policies. In some cases, I will play "The Devil's Advocate," seeking out potential faults. I will also note strengths.

Policy of Rabbi Harvey Fields of Wilshire Boulevard Temple of Los Angeles, CA[148]

> We want them [non-Jews] to "feel at home," not as strangers or aliens in our midst. We prefer to put our arms around them, and say, "It's great to have you here in our synagogue, wonderful to see how you support the Jewish loyalties of your loved ones. Thanks for being so accommodating, understanding, helpful and loving." But—ah, the awful "but." Shall we go the next step? Treat the non-Jew as a Jew? Shall we allow our ritual to become playtime, make-believe-time, by inviting non-Jews to recite blessings in which the "us" is transformed into "them," and the meaning is demolished or corrupted in the extreme? ...

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[148] Rabbi Harvey Fields, "Non-Jews at Jewish Celebrations" in Defining the Role of the Non-Jew in the Synagogue (UAHC, 1990), pp. 89-91.

There are several questions that I would ask in regard to Rabbi Fields' policy. Is it necessarily the case that the next step, the NEXT step, is treating the non-Jew as a Jew? Do we suddenly leap from considering a Christian mother of a Bar Mitzvah a non-Jew to considering her a Jew when she says the candle blessings for example? And is it make-believe? If the family keeps Shabbat in home and she lights the candles every week, she may feel "Commanded" and "Obligated." We will see that some policies included in this thesis will argue these exact points. Furthermore, who constitutes the "us?" Is the "us" necessarily Jews, or is it potentially those gathered for prayer who consider themselves part of the "us?" Finally, whose meaning is being demolished or corrupted? As I noted earlier, while Orthodox Jews feel included in the "us" in relation to keeping commandments such as lighting Shabbat candles, many Reform Jews do not. The meaning for some Reform Jews might well be that we as a community, including non-Jews, should do this action, lighting the candles. The very act may have a performative meaning in addition to its literal meaning. Thus, we suggest that intermarried families do these acts at home. Are they equally not included in "us" there? Or are they equally included in it? Rabbi Fields continues:

> The point is that I am not dealing with hypothetical human beings when I meet with an intermarried couple about to celebrate their child's birth, bar/bat Mitzvah, or marriage. I am engaging with histories, sensibilities, and loyalties which are distinctive. Because they are, the human beings bearing them must be heard with caring, and counseled with reverence. So much reverence that I must protect them from acting dishonestly, or appearing as counterfeits, that is to say from seeming to be what they are not. Non-Jews at a Jewish celebration are non-Jews sharing the celebration with Jews. Integrity demands that identities be sustained, not abandoned, acknowledged and uplifted, not trivialized with forms of mimicry and masquerade. …

The key point here, and one that makes this policy exclusive, is that the individual non-Jew is being protected from doing something that they may or may not agree with. "I

must protect them from acting dishonestly, or appearing as counterfeits," Rabbi Fields argues. I would ask, as did Rabbi Hoffman earlier, why they cannot do that themselves? I would further ask, what is the intent of this policy? I believe the underlying issue is in fact one of awkwardness, which is implied when Rabbi Fields says, "seeming to be what they are not." Seeming, to whom? Their families and friends know that they are not Jews. The "whom" must be other congregants in attendance who do not know the family, something that would apply much more to congregations with regular Shabbat morning services than to congregations wherein only the family and friends of the Bar or Bat Mitzvah are present. In a congregation with regular Shabbat morning services, however, this may well be an issue that needs to be addressed. Additionally, in regard to Rabbi Field's policy, one must ask whether or not saying a blessing necessarily means that the person is identifying with it or "masquerading"? Here, particularists generally agree that the answer is yes, while universalists generally would argue no. The former makes that determination based upon the meaning of the content of the blessing, whereas the latter may believe in the performative meaning, as I have stated.

> Should s/he be invited to sit on the bimah, called upon for an aliyah in which s/he recites the words "who has chosen us from all peoples by giving us the Torah?" Should s/he be encouraged to address his/her child after the reading of Torah? Shall s/he be relegated to the status of observer with no part, no voice, no hug or kiss in this sacred, highly emotional ceremony of adolescence—this historic bonding rite of his/her child to the Jewish people and tradition?
>
> My practice is to promote the involvement of the non-Jewish parent in his/her child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah if that parent displays any inclination for such participation. "Sit on the pulpit with your child, walk with him/her to the Ark, stand with him/her while s/he reads from Torah, puff up with pride at his/her accomplishment, speak to him/her words of joy, respect and love for his/her study of his/her tradition, tell your child to be a loyal and responsible Jew." ...

Here Rabbi Fields, in enforcing the boundaries set for the community, maintains strong boundaries between the child and his or her non-Jewish parent. No allowance is made that the non-Jew might be part of the child's "tradition." The parent is separate. This is precisely the major problem noted by universalists. Universalists would argue that it is not in the best interest of the child to divide the family so rigidly. It could be argued that this sharp division will often require the child to choose between respecting his or her non-Jewish parent and respecting Judaism. Universalists would argue that this is a choice that no child should face and that it is in the best interest of Judaism and certainly in the best interest of promoting Jews to eliminate or greatly reduce the severity of this choice. For if the child chooses to respect their parent and not Judaism, the Jewish people will likely lose the child.

> We did not, to use the words of Rabbi Solomon B. Freehof's responsum, "require him to pronounce words which he does not believe and thus make of the blessing an insincere formality...." We did not ask him to pretend for just a day or and hour that he was a Jew, and to say "who has given us a Torah of truth." Instead we made it possible for him to be a non-Jew at his son's Bar Mitzvah, and to be himself with his integrity preserved. ... Masquerading in the synagogue is only allowed on Purim.

It is also the case that this policy does not follow Rabbi Freehof's suggestion that an alternate blessing might be read, thus creating an more inclusive environment. Ultimately, it is the attitude that the integrity of Jewish worship and the integrity of non-Jews would be compromised if the non-Jews participate in the service. Thus, the stress on Particularism clearly puts this policy in that camp, and the attitude that the non-Jew is simply along for the ride, allowed only to stand silently alongside their family members, would likely be seen by many, if not a significant majority, of intermarried families as exclusive.

Policy of Rabbi Sally Priesand of Monmouth Reform Temple of Tinton Falls, NJ[149]

> One day I was standing in the hall speaking to our Religious School principal, when a teacher came out of her classroom and said: "Rabbi, my class would like to know if non-Jews can be counted in the minyan." Realizing that the majority of students in this particular class had one non-Jewish parent, I hesitated and replied, "In our synagogue, the answer is yes." The principal told me that he thought I had made a mistake and that I should have said no. As I walked back to my study, I realized that this was but one of many incidents that were becoming commonplace in our congregation, and that all too often, in an attempt to be sensitive to the increasing number of non-Jews among us, we were beginning to misrepresent Judaism. That was the day I decided to ask our Constitution Committee to consider the role of non-Jews in Temple life and to adopt a policy that would protect and preserve the Jewishness of our congregation. ...

I found this paragraph particularly telling. When the question was asked of Rabbi Priesand, she responded in a universalistic way, adapting to the needs of individual Jews at the expense of the Halakhah, stating that in her congregation, non-Jews could be counted in the minyan. The principal of her religious school, clearly a particularist, objected to this position. Interestingly, rather than defending her universalist position, Rabbi Priesand chose to agree with the particularistic one. Rather than saying, "Yes, I was right. For these Jews, for these kids, we need to be inclusive," she said, "No, I was wrong. For my religion, for Judaism, we need to be exclusive."

She realized that she was uncomfortable with the universalistic perspective and its consequences, "the many incidents that were becoming commonplace in our congregation." Furthermore, she decided that being "sensitive" and adapting to the changing needs of her congregants and particularly to families with intermarried parents, "we were beginning to misrepresent Judaism." I again must ask, "Which Judaism?"

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[149] Rabbi Sally Priesand, "The Role of the Non-Jew and the Temple Constitution" in Defining the Role of the Non-Jew in the Synagogue (UAHC, 1990).

If she intended from the start to represent a particularistic view of Judaism, one based in halakhah and not adapting to the changing needs of congregants, then yes, her adaptability was indeed misrepresenting that Judaism. However, if her intention was to be universalistic and welcoming of non-Jews then she was misrepresenting nothing.

Universalism mandates that non-Jewish family members be included in a minyan, if having a minyan is even a consideration. It would require that non-Jewish parents be seen not as non-Jews solely, but as members of a Jewish family as well, part of the Jewish, and I stress the word "Jewish," community. For some reason, walking down the hall, Rabbi Priesand had a transformation from universalist to particularist. Not only that, but it seems that where she once was inclusive, the policy suddenly became exclusive.

> In the course of our discussion, two issues began to surface:
> 1) how best to keep a record of who is Jewish and who is not. (We discovered, for example, that a non-Jewish spouse, who considered herself a member of the Temple and had participated on the bimah, was also active in a local church.)
> 2) what should be the role of non-Jews on the bimah and in leadership positions. (The Ritual Committee was finding it increasingly difficult to know who to invite for aliyot, and some committee chairs had expressed discomfort in deciding who should serve on their committees). ...

It seems that the environment of the congregation had been moderately, if not very, inclusive since non-Jewish spouses were allowed to take leadership roles in the congregation. By changing from a lenient universalism to a more stringent particularism, changes needed to be made in many aspects of the congregation. Suddenly, people who were active and probably helpful as members of congregational committees were no longer able to be on those committees. People who had been active participants in the worship of the congregation were no longer allowed to be as active. Finally, as is evident

below, the congregation decided that it needed to significantly strengthen the differences between Jew and non-Jew:

> Included in the proposed amendments were the following policies:
>
> - that non-Jews seeking to be permanently identified with Judaism and not actively participating in another religion be welcomed as members of our Temple;
> - that a record be kept indicating who is Jewish and who is not; and
> - that a distinction be made between the privileges of membership for all members and those for Jewish members.

Policy of Rabbi Adam Fisher of Temple Isaiah of Stony Brook, NY[150]

> Parents participate in three ways when their children are Bar or Bat Mitzvah. First they take out the Torah and do a reading. A non-Jewish parent simply opens the ark but doesn't do the reading. Second, they have an aliyah. The non-Jewish parent comes up with the Jewish parent who says the berachot. I then say a blessing for both parents. Third, the parents say a blessing for their child. Here the non-Jewish parent says the priestly blessing.

Ultimately at this congregation, a non-Jewish parent is allowed to open the ark, stand silently while their spouse reads the Torah blessings, and read the Priestly Benediction. While it seems that the role of Jewish parents at a Bar or Bat Mitzvah is fairly limited as well, this role is even more limited in the case of a non-Jewish parent.

Policy of Rabbi Robert A. Seigel of Fresno, CA[151]

> For what it is worth, we have an unwritten but rigid policy here (Fresno, California). A non-Jew can open the ark or read an English prayer/poem that does not mention "mitzvot." Additionally, if the non-Jew is a parent, that person can stand in the line with the other parent and grandparents during the "passing of the Torah." However, the non-Jew does not wear a tallit and does not touch the Torah.

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[150] Email sent 1/4/00 10:37:34 AM Eastern Standard Time.
[151] Email sent 1/4/00 7:24:45 PM Eastern Standard Time.

> The non-Jewish parent can speak to the bar/bat mitzvah just as if he/she were Jewish (which we do near the end of the service).
> We have a rule here that everyone on the bima wears a kipah, but all Jews on the bima must also wear a tallit.
> For one bat mitzvah, at the family's request, only the Jewish family members received honors. Near the end of the service, I called up the gigantic Christian family, spoke to them of their love and support for the youngster, and blessed them. It's been a while ago, and I don't remember exactly what I said or which common prayer I used.

At this congregation, a non-Jewish parent may open the ark, read any English prayer or poem that does not mention Mitzvot, stand along side the Jewish spouse for the passing of the Torah and speak to his or her own child while on the bimah. This is, as Rabbi Seigel states, a fairly rigid policy. It is not only exclusive in what may be said, but it stresses differences between Jew and non-Jew physically by not allowing non-Jews to wear a tallit while requiring Jews to do so. All of this is greatly particularistic and exclusive. Saying a prayer for the Christian family as whole is a nice inclusion of them in the service, but again strongly highlights that they are not part of the community.

Policy of Rabbi Samuel Stahl of Temple Beth El of San Antonio, TX[152]

> Here is how we handle the situation at Temple Beth El. On Friday night, on rare occasions, a non-Jewish mother of a Bar/Bat Mitzvah will take part in the candle lighting ritual. She will, however, read only an introduction and physically light the candles. The actual Berakhah will be sung, however, by our Cantorial Soloist, who is Jewish... In addition, before the Kiddush ceremony at the end of the service, a non-Jewish parent or any other non-Jewish relative can offer a special meditation.

This policy is particularistic because it requires that Jews alone read blessings, but it does offer an important inclusion of non-Jews by not only allowing them to physically

[152] Letter sent January 10, 2000.

participate in the ritual, but also to read an introductory statement and meditation that were created to be read by non-Jews. They are included below.

> On Saturday morning, we do not permit a non-Jewish parent to have any contact with the Sefer Torah, such as transmitting it through the Rite of Generations, undressing or dressing it, or holding it during the Haftarah. However, after the Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebrant chants the Haftarah, the non-Jewish parent is often invited to present the translation of the Haftarah from the pulpit.

Here the policy is particularly exclusive by not allowing non-Jews to have "any contact with the Sefer Torah." As noted earlier, where halakhically, there is no problem with a non-Jew touching a Torah scroll, and they could be included halakhically in some of the ritual, this policy chooses to exclude them. That said, allowing non-Jews the ability to read the translation of the Haftarah is a significant honor and inclusion, particularly in that it is not only a speaking role, but may be a lengthy one.

Candle Blessing

> Our candle lighting ritual is not found in our prayerbook:
> Each generation attempts to light the way for its successors, as it is illumined by the generation before.
> So, too, each now is in the shadows of the past, and will cast its shadow to the future. We try to live in the light of truth and morality, love and unselfishness. But often shadows cross a life. We dwell on illness or death, nearly forgetting the bright flame of a life well lived.
>
> (Light candles. Choir sings blessing. After choir is finished, say:)
>
> As we have offered a blessing over these candles of Shabbat, we create light and shadow. May we raise our children in light and bequeath to future generations the brightness of hope, and the quite shadow of peace. AMEN."

Pre-Kiddush Meditation

> We give thanks, O God, for our family, as we rejoice with [Bar/Bat Mitzvah] on this momentous day. May our family circle be warm with love and companionship. In it, may we always find rest from our day's work, and refuge from its cares. May our joys be deepened and our griefs softened by the love we give and receive.

Views of Rabbi Barry Block, Associate Rabbi (Successor) of Temple Beth-El of San Antonio, TX[153]

Rabbi Barry Block explains the congregation's policies and the reasons behind them in further detail:

> For many years, before ordination and since, I have heard about all the stress colleagues feel over the issue of involvement of non-Jewish parents at Bar/Bat Mitzvah. However, we have never had a problem or complaint here, to my knowledge, despite what I believe to be rather stringent rules.
>
> We do not allow non-Jews to handle the Torah in a ritual setting. Therefore, non-Jewish parents do not participate in Torah passing or dress and undress the Torah.
>
> We do not permit non-Jews to pronounce a brachah as shaliach tzibbur. We don't have aliyot to the Torah, other than the Bar/Bat Mitzvah kid, so that's not an issue here. We do allow non-Jewish moms to participate in the candle lighting, but a Jewish person (Bar/Bat Mitzvah kid, sibling, grandmother, aunt, whatever) pronounces the brachah. If the non-Jewish mom wants to say the brachah, that's fine, as long as a Jew says it together with her. At the end of the service, we have a ceremony for saying the kiddush and motzi on the bimah, and all the family is called up, including non-Jewish relatives. While only Jews are permitted to lead the kiddush or motzi, we give non-Jewish relatives a chance to participate by offering an English prayer which we provide.

Rabbi Block notes two important things: first, that by having only the Bar/Bat Mitzvah recite the Torah blessings, there is no problem trying to figure out to whom to give the other Aliyot, and second, that the non-Jewish parent may recite the blessing along with the Jewish person. These are both significant in many ways. By eliminating other aliyot, not only is the service shorter, which many congregants appreciate, but the worries about whom else to call up for aliyot vanish. If there is no "parental aliyah" then there is no concern about how to handle the case of a non-Jewish parent. Additionally, allowing non-Jews to recite blessings along with Jews may feel even more inclusive than having them recite the blessings on their own, because they will feel that they are

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[153] Email #1 sent 7/15/00 8:19:55 PM Eastern Daylight Time. Email #2 sent 7/16/00 3:41:39 PM Eastern Daylight Time.

included in what their loved ones are doing and not only in what the congregation as a whole is doing.

> Again, we have never had a problem or complaint about these policies, and not because our people are complacent. They complain bitterly about our not officiating at interfaith marriages. I'm not sure what all the fuss is elsewhere. The policies I indicated to you are 100% determined by the rabbis. Thankfully, our congregation recognizes the rabbis' authority on the bimah. Also, since we've never had a controversy about this issue, we've never had to justify the policies, so any description of the reason behind them would be informal.
> For me, I guess that the issue is more "halachic," for lack of a better term. The truth is that I believe Reform Judaism is non-halachic, so I'm not using that as a technical term. What I mean is that I think it's improper for a non-Jew to recite the words "asher kidshanu bemitzvotav" as shaliach tzibbur, so I wouldn't let somebody lead those words from the bimah. (Similarly, my reason for not officiating at intermarriages is that I don't think it's proper for a person to make the most important commitment of his/her life "kedat Mosheh v'Yisrael," if that person isn't subject to "dat Mosheh v'Yisrael!") Moreover, I don't think it's proper for a person to pass the Torah through the generations if that person does not possess the Torah.

This is the Particularist position stated succinctly. It is however also a fairly exclusive position when put into practice, since much of the service involves prayers that fall into this category. All this said, Rabbi Block notes that even with its rigid policy, the congregation makes an effort to include non-Jewish parents:

> As for the part of our practice that may be more liberal than that of some Reform Temples -- namely, letting a non-Jewish mom participate in the candle lighting, as long as a Jewish person does so with her -- I really like that one because it indicates that we're going to find solutions in order not to embarrass a non-Jewish parent who is sincerely raising a Jewish child by excluding her from participation in what the mom almost always does.

Policy of Rabbi George Stern formerly of Temple Beth Torah of Upper Nyack, NY[154]

> Non-Jews may not recite Hebrew prayers, or English prayers that include references to "mitzvot" (asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav) or other wordings that they cannot believe. An exception: non-Jewish Bar/t Mitzvah parents may recite the Shehecheyanu in Hebrew and/or English, since it has no theological problems....

[154] Email sent 7/12/00 2:35:12 PM Eastern Daylight Time.

> Non-Jewish spouses may read introductory words to candle blessings as long as they are not Jewish-specific, but they may not recite the berachah. Same with Kiddush.

These restrictions indicate that the policy is particularistic, with Jews and non-Jews sharply differentiated based upon the traditional liturgy. The policy itself dictates what non-Jews do or do not believe, something that Rabbi Hoffman argued with earlier. It does allow non-Jews to participate in those portions of the service, however, by letting them read introductions.

> Non-Jews may open the ark, but they may not march with the Torah scrolls or do hagbah or gelilah or hold the scroll during Haftara reading. We used to have a Torah-passing ceremony which we eliminated so that non-Jewish relatives would not feel left out, because we would not let them participate in passing down a tradition that was not theirs.

The rules regarding the Torah in general are significantly exclusive. It is notable, to say the least, that the congregation chose to eliminate a ritual from the service so that "non-Jewish relatives would not feel left out." It is thoughtful that the congregation would feel this way, but I wonder about the solution of eliminating a meaningful ritual from the service. The Torah ritual in general seems to be highly exclusive with no roles afforded non-Jews, with the exception of opening the ark. They may not even hold the scroll during the Haftarah reading.

> Non-Jewish parents may address Bar/t Mitzvah kids, together with the Jewish spouse, because they have supported the Jewish education and upbringing and they are proud.

This seems to be a fairly important concession for non-Jewish participation, but a non-Jewish parent would likely simply see this as allowing them permission to speak to their own child. They may even feel offended that not allowing this was considered. The portion of the policy that is most exclusive, however is that:

Non-Jews do not sit on the bimah.

This would sharply differentiate between Jews and non-Jews and may even embarrass the Jewish family. It would function as a clear reminder to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah that their non-Jewish parent is not accepted every time they realize that their Jewish parent is behind them, but the other person whom they love and respect is not allowed to be. On the whole then, this policy is particularistic and exclusive to a great degree.

Policy of Rabbi Eric Gurvis as detailed by Rabbi Cathy L. Felix, Interim Rabbi of Temple Emeth of Teaneck, NJ[155]

> I don't know if you heard from Eric Gurvis, the long-time rabbi at Temple Emeth, Teaneck, NJ, but as the interim the Cantor informed me about very rigid rules:
> A non-Jewish mother could not be called up Fri. night for the candle blessing.
> A non-Jewish father could not be called up Fri. night to read the English paragraph introducing the kiddush that the Bar Mitzvah kid chanted from the bimah.
> On Shabbat morning, I could say, "We now call up X's parents for the fourth aliyah" and both parents could stand up, but I could only say the Hebrew name of the Jewish partner and only the Jewish partner was allowed to give the bracha. Either or both parents, even non-Jews, I think, were allowed to address the kid from the bima in a parents' speech.

From Rabbi Felix's note, we can see that she considered this policy to be rigid. It is definitely particularistic, but not well beyond many others. It does seem that there are not many roles that non-Jews may fill in the service and thus it falls well within the Particularistic Exclusive set of policies.

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[155] Email sent 7/12/00 2:44:07 PM Eastern Daylight Time.

The official policy of Rabbi Eric Gurvis as found in A Supplemental Process Guide, edited by Dru Greenwood, in Defining the Role of the Non-Jew, UAHC, 1993

Participation in social, cultural and educational activities including membership on committees is encouraged. However, because the synagogue is first and foremost a Jewish religious institution, committed to the preservation of Jewish religious ideals and values, the leadership; i.e. committee chairs and board members, is Jewish.

In terms of ritual participation on the Bima, a non-Jew will not be asked to read publicly any prayers and blessings which express tenets of the Jewish faith—for example—"Blessed are You, Lord our God...." Rituals directly involving the Torah scrolls are also reserved for Jews.

All members are welcome to open and close the Ark, bless a bar or bat mitvah child, usher at services and sing in the choir."

Policy of Rabbi Eric A. Silver of Temple Beth David of Cheshire, CT[156]

Below is our Temple's policy. Below that is a bit of research I did--in formulating our policy, I interviewed different Christian pastors in our town, and discovered that we were the most liberal congregation in town.

Herewith our policy:

FROM THE RITUAL COMMITTEE

Temple Beth David has many members who are not Jewish and from time to time, questions have arisen concerning the involving of non-Jewish family members in life cycle ceremonies. On March 3, 1993, the Board of Trustees unanimously approved the following resolution submitted by the Ritual Committee:

Temple Beth David warmly welcomes the non-Jewish spouse as a part of the Temple family. He or she is cordially invited to share in the fellowship of the congregation.
The Reform Movement's program of Outreach has led interfaith couples to join Temple Beth David in increasing numbers. From time to time, questions about participation will arise. In order to preserve the Jewish character of our congregation and our worship service, the Temple has established certain policies

[156] Email sent 7/13/00 6:36:36 PM Eastern Daylight Time.

> with respect to the roles which non-Jewish family members might play in Temple rituals.

The explicit intention of this policy is to "preserve the Jewish character of our congregation and our worship service," something that implies that this is in jeopardy because of "the roles which non-Jewish family members" might be playing "in Temple rituals." This would tend to indicate that the policy is particularistic and likely to be exclusive, which as will be seen below, is the case.

> Because the synagogue is first and foremost a Jewish religious institution, it is dedicated to the preservation of Jewish religious ideals and values. Many of the rituals conducted therein express tenets of the Jewish faith and are sacred to Jews, serving to fulfill specific religious obligations for them. Included in the foregoing are any of the liturgical portions, whether in English or Hebrew, from the Barchu through the Alenu, as well as any rituals, ceremonies or activities involving the Torah scrolls, candle lighting and kiddush.

By stressing that "the synagogue is first and foremost a Jewish religious institution," the policy is indicating that it is not foremost something else, namely something that is more universal. It is a "Jewish religious institution" and not a "house of assembly for all peoples" perhaps. It is "dedicated to the preservation of Jewish religious ideals and values," perhaps as opposed to being dedicated more generally to the needs of its members? I suggest these alternatives not because I know that they are the alternatives, but because the wording of the policy leaves open such an interpretation.

Furthermore, the policy indicates that the congregation agrees with the Teshuvot for the Nineties responsum in regard to the obligations of Jews. In a blanket statement, the policy then excludes non-Jews from virtually the entire service from the Barchu through the Aleinu including the entire Torah service and the honors of candle lighting and kiddush. This is an extremely exclusive policy, virtually eliminating any possible role for non-Jews in the majority of the service.

> However, in order to involve the non-Jewish family member in the service, we invite and encourage participation in the service in liturgical readings that are not mandated under Jewish law. For example, selections from the Psalms may be read prior to the Barchu or immediately preceding Alenu. A non-Jewish family member may wish to offer a blessing or statement immediately preceding Alenu or following the Kaddish. Such readings or statements are to be approved by the Rabbi of the Congregation before they are read from the pulpit. Interfaith families are encouraged to consult with the Rabbi or the chairperson of the Ritual Committee if they have any questions about Temple practices.

That non-Jews may recite a Psalm, blessing, or statement during a marginal portion of the service is not a tremendous inclusion. Overall, this policy is one of the more exclusive ones that are included in this thesis. The fact that the congregation considers itself "the most liberal congregation in town," does not mean that it has an inclusive policy in the least. What it means is that all of the Christian congregations in the town are particularistic and exclusive to a great degree. Reform Judaism as a whole is much more accepting than almost any other western religion, so it is not surprising that this would be true. I have included the rest of the policy including the statements of other clergy in the town because they were used in the formulation of this policy.

> And herewith the comments of different clergy: Obviously, from the Catholics and Lutherans, it was an absolute no. Here are the others: following responses received from various church pastors in Cheshire, Feb 10, 1995

Methodist:

> This is the case in our congregation, certainly with the more formal parts of the service that lay people do. We would want them to be a Methodist. The extemporaneous parts of the service are open to anybody, but anything else would be discouraged on practical theological grounds. It just doesn't make sense. We might invite a non-Christian to give the message, but not the service itself. It would be comparable to your asking me to read a passage in Hebrew, even transliterated into English characters. I could say it--I could mouth the words, but it wouldn't mean anything. It would be making a mockery of your religion.
>
> As to bar mitzvah, this is a part of the Jewish heritage that is celebrated in a particularly Jewish way and it just doesn't make sense for a non-Jew to be a part of it.

It seems that having respect for one another's traditions would make it obvious that there are some parts that you just don't do. Otherwise it has evolved into a kind of feel good religion kind of pop spiritual kind of thing. I would feel an obligation to guard against that. Most of the churches would be far more restrictive. I would imagine that we're the most liberal in town. None of them would give it as much leeway as you're giving it.

Episcopalian:

We are restrictive not only against other Christians, but even against Episcopalians. About two thirds of our liturgy must be done by an ordained person--this means a priest, a deacon, or someone else ordained to recite the liturgy. As far as the intercessionary prayers are concerned--we call these "the prayers of the people"--anybody could stand up and say the words aloud in church and we would have no barrier on that.

As for your situation, I can't even understand why somebody would want to do that. There's a core in each religion that has to be reserved for those who believe.

Congregationalist:

No one may preach unless invited by the senior pastor. Regular liturgy every Sunday: may be done by lay person who is a participant (= member of the congregation.) Someone who is a Congregationalist and a participant in another congregation may lead the liturgy on invitation only.

Someone who is a Christian and a member of another congregation might, under the rarest of circumstances, lead a portion of the liturgy, but the situation would have to be something on the order of an interfaith or ecumenical day.

Question from Eric Silver: Must the reader be a Christian? What if a non-Christian wanted to lead the liturgy or participate in the service in some way?

Answer: Why would that happen? I can't conceive of that ever happening. What would they want here?

Communion must be ordained person or theological student on the church staff & if not, then by invitation of board of deacons. If done by lay person, an ordained person must be present.
Furthermore, the liturgy needs to reflect the faith of the person doing it, and in its absence it becomes hollow words. It's just being faithful in the very true sense. Can any man say to another man's wife "I love you" without it being a gross insult? How can you express the faith if you don't share it? And they don't come much more open than a Congregational Church.

Written Policy of Temple Anshe Sholom of Hamilton, Ontario. "What is the role of the non-Jew at Temple Anshe Sholom?"[157]

> At Temple Anshe Sholom, our services are open and everyone is welcome. A non-Jew may wear a Kippa (wearing a Kippa is the general custom at our Synagogue), though only those who are Jewish should wear a Tallit.

We have seen cases in which there is an attempt made to differentiate Jews from non-Jews by requiring Jews to wear tallitot, but prohibiting non-Jews from doing so. This policy does that to an extent, by prohibiting non-Jews from wearing them, but since it does not require Jews to do so, it is likely that many Jews would not and therefore this would not serve to sharply differentiate the two.

> It is appropriate at Temple Anshe Sholom for a non-Jew, during life cycle events or on special occasions and in consultation with the Rabbi, to read a selection at services with a universal theme before the Barchu or a suitable passage before the candle blessing. At Bar and Bat Mitzvah, our Congregation has a moving ceremony where Jewish grandparents and parents pass the Torah to the child ("from generation to generation"). In the case of a non-Jewish parent of the Bar or Bat Mitzvah, the custom at our Synagogue is to invite that person to join his or her partner in passing the Torah during this ceremony, explaining to the congregation that each parent, while from different traditions, has played an important role in passing the Torah/Judaism to their child. Both parents are also asked to participate in a personal blessing to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

Non-Jews may only read selections with universal themes before the service really starts, before Barchu, or some sort of introduction to the candle blessing. This is fairly exclusive. However, two notable inclusions are mentioned. A non-Jewish parent may participate actively, joining his or her partner, in passing the Torah, because each "has played an important role in passing the Torah/Judaism to their child." Additionally, both parents may offer a personal blessing to their child. As these are highly visible and emotionally charged moments, inclusion of non-Jews will have a stronger impact than

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[157] Policy adopted September, 1999. Pages 9-10. Rabbi Irwin Zeplowitz.

they otherwise might have in making non-Jews feel included, but more so in making the child feel that his or her non-Jewish parent is included.

> While a non-Jew may participate in the specific rituals noted above, it is appropriate to reserve certain activities for those who are Jewish. These would include serving as the service leader or Sheliach Tzibur- "emissary of the community", reciting the candle blessing, reciting kiddush, opening and taking the scroll from the ark, holding, lifting, dressing or carrying the Torah, reciting the Torah blessings or reading from the Torah scroll.... As our choir is involved in leading services, singing in the choir is reserved for those who are Jewish.

Here the policy is quite particularistic and exclusive. Not only are the rules regarding the Sh'liach Tsibbur enforced with any prayer leader considered as an "emissary of the community", but the entire Torah service, with the exception of the Torah Pass, is excluded. Among the potential honors not permitted to non-Jews are a number that would likely normally go to the parents of B'nei Mitzvah, such as candle lighting, kiddush, opening and closing the ark, holding and lifting the Torah, dressing, undressing , and carrying the Torah. The blessings over the candles, kiddush, and the Torah blessings are understandably restricted because the policy is particularistic. The other restrictions concerning the handling of the Torah are imposed in an exclusive policy, generally for reasons of awkwardness or reasons arising from sensitivities of the congregation regarding the Torah. An inclusive policy might well allow non-Jews to do these things as will be seen in the section on Particularistic Inclusive Policies.

Written Policy of Temple Emanu-El of Atlanta, GA

> Two thousand years ago, Jews and non-Jews lived side by side in their separate but interacting communities. The rabbis of old knew that for a distinct community to survive, it needed laws and structure. Today we continue to need laws and structure. We recognize the family as central in nurturing Jewish identity and in establishing a Jewish home. It is for that reason that families founded upon a

> marriage between Jews and non-Jews require special guidance regarding acceptable practices within our sacred community. ...
> According to our understanding of the covenant between God and Abraham, certain religious obligations are incumbent only upon Jews. Prayers of universal intent, however, are appropriate for any member of the congregation to lead. This includes most prayers in Jewish worship services.

The policy notes that certain "obligations are incumbent only upon Jews." This tells us that what will likely follow is a particularistic policy. The question is whether or not the policy will be inclusive or exclusive. The policy seems to imply that it will be inclusive by saying that prayers of universal intent are appropriate for any member of the congregation and that this includes "most prayers in Jewish worship services." We would expect then that there would be few restrictions.

> B'rachot (blessings) and some central prayers such as the Shema and the Aleinu, relate to the covenant between God and the Jewish people, and therefore are particular obligations for Jews. That is why leading these prayers from the bimah (pulpit) is reserved for Jews. This limitation does not restrict anyone's personal recitation of the prayers.

This short paragraph concludes, it seems to me, that most of the prayers in the service are "particular obligations for Jews." Most of the prayers are B'rachot or central prayers such as Shema and Aleinu. I must wonder then what large number of universal prayers are included in the services mentioned. It would seem to me that with these restrictions the vast majority of prayers in Jewish worship services would be restricted.

> Because the Torah is particular to the Jewish people, the Torah blessings (aliyot), the Torah reading itself, and all aspects of handling the Torah are reserved for members of the Jewish faith. Aspects of the Torah service which do not involve handling the Torah, such as opening and closing the Ark doors, are appropriate for participation by Jews and non-Jews alike. ... At Temple Emanu-El, a child observes his/her Bar/Bat Mitzvah as a part of the regular Shabbat morning service....

Having severely restricted non-Jewish participation in the majority of the service, basically prohibiting non-Jewish participation from the Barchu to the Aleinu with the

exception of perhaps the Prayer for the Nation or other prayers added to the traditional service, and prohibiting them from reciting the candle blessings or kiddush, the congregational policy now prohibits non-Jewish participation in any vocal part of the Torah service and even restricts any handling of the Torah. Non-Jews are solely allowed to open and close the ark.

Were these policies in force in a congregation where the Bar or Bat Mitzvah is the "family's service" as suggested by Rabbi Friedman earlier, this policy would not be well received and might not function at all. It is highly exclusive and prohibits non-Jews from many opportunities to participate, even from joining their Jewish spouse in doing so. However, in a synagogue where the Bar or Bat Mitzvah takes place as part of the regular congregational Shabbat service and there are "regulars" in attendance, it makes more sense to be exclusive. So when the policy states that, "At Temple Emanu-El, a child observes his/her Bar/Bat Mitzvah as a part of the regular Shabbat morning service," the policy makes more sense to me. This is a particularistic and highly exclusive policy.

Written Policy of Rabbi Richard Agler of Congregation B'nai Israel of Boca Raton, FL "A Special Note to Interfaith Families..."[158]

> Congregation B'nai Israel prides itself on making intermarried couples especially the non-Jewish spouse feel comfortable and at home here in our synagogue... It is, however, the nature of a Jewish congregation that certain synagogue rituals are observed only by Jews. For example, reading from the Torah, reciting the blessings when honored with an aliyah (being called up) to the Torah, lighting Shabbat Candles, making kiddush, and symbolically passing the Torah on, L'dor vador (from generation to generation). All of these are manifestly Jewish, religious acts that are observed at our religious services by a Jewish member of the family.

[158] Excerpts from the policy.

This first paragraph tells us that the policy is a particularistic one. It appears that most ritual actions and the vast majority of speaking parts are restricted to Jews alone. Significantly, no attempt is made to include a non-Jewish spouse in the Torah Pass, not even allowing them to stand along side their spouse as this is done. How does the congregation strive to include non-Jews?

> Yet, there are numerous opportunities for the non-Jewish partner, and other non-Jewish family members, to participate in our services. We welcome you to accompany your Jewish spouse to the Torah for an aliyah, stand beside your daughter for Shabbat candle lighting and your son for Shabbat kiddush on Friday evening; open and close the Ark; stand with your child before the Ark for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah blessing on Shabbat morning; present appropriate prayers or readings on Friday evening or Saturday morning.

Ultimately then, non-Jews may stand silently as their spouse or child recites the Torah blessings, lights the candles, and leads kiddush. They may not even offer their own blessing of their own child, but must stand silently along side their child. The lone exceptions of active participation are opening and closing the ark and presenting "appropriate prayers or readings."

Written Policy of Rabbi Daniel Pernick of Beth Am Temple of Pearl River, NY[159]

Non-Jews, Temple members or not, are welcome at Beth Am Temple and are encouraged to participate in services as part of the congregation. Non-Jews are permitted to sit or stand on the bimah for all services. They may participate from the bimah as follows:

- Non-Jews shall be permitted to recite appropriate prayers and readings that refer to the generic "God" as opposed to those that use references to the specific Jewish relationship to God (such as "Our God", "Who has commanded us", "Your people Israel", "Lord"/"Adonai", etc...
- Non-Jews shall be permitted to light the small candle preceding the kindling of the Shabbat candles.
- Non-Jews shall be permitted to accompany a Jew who is reciting the Torah blessings and may be identified by name as accompanying that person. Non-Jews shall not be given any designated role in the Torah or Ark services.
- Non-Jews shall be permitted to be called by name and to accompany the Jewish presenter of a Tallit to a Bar/Bat Mitzvah.
- Non-Jews shall be permitted to be called up by name and to accompany the person/s saying the motzi and kiddush at a Bar/Bat Mitzvah.
- Non-Jews shall be permitted to address their child during the service at which the child celebrates becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah.
- The Rabbi shall be the judge of what is appropriate participation.

The restriction on prayer language and "appropriate prayers and readings" qualifies the policy as particularistic. It tends toward the exclusive because what non-Jews are permitted to do generally involve silent participation, wherein the non-Jew simply accompanies their Jewish spouse. It is a nice touch that their accompaniment is announced in the case of Torah blessings. Permitting non-Jewish parents to address their children during the service would likely be expected by almost all parents and thus is not a significant inclusion, but as mentioned earlier, the opposite would be a significant exclusion. Overall, non-Jews are not afforded many opportunities to participate, and even fewer not in the company of their Jewish spouse or child.

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[159] Approved by the Board of Trustees on March 21, 1995. Amended (fourth paragraph) by the Ritual Committee on February 13, 1997. Excerpted.

Written Policy of Temple Adat Shalom of Poway, CA
"Involvement of Non-Jews at Temple Adat Shalom"

On the cover is the following quotation, "You shall not oppress a stranger, for you know the feelings of the stranger, having yourselves been strangers in the land of Egypt."

As regards worship, the policy includes the following statements:

> For many years, it had been the custom of our congregation for only Jews to handle and to carry the Torah. However, at Rabbi Prinz' recommendation... it was decided that non-Jewish parents and grandparents who felt that they wished to participate in the Torah passing at our Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremonies would be welcome to do so.
>
> This decision was based upon traditions and texts gathered in a responsum written by Rabbi Solomon Freehof.... In his book Reform Jewish Practice, he quotes from major rabbinic sources such as the Tosephta, the Talmud, Maimonides and the Shulchan Aruch to support his thesis:
>
> "There is no objection in the Law to non-Jews touching the scroll; in fact the law permits even such as are ritually unclean to touch the Scroll of Law and read from it" (p. 58-60).[160] Based upon this very clear evidence, the Committee and Board decision now enables the non-Jewish relatives of our B'nai Mitzvah to more fully participate in this simcha. ...

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[160] Though it refers to Jews alone, see also Solomon Freehof, "An Unworthy Man Called to Torah" CRR (UAHC, 1969), pages 62-70.

Page 63. The difficulties involved in this question (concerning "an unworthy man called to Torah") are reflected in the very wording of the dispute as it was presented to Simon ben Zemach Duran [fourteenth-fifteenth century, Tashbetz II:261]. Some of the disputants considered that what was involved was kevode ha-Torah, the honor due to the Torah, and therefore the dignity of the service. Other disputants insisted that to come up to the Torah reading was an obligation, a mitzvah, and therefore we have no right to keep a man from his religious duty.

p. 64 But being called up to the Torah may not be a mitzvah at all. It may be a right that any Jew can claim and, therefore, could protest if he were not called up to the Torah after a long time.

p. 65 Is it a duty, a mitzvah, incumbent upon every Jew, to be called up to the Torah? When a boy who is to be Bar Mitzvah is called up to the Torah, his father is required to recite the blessing (Baruch sh'petorani). Now, clearly in this case, this is a religious duty incumbent upon the father. How could we possibly prevent him from performing this mitzvah, even if he were a notorious sinner? Yet, even in this case, it is to be observed that it is doubtful whether the blessing is really required. The requirement is found in a note by Isserles in Orach Chayim 225:1, and even he is uncertain about it and, therefore, suggests that in reciting the blessing, the father should leave out God's name.

> While non-Jews do not receive aliyot to the Torah, they may stand with a Jewish spouse who recites the blessings. Rabbi Freehof also wrote of the inappropriateness of non-Jews reciting blessings which bless God for having chosen us for the fulfillment of a particular commandment.[161]
>
> Non-Jews may not recite the blessings for the candles but may stand with a Jewish family member during the candle lighting and read appropriate English introductions.

This policy is particularistic because it bases restrictions on content of prayers and does not allow non-Jews to recite particularistic blessings. Its only concessions to non-Jews are universalistic blessings and touching the Torah scroll. On the whole it is a fairly exclusive policy.

Written Policy of Temple Beth Orr of Coral Springs, FL

> The congregation will accept as Jewish, and the rabbi will induct into our community of faith, any Member's child who is being raised as a Jew, and who is ritually named (in the case of girls) or circumcised in accord with the Abrahamic Covenant (in the case of boys).

While not a policy regarding non-Jews, this paragraph says several things about the religious ideology of the congregation. The congregational policy literally determines who is a Jew!!! Only those who are circumcised (boys) or named (girls, only) are considered Jewish by this congregation. It may be the case that this only refers to children of intermarriages and that the policy demands that a public act of adherence to the Jewish tradition be made prior to such a child being considered a Jew. However, it may be asked whether this statement also means that even though a child may have two Jewish parents, without these ceremonies, that child will not be considered Jewish by the congregation. Without even reading the rest of the policy, by strongly stating the requirements of

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[161] Solomon Freehof, "Gentile Stepfather at Bar Mitzvah," CRR, no. 23, pp. 91-93.

admission into the community, one would assume that the policy is both highly particularistic and highly exclusive.

Under the heading "Worship and Life-Cycle" are the following quotes:

> "For my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples." Isaiah 56:7.
>
> Halachah (Jewish law; the normative conduct of Jewish life) permits certain kinds of ritual participation by unconverted non-Jews in the life of our Jewish worship community.

This policy uses a redundancy that stresses just how different non-Jews are when it calls them "unconverted non-Jews." I assume that the policy is not implying that there are "converted non-Jews," since after undergoing conversion they would be "Jews." The policy also stresses that the community is a "Jewish worship community" as opposed to something not ritually oriented.

> However, the privileges of leading Congregational worship or publicly performing ritual honors which explicitly proclaim Jewish Covenantal identity are reserved only for those committed to and practicing the Jewish faith.
>
> The non-Jew may:
> *Share an aliyah by association, standing by as his or her Jewish spouse recites the benedictions over the reading of the Torah;
> *together with his or her relatives, receive secondary Torah honors (hakkafah, g'lilah or hachnassah) or opening the Ark for Aleinu at family celebrations such as baby namings and Bar-or Bat-Mitzvah;

Ultimately, non-Jewish participation is limited to silent accompaniment and secondary Torah honors. Having limited the role of the non-Jew to this, the policy reinforces what non-Jews are not allowed to do:

> The non-Jew may not:
> *Serve as sh'liach tzibbur by leading public worship or performing on behalf of the Congregation such religious obligations as lighting Shabbat, Chanukah and holiday candles; blowing the shofar, blessing the lulav and etrog, chanting or reciting Kol Nidrei, Akadmut or the megillot;
> *be given principle Torah honors such as hotza'ah, hagbahah and aliyah;

*marry at the Temple or with the officiation of the Rabbi or Cantor in any other venue.

This paragraph begins by stressing the particularistic nature of the policy and the stringent enforcement of it. It concludes by stressing what appears to be the major purpose of this policy, which is to discourage intermarriage, something that is done explicitly here and is the only such case among the policies included in this thesis.

Policy of Rabbi Allen Freehling of University Synagogue of Los Angeles, CA[162]

Non-Jewish grandparents are invited to join the celebrant in reading one of the opening passages in the service, because the text is either from Psalms or it articulates a general, human theme rather than something specifically "Jewish."

Non-Jewish relatives or very close friends may be invited to open the Ark doors at certain times during the service and even to help "dress" the Torah after it has been read.

When we pass the Torah from one generation to the next, it is not handed to either a non-Jewish grandparent or parent.

A non-Jewish parent has the choice of reading a passage from the prayer book as long as that text causes no discomfort.

During a Torah ritual, relatives are invited to have an aliyah, our code words are: "We invite Sarah Smith to offer a blessing, accompanied by John." So, the non-Jewish person's presence is acknowledged while not having that individual involved in reciting an inappropriate b'racha; he/she comes to the bema but remains silent when the blessing is recited by the Jewish individual.

On the whole this policy is clearly particularistic and exclusive because it limits non-Jewish participation in most cases to silent accompaniment and excludes them altogether from the Torah Pass, not acknowledging any role that they may have played in their child's Jewish upbringing. The non-Jewish parent is acknowledged by name as a

[162] Email sent 9/11/00 7:34:57 PM Eastern Daylight Time.

parent when the Jewish relative is called up for an aliyah, but this inclusion is not enough to move the policy on the spectrum from exclusive to inclusive.

Policy of Rabbi Bruce Kahn of Temple Shalom of Chevy Chase, MD[163]

> They are welcome to sit on the bima, to open and close the doors of the Aron Hakodesh, to march in a hakafa, to make speeches from the bima and to read appropriate sections of the liturgy.
>
> They are not permitted to hold a Torah scroll, to undress or dress a Torah or say the blessings for the reading of Torah. They may not administer the special bar/bat mitzvah Torah charge we use.
>
> We formulated the questions we wanted to answer. We studied Jewish sources in relation to those questions. We selected Jewish principles of decision-making that would guide us. We studied the material and set about our deliberations. When we finished, we presented our findings to the board. Then we held study sessions for the general membership to encounter the material we used. Then, at an annual congregational meeting, the members voted on the policy. The policy follows:

The Role of the Non-Jew in Temple Shalom[164]

> Non-Jews are warmly welcome to attend worship services at Temple Shalom and, upon invitation of the Rabbis, participate in leading that worship. The role they shall exercise in leading the worship, whether at regularly scheduled services or at life cycle events, shall be determined by the Senior Rabbi. He/she shall use as a general guide the American Reform Responsa of 1979 #6 entitled, "Participation of Non-Jews in a Jewish Public Service" understanding that the Board recognizes that recommendation #3 ("through the recitation of prayers for special family occasions") be broadened to include all Congregational services.

We welcome non-Jews to our services and:

1. to sit on our bima
2. to open and close the doors of the Holy Ark
3. apart from the Torah ritual, to lead any segment of the service which the rabbi deems appropriate.

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[163] Email sent 7/12/00 6:57:44 PM Eastern Daylight Time.
[164] Passed by the Board of Temple Shalom in March, 1989.

In essence, non-Jews are allowed to sit on the bima, open the Ark, and perhaps, to read universal prayers. I am assuming here that all blessings with particularistic language are deemed inappropriate for non-Jews to lead. Significantly, a non-Jewish parent is not allowed to read the Bar/Bat Mitzvah charge that is regularly used, clearly distinguishing a Jewish parent from a non-Jewish one. Non-Jews are allowed to read parts of the introduction to the candle blessings (see below) and actually light the candles. This policy is highly particularistic and seems to be fairly exclusive. It seems possible that a different senior rabbi could come to the congregation and institute a more inclusive policy in the future since the rabbi determines what is appropriate and therefore has some leeway within the policy.

From "B'nei Mitzvah Reading Parts for Non-Jewish Participants:"

> We do all we can to welcome participation in our bar and bat mitzvah services by family members and friends who may not be Jewish. It is not our desire to exclude but to include as we read in Isaiah: "Your house shall be a house of prayer for all peoples." Temple Shalom members seek to create an atmosphere of loving warmth and peace.

From this introduction, one would expect an inclusive policy, but as was seen above, the policy is fairly exclusive. The congregation has also prepared a list of readings that they consider to be appropriate for non-Jews to read in the Gates of Prayer (Blue). I thought it beneficial for those wishing to form policies and to determine where their own may be found on the spectrum to include the list. It is as follows:

> Parts of the Friday Night candle-lighting selections which may be led by non-Jews. Non-Jews may also light the candles:
>
> Friday Night Services
>
> #1 (p. 117): paragraph two

#2 (p. 142): sentence one
#3 (p. 158): sentences one through six
#4 (p. 176): sentences one and two
#5 (p. 189): the second and third reader sentences in this responsive reading
#6 (p. 204): first two paragraphs, but not the last line before the blessing
#7 (p. 219): sentences four and seven
#8 (p. 244): the reading before the blessing
#9 (p. 260): the last three lines on the page
#10 (p. 269): the last three lines on the page

Saturday Morning Services

Service One: Reading #4, bottom of p. 285 to top of p. 286, reading #7, p. 288-289, readings from p. 290 through the top of p. 300, and p. 301.

Service Two: bottom half of p. 318, top half of p. 321, meditation on p. 325, responsive reading from the bottom of p. 326 to the top of p. 327, and bottom half of p. 330.

Service Three: p. 333, top half p. 335, top half p. 340, top paragraph p. 343, bottom of p. 344 to the very top of p. 345, and Psalm 15 p. 346.

Service Four: the last paragraph on p. 348 and the first three paragraphs on p. 349, bottom of p. 349 through the top of p. 350, bottom of p.356 through the top of p. 357, bottom half of p. 361 and all of p. 362.

Service Five: top half of p. 364, the middle and bottom of p. 367, and the bottom of p. 375 through the top half of p. 376.

Service Six: the responsive reading on p. 378 and the responsive reading on p. 386.

Written Policy of Temple Sinai Congregation of Toronto, ON "Religious Practices and Policies"

Ritual Participation

As noted, Non-Jews are welcome in the Temple. While we will always do everything possible to make our guests feel welcome, maintenance of the religious integrity of the congregation demands that ritual honors be reserved for Jews. Accordingly, at family life-cycle events, supportive non-Jewish family members may, where appropriate, be invited onto the *bima*, but they will not be invited to participate in the ritual aspects of the service.

This is an extremely exclusive policy that seemingly does not even grant any speaking opportunities to non-Jews at all. If it does, it would most certainly not allow any prayers to be read. Ultimately, this policy is one of the more extreme examples of particularistic exclusivism that I have encountered.

The Role Of Non-Jews In Jewish Reconstructionist Federation Congregations

I have included the official policy of the Reconstructionist movement here, because, like the Reform movement, they too have significant numbers of non-Jews in their communities. The following policy may be found at the Reconstructionist movement's website:

> This report views the role of non-Jews through the lens of values that have their roots in Jewish tradition and Reconstructionist ritual and practice. Values discussed in the report include: commitment to community; connection to God; democracy; diversity; holiness (kedushah); human dignity; integrity of Jewish ritual practice; Jewish continuity and the survival of the Jewish people; Jewish education; maintaining an inviting and accepting atmosphere; preservation of Jewish tradition; preserving peace in the home (shelom bayit); and welcoming the stranger/guest (hakhnasat orhim).
>
> The sheliah tzibur (prayer leader) must be Jewish; appropriate opportunities to participate in the prayer service may be offered to non-Jews.
>
> Aliyot, hagbah (lifting the Torah), and gelilah (wrapping the Torah) must be reserved for Jews.
>
> Particularistic blessings, those containing the words asher kideshanu bemitzvotav (who made us holy through your commandments), must be reserved for Jews. Universalistic blessings, (birkhot nehenin, blessings of enjoyment), may be said by non-Jews.
>
> In conjunction with beney mitzvah ceremonies, non-Jewish family members who encouraged the child's preparation and education may be included in the following ways:
>
> Affirmation of respect at Erev Shabbat candle lighting or during the Torah service.

Sheheheyanu prayer.
Personal prayers and supplementary readings
Presenting the tallit.
Addressing personal remarks to the bar/bat mitzvah.
Ark opening.
Making the motzi.
Meeting with the rabbi to plan the service.
Working on social action and/or study projects.

Establishing clear rules also minimizes the confusion and pain that can accompany difficult situations in important life cycle events. The absence of clear policies and procedures is a disservice to Jews and non-Jews alike.

This is a particularistic policy par excellence, and a very exclusive one with non-Jewish participation extremely limited in scope. The bulk of the service is completely devoid of any opportunities for non-Jewish participation and during the Torah service the only opportunities involve silent actions. The only significant speaking parts are supplementary readings and personal prayers and remarks. Notably, this policy is very similar to that desired by the Teshuvot for the Nineties responsum.

Policy of Rabbi Mark Washofsky as found in Jewish Living: A Guide to Contemporary Reform Practice[165]

As a religious matter, the essential distinction between Jews and non-Jews remains a vital element in the movement's discussions over mixed marriage, conversion, and its stance toward non-Jewish religious observances and customs. The fact remains that Reform Judaism, like Judaism in general, is a religion marked by particularistic Jewish elements along with universal "human" ones. The question, as always, is one of boundaries: At what point does Jewish ritual life become an exclusively or primarily Jewish affair, so that a non-Jew, though welcome to attend, may not participate on an equal footing unless he or she converts to Judaism? The drawing of these boundaries has become more complicated due to the profound demographic changes that have taken place within the North American Jewry in recent years.[166] ...

[165] Mark Washofsky, Jewish Living: A Guide to Contemporary Reform Practice (New York: UAHC, 2001).
[166] Pages 23-24.

> In this new social reality, "boundaries" become ambiguous and much harder to draw... Reform responsa have nonetheless insisted that the lines be drawn. The synagogue is emphatically a *Jewish* institution... There is a valid distinction to be made between the Jewish people, members of that historical covenant community who bear its identity and its sense of destiny, and all others...[167]
>
> To say that a non-Jew who has not formally adopted Judaism may be granted a full and equal role in the public religious life of a Jewish community is to say that the concepts of peoplehood, covenant, and historical identity do not, in the end, really matter very much, or that it makes no substantial religious difference whether one is a Jew or a non-Jew....[168]
>
> The line drawn in the responsa is based on that which distinguishes public from private worship. A non-Jew does not take leadership roles in specifically Jewish rituals in public worship.[169]

Not surprisingly, this policy is much in line with the Teshuvot for the Nineties responsum that was discussed in detail earlier and does not add a great deal to what was said in that responsum with one exception. The policy in the Guide helps to further explain the Particularistic Exclusive perspective on the issues facing Reform Judaism and those issues seen as threatening Jewish identity today.

While I agree for certain that one may not say that a non-Jew is a Jew, I must question Rabbi Washofsky's statement that, "To say that a non-Jew who has not formally adopted Judaism may be granted a full and equal role in the public religious life of a Jewish community is to say that the concepts of peoplehood, covenant, and historical identity do not, in the end, really matter very much, or that it makes no substantial religious difference whether one is a Jew or a non-Jew." Universalistic policies, as we shall see later, stress the concept of "peoplehood" strongly. If they grant non-Jews an equal role, or, more likely, a more equal role than they would be given by a particularistic policy, it is generally because of a desire on the part of those policies to do what is

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[167] Pages 24-25.
[168] Page 25
[169] Ibid.

necessary to keep the children of intermarriages Jewish and to encourage them to raise their children as Jews. On occasion it is also because the rabbi and/or congregation does not believe in the concepts of "chosenness," "commandedness," and/or "obligation," concepts stressed in the Teshuvot for the Nineties responsum as being vital to Jewish identity. We will see examples of these below in the section on Universalistic policies.

Rabbi Washofsky argues that the concepts of covenant and historical identity do not matter very much in policies that do not strongly differentiate Jews from non-Jews. The assumption is that they should matter and therefore policies should differentiate the two strongly. One of the main issues addressed in this thesis and, as I see it, certainly one of most difficult problems facing the Reform movement today, is what happens when it is, in fact, the case that for a rabbi and/or a congregation the concept of covenant does not mean as much as it does to a particularist and that a rabbi or congregation believes not in a well-defined historical identity, but in an ambiguous evolving one. As we shall see in the section on the Universalistic policies, many Reform rabbis and congregations see ambiguity not as an enemy, but as friend, allowing policies to adapt to the needs of individual families. More importantly, such policies may evolve to fit the needs of those congregations in ways that a more particularlistic policy cannot. That said, while it is helpful to Universalists, it is this very evolution that frightens particularists, who do not see a healthier Jewish people and Judaism emerging because of the evolution, but a different Jewish people and a different Judaism altogether. Perhaps, evolution may benefit survival, but it certainly threatens identity.

Particularistic Inclusive Policies

21. Article by Rabbi David Ostrich of Temple Beth El of Pensacola, FLA.[170]
22. Policy of Rabbi David Ostrich of Temple Beth El of Pensacola, Fla.[171]
23. Policy of Rabbi Lawrence Mahrer of Congregation Beth Israel of Florence, SC.[172]
24. Written Policy of Temple Israel, Dayton, OH.[173]
25. Policy of Rabbi Norman Cohen of Bet Shalom Congregation of Hopkins, MN.
26. Policy of Rabbi Alan Greenbaum of Adat Elohim of Thousand Oaks, CA.[174]
27. Written Policy of Temple Emanu-El of Marblehead, MA.[175]
28. Policy of Rabbi Bruce Kadden of Temple Beth El Salinas, CA.[176]
29. Policy of Rabbi Ellen W. Dreyfus of B'nai Yehuda Beth Sholom of Homewood, IL.[177]
30. Policy of Rabbi Tom Louchheim of Or Chadash in Tucson, AZ.[178]
31. Policy of Rabbi Brian Michelson of Temple Oheb Sholom of Reading, PA.[179]
32. Written Policy of Rabbi Elias Lieberman of Falmouth Jewish Congregation of East Falmouth, MA[180]
33. Policy of Rabbi Debbie Cohen of Congregation Beth Shalom of Cary, NC.[181]
34. Policy of Rabbi Morley Feinstein of Temple Beth-El of South Bend, IN.[182]
35. Written Policy of Temple Emanuel of Worchester, MA.[183]
36. Policy of Rabbi Norman Koch of Temple Sholom of New Milford, CT.[184]
37. Policy of Rabbi Hillel Cohn of Congregation Emanu El of San Bernadino, CA.[185]

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[170] Rabbi David Ostrich, Letter to the Editor, CCAR Journal (Summer, 1994). The letter was written in response to Michael Meyer's "On the Slope Toward Syncretism and Sectarianism," CCAR Journal (Summer, 1993).
[171] Letter sent Sept. 28, 2000.
[172] Rabbi Lawrence Mahrer, "The Role of the Non-Jewish Parent in Synagogue Life-Cycle Ceremonies: A Rabbi's Reflection" in Defining the Role of the Non-Jew in the Synagogue (UAHC, 1990), pp. 92-97.
[173] "A Family Affair: Involving Non-Jewish Family Members in Jewish Life-Cycle Events," a creation of the Outreach Committee, Temple Israel, Dayton, OH, 1992. Written during the tenure of Rabbi Mark Glickman, currently rabbi of Temple Beth El of Tacoma, WA.
[174] Alan Greenbaum 1/4/00 8:10:55 AM Eastern Standard Time.
[175] David J. Meyer is the Rabbi of Temple Emanu-El. Email sent 1/4/00 AM EST.
[176] Email from Rabbi Bruce Kadden of Temple Beth El Salinas, CA. 7/13/00 11:31:30 AM Eastern Daylight Time.
[177] Email sent 7/24/00 2:11:48 AM Eastern Daylight Time.
[178] Email sent 7/12/00 5:57:34 PM Eastern Daylight Time.
[179] Email sent 7/13/00 11:45:42 AM Eastern Daylight Time.
[180] Email sent 7/13/00 10:15:47 PM Eastern Daylight Time.
[181] Email sent 1/3/00 6:20:47 PM Eastern Standard Time. Debbie Cohen is now the associate rabbi at Temple Emanuel in Cherry Hill, NJ.
[182] Letter sent January 6, 2000.
[183] Submitted March 22, 1995. Rabbi James Simon.
[184] Email sent 1/4/00 10:46:52 PM Eastern Standard Time.
[185] Email sent 7/13/00 12:02:30 AM Eastern Daylight Time.

What characterizes a Particularistic Inclusive Policy?

Particularistic Inclusive policies are ones that seek to strongly differentiate between Jews and non-Jews in the worship experience, but also seek out ways to include non-Jews in that experience. When there is doubt as to whether or not a portion of the service should be exclusive to Jews, inclusive policies will generally not choose to make them exclusive. There is a great deal of flexibility here. What may be obviously something that must be exclusive to Jews in one congregation may be equally obviously not so in another. The sensitivities of individual rabbis and congregations play a major role in determining the extent of inclusion, as will be seen below. Also noticeable in these policies is that in many cases the symbolism, meaning, and context of portions of the service, if not of the entire service, is significantly different from that expressed in Particularistic Exclusive policies, though as will be seen later on in this work, still far from those of universalistic policies.

Some scholars and rabbis, mostly particularistic ones, worry that we may go, or have already gone, too far to accommodate the needs of non-Jews in our congregations. Rabbi David Ostrich eloquently argues an opposing view. His argument provides a good introduction to this type of policy. His policy follows with my analysis.

Article written by Rabbi David Ostrich of Temple Beth El of Pensacola, FL[186]

> In the subject under discussion—the participation of non-Jews in synagogue services, the "slippery slope" argument definitely applies, but to what purpose? Do we use the metaphor to get us out of the business of accommodating non-Jewish family members of our congregants, or do we use it to note the fact that

[186] Rabbi David Ostrich, "Letter to the Editor," CCAR Journal (Summer, 1994). The letter was written in response to Dr. Michael Meyer's "On the Slope Toward Syncretism and Sectarianism," CCAR Journal (Summer, 1993).

> we live in two worlds and often try to bring them together? The whole point of our reforms, both cosmetic and theological, was to somehow find a middle ground so that we can live authentically in both.

The "slippery slope" argument is that when we begin to make concessions, we begin moving down a "slippery slope." Once we begin this process, we will inevitably continue to slide down the slope. The slope in this case is away from tradition and exclusive Particularism to "syncretism and sectarianism." Rabbi Ostrich believes that we are not dealing with a "slippery slope," but rather with terrain, though slippery, upon which we may find a middle ground and stand. As Rabbi Ostrich notes later, it is necessary for us to descend the slope and for us to try to maintain our ground thereon.

He argues that we must accommodate non-Jewish family members of our congregants because the reality of their lives necessitates this. Extreme positions are not to be our goal. Rather, we should find a middle ground that we feel is authentic to both Judaism and the lives of Jews. Significantly, this middle ground will differ from congregation to congregation and rabbi to rabbi. Rabbi Ostrich continues:

> The problem of non-Jews participating in Jewish services is fraught with philosophical and emotional difficulties, but what in our religion is not? At every step in our reforming process, there have been those who have accused us of being untrue. The Orthodox say that we have abandoned Judaism, and the secularists (like Felix Adler and Heinrich Heine) say that we hold on to too much of our primitive, superstitious past. To many, we have already "descended" beyond the point of safe return, slipping off the slope and out of Judaism. And yet, Reform Judaism feels it has not slipped too much. We like living on the slope, pulled by two cultural poles and finding meaning and beauty in such hilly terrain.

According to this philosophy, that we go against traditional Judaism is not unexpected and not outside of the normal practices of Reform Judaism. Those who stand on the Particularist side of the argument may well argue that Universalists, for example, are being untrue and that they have abandoned Judaism. Universalists might just as easily

argue that Particularists are practicing a primitive, superstitious form of Judaism, which many Reform Jews have rejected and/or which cannot adapt to our modern needs. However, even among Particularists the debate ranges over inclusion and exclusion of non-Jews.

> Some of us feel more comfortable than others in drawing and maintaining definitional lines along the slope. When it comes to participation by non-Jews in our services, we draw the lines where we think them appropriate and live comfortably in our ability to be both true to Judaism and inclusive of non-Jews who are supportive of our Jewish enterprise. We may argue about where the lines are to be drawn, realizing all the while that the slope is indeed slippery, but there is value in including non-Jews who honor and support Judaism by helping the Jewish members of their families to be Jewish. To abandon the slope entirely, just because it is slippery, would be to exclude people who are—even though they have not converted—part of our process.

The key point here is that "we draw the lines where we think them appropriate and live comfortably in our ability to be both true to Judaism and inclusive of non-Jews who are supportive of our Jewish enterprise." Rabbi Ostrich argues that we differ on what each of us considers appropriate and comfortable for us as rabbis and for our congregations. We form policies, according to him, in order to be authentic to Judaism and inclusive of non-Jews. I would argue that some congregations and rabbis do not wish to be "inclusive" at all and that they do in fact desire not to set foot on the "slippery slope." Many of the Particularist Exclusive policies that are included in this thesis would appear to fall into this category. Rabbi Ostrich argues that we really have no choice but to try and stand on the slope, slippery though it may be:

> When there is value in an in-between position, it may be the right place to be. It may be dangerous, and we must always be cautiously mindful of our balance. But, as Tevye the Dairyman would say, we do not really have much of a choice. Life is like a fiddler on the roof.

Policy of Rabbi David Ostrich of Temple Beth El of Pensacola, FL[187]

> We welcome non-Jewish friends and family members to do anything in the service that does not contain Jewish exclusive language: 'Asher bachar banu" or something like that. This means that non-Jews may open the Ark, undress and dress the Torah, read the prayer for healing, and lead the motzi... It is obviously important to the Jewish people who made the decision inasmuch as they want their non-Jewish family members included. For what it's worth, I have never had a complaint about this.

This is a normal particularistic policy, restricting recitation to Jews of prayers with particularistic language. It is, however, also inclusive in that the policy allows a number of roles for non-Jews to play in the service. Notably, the policy cites as a reason for its accommodation that Jews "want their non-Jewish family members included." Furthermore, Rabbi Ostrich notes that people have not complained about the inclusiveness in his congregation. He continues:

> The big question came for me early in my tenure here when a family wanted a Handing-down-the-Torah ceremony. I have always used the Edmund Flegg "I am a Jew..." reading, giving each of the handers-down two of the lines. When it came up in an interfaith family, I knew that the "I am a Jew" would not be appropriate, and yet, I also knew that the non-Jewish mother had raised her daughter Jewishly. It occurred to me that, instead of prefacing the line with "I am a Jew", it would ring true for her to say, "I give you this Torah because..." It more directly spoke to the symbolism of the ceremony, and it was a fact: even though she was not Jewish herself, she had brought her child to the Temple, attending services and helping out in Sunday School, giving her daughter to Judaism—and thus, giving the Torah to her daughter. To say, "I give you this Torah because Judaism demands no abdication of the mind," or "I give you this Torah because the word of Israel is both the oldest and the newest," states the obvious truth of her endorsement of Judaism for her child. I liked the way this sounded so much that I changed all the lines from Flegg's piece to "I give you this Torah because," and have been very happy with it for nine years.

This alteration of the Torah Pass is a tremendous inclusion of non-Jews. Not only does Rabbi Ostrich include non-Jews in the ceremony and give them credit for raising the

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[187] Letter sent Sept. 28, 2000.

child as a Jew, but he altered the text of the reading that he normally uses in order to make the text readable by them. Non-Jewish parents would feel highly included in the ceremony, but more so, their children would see that their religion values the role that they have played.

Policy of Rabbi Lawrence Mahrer of Congregation Beth Israel of Florence, SC[188]

> In our congregation, the ceremonies of Consecration and Bar/Bat Mitzvah strive to be inclusive of non-Jewish family members, without compromising the liturgy, theology and practice of Reform Judaism. ...

This statement, particularly the words "without compromising the liturgy," demonstrate that what will follow is a particularistic policy. One would expect restrictions based upon the wording and content of prayers will be found in the policy. This is in fact the case. However, rather than simply not allowing non-Jews to read such prayers, this congregation has chosen to pursue the alternative offered by Rabbi Freehof in the responsum we discussed earlier, namely to alter the wording of some of these prayers so that they could be said by non-Jews while maintaining the integrity of the speaker. I leave it up to the reader to determine whether or not this process compromises "the liturgy," something stated as a purpose of this policy. The policy continues:

> Wording of this nature [who has chosen us, who has given us] is inappropriate for non-Jews since they cannot be included among the "us". ... While the language of certain portions of our liturgy may be particularistic to Jews, the importance of involving the non-Jewish parent in this significant life-cycle event cannot be dismissed. This has led to a number of suggestions designed to include the non-Jewish parent. In those congregations where the parents of B'nai Mitzvah lead the rituals of lighting Shabbat candles and reciting Kiddush at the beginning of Friday evening services, the wording included in Gates of Prayer might be changed

[188] Rabbi Lawrence Mahrer, "The Role of the Non-Jewish Parent in Synagogue Life-Cycle Ceremonies: A Rabbi's Reflection" in Defining the Role of the Non-Jew in the Synagogue (UAHC, 1990), pp. 92-97.

> slightly for the occasion. For example, the text of the candle lighting ritual from Service #1 in Gates of Prayer (p. 117) reads:
>
> Source of mercy, continue Your loving care for us and our loved ones. Give us strength to walk in Your presence on the paths of the righteous, loyal to your Torah, steadfast in goodness. Keep far from us all shame, grief, and anguish; fill our homes with peace, light, and joy. O God, fountain of life, by your light do we see light.[189]
>
> Simply by changing the word Torah... to teaching, the text can be made suitable for a non-Jewish mother to recite on the occasion of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah of her child. It is assumed that this mother would read only the top two paragraphs [and not the blessing itself], and while she is lighting the candles, the blessing would be sung in Hebrew by the congregation, the cantor/soloist or choir. ...

It seems to me that this does not do the trick. First of all, there is a significant problem with the definition of "Torah." Torah, in the rabbinic tradition generally does not refer to the Five Books of Moses alone, but to all of Jewish religious literature as well as oral and written legislation. Or it could simply be interpreted to mean "Teaching" or "Instruction." In the first case, I would argue that it is not necessarily the case that the vast majority of Reform Jews would ask to be "loyal" to the halakhic tradition, and that they would themselves be inauthentic saying this prayer with that meaning. Even if their interpretation of "Torah" were the Five Books of Moses by themselves, it is doubtful whether the majority would ask to be "loyal" to it, particularly when one could cite numerous parts of it that they regularly violate such as Kashrut laws. If one were to use the more universal translation of "Torah" to be "Teaching" or "Instruction" then it seems to me that there is no reason to modify this language at all.

> In efforts to include the non-Jewish father in this ritual [Kiddush], some have suggested that the wording might be changed along these lines:
>
> The seventh day is consecrated to the Lord. This day is celebrated and sanctified with wine, the Jewish symbol of joy. Our family gives thanks for all our blessings, for life and health, for work and rest, for home and love and friendship.

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[189] Gates of Prayer, CCAR, 1976.

> On Shabbat, eternal sign of creation, we remember that we are created in the divine image. The Kiddush cup is raised in thanksgiving.
>
> At this point, the Hebrew of the Kiddush would be sung and the translation of the Kiddush would be omitted or read by the entire congregation, led by the rabbi. ...

Here the simple question must be asked, can a non-Jew not say, "with wine our symbol of joy?" Why is wine suddenly exclusively a Jewish symbol? I think that it is true that one could alter the wording of the candle blessings and kiddush to allow non-Jews to read them, but I do not agree with these particular alterations. If I wished to do this, I would simply eliminate "the Jewish symbol of joy," leave it as "our symbol of joy," or change it to "reminding us of the joyous nature of the day." It makes no sense to me at all that a non-Jew should be prevented from saying something that he or she may well believe. We certainly are not the only people who celebrate with wine, though we may be the only people who celebrate with overly sweet wine.

> Non-Jewish parents may be included in the ceremony of passing the Torah from generation to generation, a particularly moving moment that I use at all B'nai Mitzvah in our congregation. The non-Jewish grandparents do not participate in this ceremony. The non-Jewish parent is invited to stand with the Jewish parent before the open Ark. It is in part the consent, support and encouragement of the non-Jewish parent that has made the passing of Torah to the next generation possible. The actual passing of the Torah is from the Jewish parent to the child. When a non-Jewish parent is involved, I only give the Torah to one representative of each generation present, and only to the Jew in the parental generation. Care must be taken in the choice of words spoken as the Torah is moved from one generation to the next so as not to embarrass the non-Jewish parent by inclusion or exclusion. My own preference is to use something like this:
>
> In a few moments, (child's name), the scroll of Torah will be handed to you. But, first, we give it to one of your grandparents. The teachings of our religious heritage have come down to us through hundreds of generations. The strength and courage and dedication (Torah moved to parental generation) of all of those unknown and unnamed people have made it possible for us to stand before this Ark and this congregation on this important day (Torah passed to child) in your life. Now the Torah is yours. Hold it tightly. Guard it well. Carry it around this Sanctuary and through your life with pride, pleasure, happiness and blessing.

Inclusion of the non-Jewish parent here is silent accompaniment. This is not highly inclusive. The Jewish parent alone handles the Torah. Care is taken not to embarrass the non-Jewish parent by what is said during the Torah Pass, but it also carefully avoids directly acknowledging the role that that parent played in raising the child as a Jew.

> Finally, I offer each child the option of having his/her parents stand at the lectern while the Torah is read. ...The choice belongs to the child. Non-Jewish parents are included, at the child's request. Parents never recite the Aliyah blessings; the child does. Non-Jewish parents have expressed gratitude for having been given the opportunity to stand publicly with their child while the Torah is read.

Since there are no other aliyot, there is no concern about whether or not to allow a non-Jew to participate. It is a nice touch to allow parents, no matter what their religion, to stand silently as their child reads the Torah. This policy tries to go to what the rabbi considers to be great lengths to include non-Jews, but on the whole the policy is marked by silent accompaniment and it is a far cry from active participation. I feel that the attempts to be inclusive are significant enough not to call this policy exclusive, particularly in relation to altering the language of prayers, but it falls short of being significantly inclusive.

The rabbi notes something significant at the end of the policy:

> A final word of caution: ...Parents may be wary of the response of the rabbi to dealing with non-Jews in this forum and concerned that their child's experience will be affected by the presence and/or participation of non-Jewish family members.

This caution is the driving force behind inclusive policies in general, particularly those with a particularistic slant. As Rabbis Alexander Schindler and Julian Morgenstern noted, we must do what we can to keep these children Jewish. We must be concerned about how the ways that we treat their non-Jewish parents will be perceived by them.

Written Policy of Temple Israel, Dayton, OH[190]

> There are several meaningful and significant ways for a non-Jewish parent or grandparent of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah to participate in the ceremony, without compromising either the integrity of the ceremony or the integrity of the non-Jewish parent. ...

With this introduction, this is clearly a particularistic policy, using the characteristic language. The policy will then either take the path offered by the policy above and offer alternative texts to allow for non-Jewish participation or it will simply make those prayers exclusively for Jews. Furthermore, it will either alter the meanings of rituals to accommodate non-Jewish participation, or it will make those rituals exclusively for Jews. This policy makes them exclusively for Jews in both cases.

> Prayers such as the Shema, Ve'ahavta, Mi Camocha, Avot, Aleinu and the Kaddish, express uniquely Jewish sentiments or remember uniquely Jewish national events, and are not appropriate for a non-Jew to recite. Likewise, such ceremonial events such as aliyah or the symbolic passing down of the Torah from parent to child are not appropriate for involvement by the non-Jewish parent. These are matters of Jewish tradition, of which the non-Jewish parent is not a part.

The policy has now set a rigidly particularistic base, making it difficult to offer inclusions to non-Jews. However, it then proceeds to do so in such a way that it becomes a fairly inclusive policy overall.

> On the other hand, there are numerous places during the service in which the non-Jewish parent could very comfortably and meaningfully take part. There are appropriate prayers or readings, while not part of the traditional liturgy, that present a theme or sentiment from the traditional service in an ecumenical way. For example, the blessings preceding the Shema deal with the power of God and the beauty of creation. There are readings and prayers on those themes which would be acceptable for any religious orientation. The blessings concerning revelation preceding the Shema are presented in the distinctly Jewish form, dealing with Torah and mitzvot; but, again, the ideal of revelation- a love and understanding between God and humankind- could be the basis of a prayer or

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[190] "A Family Affair: Involving Non-Jewish Family Members in Jewish Life-Cycle Events," a creation of the Outreach Committee, Temple Israel, Dayton, OH, 1992. Written during the tenure of Rabbi Mark Glickman, currently rabbi of Temple Beth El of Tacoma, WA.

> reading meaningful to Jew and non-Jew alike. Even the Mi Camocha, the song of Jewish national freedom and redemption, contains a tacit message that applies to all people. Through an appropriate prayer or reading, the non-Jewish parent can show that "These themes touch me, too."

In other words, even though the policy to this point is extremely Particularlistic and somewhat exclusive, it combats that exclusivity by seeking ways to add possibilities of inclusion for non-Jews. If non-Jews are not able to say the traditional prayers, perhaps appropriate readings may be found and included in the ceremony. This is a very inclusive position and counteracts to a certain extent the exclusivity of the paragraphs above.

> Similar possibilities for the involvement of the non-Jewish parent in the service can be found throughout. The Avot prayer, showing the relationship of God to all generations and of us to our Jewish ancestors, could provide the place to thoughtfully point out that this child has a unique ancestry, and that God remembers the faithfulness of all the child's ancestors. The prayers of thanksgiving and for peace certainly strike universal themes and lend themselves to ecumenical thoughts.

Now the policy moves beyond normal inclusion to a new level of inclusion. Not only does it allow for additions to the service on the periphery; i.e. prior to the Barchu, but it allows for an additional reading to come during the Amidah itself after the Avot! Furthermore, it suggests that this reading point out that the child is the product of a mixed marriage!

> Each parent might wish to briefly congratulate their child and express their personal feelings of joy and pride. These sentiments are expressed during the service, but need not have a distinctly Jewish theme. ...

Here the policy takes on a greatly inclusive tone. Not only are non-Jewish parents allowed to address the child, but they are also given expressed permission to be authentic to their own beliefs in their speech. The policy on the whole is clearly particularistic, but also definitely inclusive with non-Jewish participation actively encouraged, just as the policy states that it should be:

> The involvement of the non-Jewish parent in the child's bar/bat mitzvah ceremony has many benefits and should be actively encouraged.

Policy of Rabbi Norman Cohen of Bet Shalom Congregation of Hopkins, MN[191]

From Teshuvot for the Nineties as cited by Rabbi Alexander Schindler on Dec. 7, 1993:

> When a non-Jewish spouse is supportive of the Jewish upbringing of the children, he [Norman Cohen] involves them in a number of ways in the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony. While the non-Jewish partners do not actually pass the Torah, they stand with the Jewish spouse and Norman says to them quite clearly: 'The Torah is passed from your grandparents to your mother who, with the loving support of your father, passes it on to you.' And when the Jewish parent is invited to do the Torah blessing, the non-Jewish parent stands with him/her and recites the following words:
>
> 'My prayer, standing at the Torah, is that you, my son/daughter will always be worthy of this inheritance as a Jew. Know that you have my support. Take its teachings into your heart and, in turn, pass it on to your children and those who come after you. May you be a faithful Jew, searching for wisdom and truth, working for justice and peace.'
>
> This policy as portrayed here seems to be a particularistic and inclusive one.

There are distinctions made between Jew and non-Jew, particularly in the Torah Pass, wherein non-Jews are specifically included by the words spoken by the rabbi, even as they are physically excluded by not actually passing the Torah itself. The prayer that Rabbi Cohen has written to be read by the non-Jewish parent would be appropriate for any parent to read at a Bar/Bat Mitzvah. I would encourage its use even in cases when both parents are Jewish. In that way, having a non-Jew read it would be even more inclusive since they would be taking part of something in the regular Bar/Bat Mitzvah

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[191] Teshuvot for the Nineties, p. 75, footnote 38, and other materials sent by fax from Rabbi Cohen on Jan. 4, 2001.

ceremony and not something added to accommodate them specifically, which by its inclusion points out that they are not Jewish.

From "Informal Policies of Bet Shalom Congregation Regarding Participation of Non-Jewish Spouses":

> Participation in the public ritual life of Bet Shalom Congregation includes many opportunities for non-Jews to participate in an appropriate fashion. No one, no matter what their religious beliefs, is excluded from worship in our sanctuary.

At the very beginning, this policy declares its particularistic stance, since some things are not "appropriate," and that it intends not to be exclusive. It was noted above that the policy goes to some lengths to include non-Jews, but that these lengths will likely not compromise the particularistic beliefs of the congregation and will attempt to prevent non-Jews from compromising their own beliefs as defined by the rabbi. This will be seen below:

> In addition, it has been our tradition to invite non-Jews to participate on the pulpit in blessings which do not include the phrase "asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav", "who has commanded <u>us</u> with these mitzvot". Non-Jewish spouses are invited and encouraged to ascend the pulpit <u>with</u> their family when that family is invited to read the candle blessings and the kiddush at our Shabbat services.

Participation by non-Jews is silent accompaniment. They are not allowed to recite particularistic blessings even if they themselves might agree with them. This accompaniment is encouraged at two points in the service which are most likely times when Jewish parents would be given honors, namely the candle blessings and kiddush.

> During a Bar or Bat Mitzvah of one of their children, a non-Jewish spouse is invited and encouraged to stand with the Jewish spouse as the Torah is passed from one Jewish generation to another. As the Torah is passed to the Jewish parent, there is a recognition that the non-Jewish parent is supportive of the transmission of Torah and Jewish tradition to their youngster. When it is appropriate, non-Jewish grandparents are also invited to assist in the opening of the ark at that special moment in their grandchild's ceremony. During the Bar or Bat Mitzvah ceremony, the non-Jewish spouse may also stand with the Jewish

> spouse, who recites the Torah blessings at that appropriate time. We also have a special blessing that can be recited by the non-Jewish spouse at that time. This blessing recognizes the ongoing support of that non-Jewish spouse, while respecting his or her own beliefs and those of Bet Shalom Congregation, as well.

This is the policy cited by Rabbi Schindler above. Notable here is the possible inclusion of non-Jewish grandparents as ark openers. Again, beyond the special prayer that may be recited by non-Jews, (which I suggested could be recited by any parent and possibly should), participation by non-Jews here is silent accompaniment. On the whole, this policy is quite particularistic and falls somewhere between inclusive and exclusive:

> In all cases, these informal policies are designed to retain the integrity of Jewish tradition, while welcoming and encouraging appropriate participation by non-Jewish spouses who are a part of our community.

Excerpts from "What does it mean to say a Brakhah?" A sermon delivered Rosh Hashanah morning, 5754.

> We are a synagogue, established to help us fulfill some basic Jewish goals: to learn and to practice our unique heritage, to enrich our people's lives, to guarantee the survival of the Jewish way of life, and to create a haven and environment for Jews who elsewhere find themselves so often outsiders.

This speech is essentially an explanation of reasons behind the policy decisions. The guiding goals behind the policy are significant. They are, as I see them, the practice of Judaism, enriching the Jewish life, guaranteeing the survival of Judaism and creating a Jewish home. What is not said is also significant, because it differentiates this policy from a Universal one.

This policy does not mention a desire to enrich the lives of member families inclusive of non-Jews, but to enrich the lives of "our people," which seems to exclusively refer to Jews. There is no problem with a synagogue believing that it has no role in enriching the lives of non-Jews, even of non-Jewish spouses, as well, but this is a

particularistic goal and does indicate that the congregation is oriented in that direction. Furthermore, the policy desires the "survival of the Jewish way of life," and does not seek "the survival of the Jewish people." This is not simply a semantic difference. Rather, this policy, a particularistic one, seeks the survival of the Jewish way of life, of Judaism, the religion, whereas a universalistic policy would seek the survival of the Jewish people, even at the expense of the "Jewish way of life." Rabbi Cohen touches on part of this dispute below:

> We could see the challenge defined by two seemingly paradoxical parameters: 1) in order to be warm and welcoming, we want to establish opportunities for the participation of the ger toshav, the non-Jew; 2) in order to be true to normative Jewish tradition, we need to discern the limits of that participation.

For Rabbi Cohen, the discussion is about the extent to which the congregation should be inclusive or exclusive of non-Jewish participation. Others would see the challenge in a completely different light, not concerned about being warm and welcoming to the non-Jew, but doing what is necessary to keep their children Jewish. Furthermore, some might even totally disagree with the second point and argue that Reform Jews cannot claim to be "true to normative Judaism" in any case. We shall see similar arguments made in the section describing universalistic policies.

> On the one hand, we want to be welcoming and warm to those who seek God, community, and study in our synagogue while supporting and encouraging the creation of Jewish home and raising Jewish families.... On the other hand, it is equally our responsibility to be true to normative Judaism, maintaining the integrity of our tradition, and preserving our heritage in an appropriate fashion.... We also have the obligation to remember that no matter how liberal we like to picture ourselves, Judaism is not just whatever we wish it to be.

Here, Rabbi Cohen is clearly particularistic. The "integrity of our tradition," as has already been seen in numerous policies, is clearly of prime importance, as is being "true to normative Judaism." As some universalistic policies will argue explicitly later,

one must ask what "our tradition" is, why we have a "responsibility to normative Judaism," and what "normative Judaism" is. Is our tradition one that demands adherence to Halakhah? Is normative Judaism the Judaism practiced by Orthodox Jews, Conservative Jews, or by the majority of Reform Jews in this country? Is what is normative to be decided by each rabbi and each congregation? Or is it to be decided by each individual Reform Jew? Rabbi Cohen seems to reject the last possibility.

He states that, "Judaism is not whatever we wish it to be." I think this begs the question, then what is it? If I am not to define it, who is? The rabbi? The congregation? The CCAR? The UAHC? HUC-JIR? Or shall we look to the Shulchan Arukh and the traditions of Orthodoxy? I can only smile wondering what Dr. Alvin Reines would say.

> There are boundaries and limits that define any religious community. There is no community that could survive where an "anything goes" attitude exists.... Conflict is unavoidable when it comes to synagogue rituals. We want to accommodate the non-Jew, yet our ceremonies must reflect the integrity of Jewish religious idealism. Consider, for example, the communion ritual of the Catholic Church. The Eucharist or host is a wafer-like cracker representing the body of Christ and the wine is symbolic of Jesus' blood, shed for the redemption of human sin. When Catholics take communion they consume these two symbols affirming the belief in what they represent. There is no way that a non-Christian should participate in such an act, no matter how supportive they are of their children in the church. Why should Jews expect our symbols to mean less than that? ...

It is true that when Catholics take communion they eat the "body of Christ" and drink "Jesus' blood." Catholics actually believe in that symbolism. I am not sure that the vast majority of Reform Jews would believe in that kind of symbol. We cannot even agree on what most Jewish symbols mean, much less expect people to defend them vehemently. What does the holiday of Chanukah symbolize, for example? Is it the miracle of the oil, as we teach our children? Is it that our people overcame religious persecution? Is it that the Hasmoneans in a coup d'etat ousted the High Priesthood that

had reigned for 800 years and declared themselves to be kings and high priests even though they had no legitimate claims to either? Is it an eight-night holiday because the people needed to make up for missing Sukkot? Is it because the original holiday marked the time of the Winter Solstice? I wonder to which Jewish symbols we are referring and then to whose definitions of those symbols?

> For a non-Jew to recite such a blessing [Torah blessings] in front of a Jewish congregation could be perceived as a mockery, however unintentional, of its meaning, and a compromise on the part of the non-Jew respecting his/her own beliefs.... No matter how much a Christian accepts "the Old Testament", it is still not Torah, our own particular Jewish perspective on our Biblical writings, quite different from a Christian interpretation of our tradition....

It is true that the Christian concept of the "Old Testament" is clearly at odds with any Jewish interpretations. For beginners, Traditional Judaism teaches that the Torah is not the "Old Testament," but the only testament. I say "Traditional Judaism," because some Reform Jews reinforced by modern scholarship could argue that it is not a testament, or covenant, but rather a collection written by human beings. Interesting here is that Rabbi Cohen does not raise the possibility that a Jew could say a blessing that they do not believe. For example, in our regular Torah service, we lift the Torah and proclaim, "This is the Torah that Moses lifted up before the people of Israel from the mouth of Adonai." Yet, our scholarship tells us that the likelihood is that every bit of this is false. Most Reform Jews find this statement highly questionable, if not laughable. Is it not a mockery of Orthodox Jews, who do believe this statement, for these Reform Jews to say it? Or are we saying it because it has a meaning beyond its content, a performative meaning?

Rabbi Cohen points out something that is significant toward the end of this paragraph, which is that he believes that Jews have "our own particular Jewish

perspective on our Biblical writings," which is definitely "quite different from a Christian interpretation." I do not question the latter point, but must the former. Do we indeed have one particular perspective? The old joke comes to mind, ask five Jews their opinion on an issue and you will get ten opinions. Which takes me back to the point made earlier concerning symbols. There is little doubt that the vast majority of Catholics have the same view, or at least a similar view, of what the wafer and the wine are supposed to mean, even if they do not agree with that meaning. I highly doubt that such consensus exists among Reform Jews for any symbol connected to our religion.

> The choice to convert is always a possibility as far as we are concerned. If someone chooses not to become a Jew, we must respect that but not pretend that there is no difference.
>
> And what about people who do convert? Do we not have a responsibility and obligation to them? What are we saying to them when we make no distinctions between them and those who have not made that formal commitment? ...

As will be seen later on in the section dealing with universalistic policies, when we make no distinctions between Jews and non-Jews we do not encourage conversion. However, for most universalistic policies, conversion is not the goal. The only concern is for the children of intermarriages, which is why universalistic oriented rabbis generally, (I cannot say exclusively for lack of data), perform intermarriages. Particularistic rabbis, seeking to strengthen the distinctions between Jew and non-Jew, must also encourage conversion.

> We are a Jewish religious congregation. Our leaders should be committed Jews, for whom saying a bracha is a mitzvah. At the same time, we can create a community which is warm and welcoming to those who have found their way into our midst.

This last paragraph hints at the issue that I raised earlier, namely what happens when Jews do not believe in the meaning of the blessings. I assume that the connection

between "Jewish religious congregation" and "committed Jews" implies that the Jews in question must agree with the particularistic sentiments of the blessings. If they do not agree, I assume that they would not be considered "committed Jews." Otherwise, it seems to me, this policy would say, "Jews," without modification. By further adding, "for whom saying a bracha is a mitzvah," the policy seems to suggest the possibility that even among Jews some are not suitable. This gives the policy a consistent philosophy that is not found in many policies. It suggests that the policy applies to Jews and non-Jews alike. Only those who actually believe in the words, among Jews, should say them.

Whether or not this is enforceable for practical reasons is a different story. I think that it would be awkward to ask Jews whether or not they believe that God commanded Jews to light the Shabbat candles for example and then tell them that they cannot say the blessings if they do not believe that statement. I doubt that such questions are ever asked. However, to avoid any measure of hypocrisy, and I am not speaking solely about this policy by any means, but about all particularistic policies, such concerns need to be addressed. It seems to me a highly questionable assumption to assert that all Reform Jews believe in the content of particularistic blessings. This assumption is generally rejected by universalistic policies.

On the whole this policy is highly particularistic, and relatively inclusive. In practice, it seems to be more inclusive, whereas the theories behind the policies seem to desire more exclusivity.

Policy of Rabbi Alan Greenbaum of Adat Elohim of Thousand Oaks, CA[192]

> I have always "drawn the line" in the following way: Aspects of the service which require a bracha should involve only people who are Jewish. These include: Erev Shabbat candle lighting and Aliyah. Everything else is open to people regardless of their religious beliefs.... I really like to encourage participation by as many people as possible in this regard and the families seem to appreciate that.

This policy is not detailed enough for a full analysis, but it is clearly a particularistic policy, with blessings limited to Jews. The statement "everything else is open to people regardless of their religious beliefs" seems to indicate to me that not only is there a desire for inclusion, but inclusion in practice to a significant degree.

Written Policy of Temple Emanu-El of Marblehead, MA "The Role of the Non-Jew in the Ritual Life of Temple Emanu-El"[193]

> Temple Emanu-El has a long history of welcoming non-Jews within the midst of our congregational community. Our By-Laws make explicit this stance of inclusion, conferring the privilege of Temple membership upon those married to Jews. We have established Outreach as a standing committee of the Congregation, with its chair serving as a full, voting member of the Board. And as a congregation, we wish to involve non-Jewish members and their loved ones in the ritual and celebratory life of the congregation to the extent to which such participation is appropriate and upholds the integrity of our services and our worshippers. This policy statement is intended to clarify for our members the manner in which non-Jews may share in the various ritual aspects of synagogue and family life.

Looking at the introduction to the policy, two things struck me right away: 1) non-Jews are considered to be part of the congregational community; and 2) the policy intends to clarify their role. The language of the introduction seems very inclusive and welcoming, even though it is particularistic.

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[192] Alan Greenbaum 1/4/00 8:10:55 AM Eastern Standard Time.
[193] Adopted by the Board of Trustees on June 3, 1996. David J. Meyer is the Rabbi of Temple Emanu-El. Email sent 1/4/00 AM EST.

> BAR/T MITZVAH: The Bar/t Mitzvah service affords many opportunities for family honors and participation, some of which are appropriate for non-Jewish parents, family and friends.
>
> BIMA GUESTS: It is the custom of our congregation that the parents of the Bar/t Mitzvah are given the honor of sitting on the bima with their child throughout the service. This honor may be accorded to Jewish and non-Jewish parents alike.

One must ask the question whether or not being allowed to sit on the bimah during your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah is to be considered an honor on the same level with other honors, or if it should be expected? I would argue the latter, that it is something that would normally be expected and therefore does not qualify as a particularly inclusive policy. However, it may be that in the environment of the Temple, this is a significant honor for Jews to receive and not something that they would expect. If this is the case, then to grant non-Jews this honor would be significant and represent a move toward being inclusive.

> TORAH PASSING: Our Torah Passing Ceremony re-enacts the faithful transmission of Torah and the Jewish tradition from one generation to the next, "from grandparents to parents to children." A non-Jewish parent who has played an active or supportive role enabling the transmission of Torah to their child may participate in this ceremony. It is not appropriate for non-Jewish grandparents to participate.

This statement which allows non-Jewish parents to participate in the Torah Pass is a significant inclusion of non-Jews, not to be overlooked, and moves this policy closer to those particularistic policies that are inclusive; however, as will be seen, other parts of the policy are more exclusive.

> PRAYERS AND BENEDICTIONS: The traditional formulation for the blessing (beracha) which accompanies all prescribed acts of sanctity expresses the reciter's personal identification with the Jewish people, history and Covenantal obligations (mitzvot) -- "Blessed are You, O Eternal our God, Sovereign of the universe, who has made us holy by Your commandments and has commanded us to..." Likewise, the blessing upon being called to the Torah expresses the identification

> of the reciter with the people of Israel, recalling that they have been given a unique set of tasks and obligations:
>
> "... who has chosen us from among all peoples and has given us the Torah." Such blessings and other similar expressions are not appropriate for non-Jews to lead and recite within the congregation. However, a non-Jewish parent may ascend to the Torah along with his/her Jewish spouse, and offer a special prayer, with the approval of the Rabbi, on behalf of the child. Such an invocation might give thanks to God for giving the Torah to the world through the Jewish people, and pray that the Bar/t Mitzvah will lead a life in accordance with its values.

This portion of the policy highlights the policy's particularistic stance. Not only are non-Jews not allowed to lead such prayers, the policy states clearly that it is not even "appropriate" for non-Jews to "recite" such prayers within the congregation. This position seems to argue that participation, much less leadership, in worship is for Jews alone. Some non-Jews, as Rabbi Hoffman pointed out earlier, may be able to say these words authentically, yet this wording seems to exclude them from even recitation of the prayers along with Jews.

That all said, this policy also allows for another significant inclusion of non-Jews by allowing non-Jews to say a "special prayer" that is appropriate for a non-Jew to recite, something that is in line with Rabbi Freehof's responsum on the "Gentile Stepfather at a Bar Mitzvah" which was discussed earlier.

> TORAH HONORS: The value of kavod ha-tzibur relates to the sensitivity to time-honored values of a congregation and its expectations. In keeping with this value, non-Jews should not be given congregational honors related to the Torah ritual, such as opening the Ark or dressing the Torah scroll.

Herein lies an important glimpse into the congregation's sensibilities in regard to the Torah ritual. It is not Halakhah that is being cited in order to exclude non-Jews here, but "time honored values" and "expectations." In essence, the minhag, "custom," of the congregation is exclusive when it comes to the Torah ritual and there is no desire to adapt

that minhag to allow for non-Jewish participation. Thus, where a relatively inclusive policy would allow non-Jews to open the ark, dress, and undress the Torah, this policy chooses to exclude them.

> OTHER PRAYERS AND BLESSINGS: Non-Jewish family members may lead certain portions of the worship service, especially those reflecting the universalistic impulses of the Jewish tradition. Such prayers might include "Grant us peace, Your most precious gift..." (Gates of Prayer, p. 345); "Bless, O God, this congregation..." (p. 452); readings from The Book of Psalms. All such prayers and personal statements should reflect the mood of the service and be non-Christological in nature.

Allowing non-Jews to read universalistic readings and Psalms is a good inclusion. Ultimately, however, this policy falls somewhere between inclusive and exclusive on the spectrum with some things pulling it in each direction.

Policy of Rabbi Bruce Kadden of Temple Beth El, Salinas, CA[194]

> While it is not appropriate for non-Jews to say the candlelighting blessing, the Torah blessings, or to pass the Torah to the next generation, they may stand with those who do. So, for example, a non-Jew may participate in the candlelighting with others, but not say the blessing; may stand with a spouse reciting the Torah blessings or passing the Torah. Non-Jews may lift and dress or undress the Torah, open or close the ark, or read an introductory Psalm as well as speak to the child if appropriate.

On the whole this policy is fairly exclusive when it comes to speaking parts in the service. However, other parts, not limited to silent accompaniment, are permitted non-Jews. The inclusion of Torah related rituals among these parts, particularly lifting and dressing the Torah are important inclusions. Thus, overall, because it is physically a highly inclusive policy with the exception of the Torah Pass, I place it in the category of Particularistic Inclusive policies.

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[194] Email from Bruce Kadden of Temple Beth El Salinas, CA. 7/13/00 11:31:30 AM Eastern Daylight Time.

Policy of Rabbi Ellen W. Dreyfus of B'nai Yehuda Beth Sholom of Homewood, IL[195]

> My long-standing policy, which had been upheld by three congregations I have served over the past 16 years, (before that I was not in a solo pulpit), has been that non-Jews cannot say berachot that include "asher bachar banu mikol haamim" or "asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav". Therefore, non-Jewish parents cannot recite Torah blessings, or Shabbat candle blessings. However, I have had the non-Jewish parent accompany the Jewish spouse to the bima for an aliyah, and stand by his/her side... In the case of a non-Jewish mother who wants to participate in the candle blessing ritual, we usually have two people do it together, so she can read the intro, and have a Jewish relative say the blessing.

This policy seems to be a standard particularistic one. Silent accompaniment is allowed for Torah blessings. For the candle blessings, the policy is slightly more inclusive, allowing for the non-Jew to read the introduction.

> We do not grant Hebrew names to non-Jews, so the non-Jewish parent would not be called up in Hebrew. So I would say something like: 'Ta'amod Rachel bat Moshe v'Shoshana....The honor of the third aliyah goes to Justin's parents, Rachel and Chris Smith.'

This is a significant inclusion. Non-Jews are not only permitted to silently accompany their Jewish spouse, but they are mentioned by name when they do so. Even though they do not actually read the blessing together, it appears that they are both being included to those in attendance and most likely to their children as well.

> We try to provide the opportunity for meaningful participation for a non-Jewish parent, grandparents and other family members, within limits. Some examples are: Reading the translation of the Torah or Haftarah portion or reading a psalm in the early part of the service (I always say: there's nothing wrong with a Christian reading scripture!), or parents speaking to their child.

Here the policy is also very inclusive, allowing significant and lengthy spoken parts to be read by non-Jews. It is unlikely that a non-Jewish parent would be upset about not being allowed to recite the Torah blessings if they can read the translation of the

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[195] Email sent 7/24/00 2:11:48 AM Eastern Daylight Time.

Torah portion! This would even be a great opportunity to offer a tremendous honor to a non-Jewish grandparent or other important relative.

In regard to handling the Torah itself, the congregation's policy, determined before Rabbi Dreyfus became the rabbi, is very exclusive with non-Jews prohibited from contact with the Torah or even from opening and closing the ark:

> My current congregation did an extensive study of "The role of the non-Jew in the synagogue" before I became their rabbi, and came up with some guidelines in addition to those above about saying blessings. Non-Jews cannot open or close the ark, or lift or dress the Torah, or participate in the passing of the Torah (when we do that, but I usually discourage it for mixed-married families). In general, much discretion about how all of this is carried out is left to the rabbi. It is fortuitous that the Ritual Committee and I are on the same wavelength on the subject.
>
> I think that people understand the limits in the way they are intended. We are not trying to be mean or exclusive in the negative sense, but 'if you want all the privileges of membership, you have to join the club!' Something else that complicates matters that you may want to think about is: What if we don't know if the person is Jewish or not? What if he/she functions as a Jew, but has never formally converted? What if he/she had one Jewish parent (we'll say a Jewish father to make it simpler), but had no Jewish education or formal involvement, but now claims to be Jewish once married to a Jew? It's not always as clear cut as our "rules" would dictate - it can be messy sometimes. We live in a strange world!

When Rabbi Dreyfus' states at the beginning of the paragraph her sentiments regarding not wishing to be exclusive, yet wishing people to "join the club," she is expressing a particularistic view, that people should join the club and that there need to be differences. On the whole, this policy is clearly particularistic, but also significantly inclusive.

Policy of Rabbi Tom Louchheim of Or Chadash in Tucson, AZ[196]

> A non-Jew may not read any Hebrew prayer or recite any Blessing including Torah Aliyah, Kiddush, Motzi and the Shabbat candle blessing.
> The reason for non-Jews not participating in Hebrew, Torah blessings, holding the Torah, etc... is the same reason that I will not participate in officiating at an interfaith wedding. I do not want to put the non-Jew in the position of saying anything that they are not theologically committed to. Someone who has not committed to the mitzvot shouldn't be involved in a ritual which embodies that commitment.[197]
> They may open and close ark doors, but cannot lift or hold the Torah.
> However a non-Jew may pass Torah with Jewish spouse to child (if approved by the rabbi).
> They may translate the Torah or Haftarah, but cannot read the Hebrew. They may also stand along side a Jewish spouse during an aliyah.
> Non-Jews may read Our People and Our Nation prayer and they may sit on the Bimah.

This policy is clearly particularistic, but offers non-Jews important opportunities for inclusion in the service including participation in the Torah Pass and opportunity to translate Torah and/or Haftarah. They are also afforded opportunities to read universal prayers and may open and close the ark. On the whole this policy is particularistic and inclusive.

Policy of Rabbi Brian Michelson of Temple Oheb Sholom of Reading, PA[198]

> Although we have oral understandings of what non-Jews may do and not do at B'nei Mitzvah services, there is nothing written. Personally, I feel that once it is down on paper, people tend to get upset about it. Given the opportunity to explain and talk with families, almost always, for me, works better.
>
> Non-Jewish parents are respected, included and part of their child's B'nai Mitzvah. All accommodations to include the non-Jewish parent are made within confines that are comfortable for the rabbi, ritual committee and congregation.

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[196] Email sent 7/12/00 5:57:34 PM Eastern Daylight Time.
[197] Email sent 7/13/00 11:26:34 AM Eastern Daylight Time.
[198] Email sent 7/13/00 11:45:42 AM Eastern Daylight Time.

> A non-Jewish parent may present their child with their tallit or address the child during the service, if desired. They may also join the Jewish parent on the Bimah for the "parental" aliyah. (But only the Jewish parent recites the blessing.) They may read the translation of the Torah portion or Haftarah portion depending on what their child has prepared. (This is limited to Christian & Muslim parents. I have not yet dealt with a non-biblical based non-Jewish parent, i.e., Buddhist, etc.)
>
> Integrity is of prime importance and the policy for inclusion of non-Jewish parents embodies this value. We believe that it is improper for a non-Jewish parent to make any statements or act in any way that is not in keeping with their own personal beliefs. Therefore, non-Jewish parents, while included in other ways, are asked to refrain from: Reciting blessings-including Torah blessings and candle lighting. Passing or holding of the Torah. Or being involved in any part of the liturgy that is specifically Jewish.
>
> Over the two years I have been in Reading, this has worked fairly well. I have ruffled a few feathers, because my emeritus had no limitations.

This policy is particularistic and inclusive, though bordering on exclusive, because it prevents non-Jews from participating in "any part of the liturgy that is specifically Jewish," while seemingly declaring the vast majority of the service as "specifically Jewish." Implementation of this policy in a congregation that is used to a Universalistic Inclusive policy would likely ruffle a few feathers.

This would particularly be an issue when people say, "I want to do the same thing that I did for my oldest son's Bar Mitzvah," or "I lit the candles at my daughter's bat mitzvah, why can't I do it now?" Furthermore, the answer must be that in the new rabbi's opinion and/or in the new official congregational opinion it was wrong for that person to have done it the first time. This has implications for the memory of the former rabbi and could cause problems for rabbinical transition. While it seems that the policy still attempts to be inclusive, the move from Universalism to Particularism is a shift dramatically toward exclusivity. On the whole, this policy is a reasonably inclusive one for a Particularist policy.

Written Policy of Rabbi Elias Lieberman of Falmouth Jewish Congregation of East Falmouth, MA[199]

Your research sounds very interesting and of great relevance to those of us who struggle with the issue. I serve a congregation of over 400 households on Cape Cod that is 19 years old. I've been here ten years.

Our Religious Living Committee adopted a policy concerning the participation of non-Jews in our worship which reads as follows:
Policy #3.1 - The Role of Non-Jews in FJC Worship

(Revised and approved 4-28-97)

Cognizant of both the universal message of Judaism and the reality of interfaith member families in our congregation, which will bring many non-Jews through our doors, the Religious Living Committee adopts the following policy to define the role of non-Jews in the Falmouth Jewish Congregation's worship services:

-When appropriate, non-Jews are welcome to ascend to the bimah

-When appropriate (and with the Rabbi's approval) non-Jews may have contact with a sefer Torah (i.e. Torah passing at b'nai mitzvah service)

-Non-Jews shall not be invited or permitted to speak or read language which, by its very nature, pertains specifically to Jews and Jewish tradition (i.e. most blessings which make reference to Jews being "chosen" or "commanded.") They may be invited or permitted to speak or read other portions of the liturgy which are non-particularistic in nature, or other readings, with the approval of the Rabbi.

I have had to contend with members who deem it inappropriate for a non-Jew to help pass a Torah to a bar/bat mitzvah. Insofar as the non-Jewish parent often plays a crucial role in helping to raise that Jewish child, I am comfortable with both the Jewish and non-Jewish parent holding to Torah in order to pass it to their child. I do not invite non-Jewish grandparents to participate in this ritual.

Non-Jewish family members and friends are permitted to open the Ark in our congregation.

This policy is clearly particularistic, even using the term. However, it is inclusive in numerous ways. Importantly, the non-Jewish parent may hold the Torah and pass it to

[199] Email sent 7/13/00 10:15:47 PM Eastern Daylight Time. Debbie Cohen is now the associate rabbi at Temple Emanuel in Cherry Hill, NJ.

his or her child. Note that this rabbi expressly states that some members of his congregation seem to be pressuring him to not allow this. In other words, whereas the CCAR Responsa Committee argued that rabbis are pressured to give in and accommodate non-Jews, here the rabbi is pressured to do the opposite.

Policy of Rabbi Debbie Cohen of Congregation Beth Shalom of Cary, NC[200]

> At our congregation (Beth Shalom), at least half of the B'nai Mitzvah families have one Jewish parent and one non-Jewish parent. We have firm guidelines about what non-Jewish family and friends can do during the service.
>
> They may read an introductory reading -- or, if they have an appropriate favorite reading that is non-religious from outside the prayerbook, they can also read it. We have had musical parents sing a song or perform a non-religious piece for their child.
>
> They can read the English translation to the Torah or Haftorah portion. This is the most typical choice. Often, the portions are divided into two parts each to allow grandparents, etc., also to participate.
>
> A non-Jew can come to the front of the sanctuary when their spouse has an Aliyah, but does not put on a tallit, kiss the Torah or say the blessing. Often, non-Jewish parents choose to do this.
>
> A non-Jewish parent can stand in the line if the family chooses to symbolically "pass" the Torah. But, they step back and the Torah passes over them. Often, in mixed marriage families, we either do not pass the Torah or the non-Jewish spouse sits during this part of the service, as they feel uncomfortable with the Torah "passing" over them. Non-Jewish parents and grandparents are invited to join in the Hakafah, along with younger siblings.
>
> Non-Jewish parents are encouraged, and almost always, bless or make a short speech to their child, along with the Jewish partner.
>
> My experience has been that the non-Jewish partners often feel uneasy at the beginning of the B'nai Mitzvah process, but end up feeling comfortable and included on the day of the ceremony. They feel that they have a part in the service, but do not feel that they have overstepped their bounds as a non-Jew.

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[200] Email sent 1/3/00 6:20:47 PM Eastern Standard Time.

On the whole this policy is particularistic, clearly defining the boundaries between Jew and non-Jew. It is also fairly inclusive, especially in its flexibility in adapting to the needs of families, even including non-Jewish grandparents. In regard to the Torah Pass, it seems to me that having the non-Jew step back is a significantly exclusive act, because not only are they actually not participating, but by asking them to physically step back, they are being pushed away and not simply excluded. Allowing the non-Jewish parent to add a reading from outside the prayer book is a good attempt to include them and may make them feel even more included than allowing them to read a universal prayer would.

Policy of Rabbi Morley Feinstein of Temple Beth-El of South Bend, IN[201]

> I utilize this "Family Meditation" [Meditation found below] at the very end of the service (Saturday morning), after Kaddish, and before other family members might lead Kiddush and HaMotzi.
> A non-Jew in services at Temple Beth-El may sit on the pulpit, stand beside family members who light candles (only a Jewish person would do so) and offer the English meditation on page 719 (GOP) prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah leading Kiddush (Friday evening).
> Non-Jews do not offer Berachot, Torah blessings, or pass the Torah. A non-Jewish parent may offer his/her reflections during the service, as all parents are offered such a privilege. Non-Jews may also read the "Prayer for the Nation" or the English translation of the Haftarah. Torah translation I leave in the hands of Jewish friends or relatives.

This policy is in line with other particularistic ones included in this thesis. It is reasonably inclusive in that it does allow a non-Jew to read the English translation of the Haftarah portion, to read the introduction to the Kiddush, to read universal prayers and to accompany family members silently as they lead blessings. It does not allow non-Jews to participate in the Torah Pass, something that is a notable exclusion. The Family

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[201] Letter sent January 6, 2000.

Meditation below is a significant act of inclusion because it is designed specifically to include non-Jewish family members.

A Family Meditation

Family is a group of people dedicated to each other's growth, welfare and happiness.
Family is a group of people who recognize and appreciate the uniqueness of each other.
Family is a group of people sharing feelings, communicating not just talking.
Family is a group of people spending quality time with each other.
Family is a group of people who grow together in the face of conflict and stress.
Family is a group of people who share a sense of greater good or power that gives them strength and purpose.
O' God, please guard our family and protect them. For all that we are to each other, for all we mean to be to each other, guide us in good health from this day forth and forever. Amen.

Written Policy of Temple Emanuel of Worchester, MA[202]

> Temple Emanuel strives to create an inclusive and welcoming environment for all its congregants and their families. We believe that, if Temple Emanuel is to continue to fulfill its stated mission, its Jewish identity must be preserved and protected. It is our foremost desire to maintain the integrity of: our congregation, our worship services and all participants in the worship services, both Jewish and non-Jewish. Yet, our sensitivity to families at times of life-cycle events guides our other desire: to foster Shalom Bayit (peace in the house) within our congregation's families and our own congregational family. ...
> In keeping with the prophet Isaiah's assertion that "my house shall be a house of prayer for all people", Temple Emanuel welcomes all who wish to attend our Sabbath and holiday worship services.

This policy explains its Particularist stance immediately, "its Jewish identity must be preserved and protected." The policy will attempt to preserve the integrity of both Jews and non-Jews as well as the integrity of the congregation. At the same time, it wishes to "foster Shalom Bayit." It is assumed that in some cases Shalom Bayit will clash with maintaining integrity and identity. As is the case in particularistic policies, Shalom Bayit is secondary to Jewish identity and integrity, meaning that it is likely that non-Jews

[202] Submitted March 22, 1995. Rabbi James Simon.

will be restricted from reciting prayers or performing rituals whose content or symbolism, according to the policy, they may not agree with even if their exclusion will cause problems for the family. The policy is exclusive in these areas as will be seen below.

> [After quoting the blessing for lighting the Shabbat candles is Hebrew, Transliteration, and Translation, the policy continues]:
>
> The act of lighting the Shabbat candles is a fulfillment of this blessing and, therefore the act and the blessing cannot be separated. It is the Jews whom God has commanded to recite this blessing and to kindle these lights; therefore, it is the Jewish family member who has the religious duty and honor to do so. Non-Jewish family members are most welcome to stand beside the Jewish family member if they wish to do so. ...
> The Friday night Kiddush is done by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. A Non-Jewish parent is welcome to stand along side the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. ...
> The Temple Emanuel custom is to invite both parents to sit on the Bimah (the elevated area) during the B'nai Mitzvah ceremony. Non-Jewish grandparents may sit on the Bimah during the Torah service if they choose to do so.
> The opening and closing of the ark is an honor extended to Jewish and non-Jewish parents or family members of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.
>
> This portion of the policy expresses the congregation's particularistic stance.

Halakhic concepts are used to restrict participation in the candle blessings to Jews alone, namely the obligation of Jews to recite the blessing and the notion that the act cannot be separated from the blessing. Thus, whereas a more inclusive policy might separate these, this policy does not. It is a nice inclusion to invite non-Jewish grandparents to sit on the bimah as well as the non-Jewish parent.

> It is a long standing custom at Temple Emanuel that, after the Torah is brought out of the Ark, the Torah is symbolically and physically passed from generation to generation as a sign that the teachings of Judaism will be transmitted from generation to generation. The custom implies that the final recipient of the Torah, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, will one day pass Torah to his/her children as well.
>
> We recognize that there are non-Jewish parents who have helped and encouraged the transmission of Judaism and Jewish teachings to their child, despite the fact that the parent has not formally converted to Judaism. Yet, the actual passing of the Torah should be carried out by those who have formally and publicly identified themselves with Judaism and with the Jewish people. If one of the

> B'nai Mitzvah parents is not Jewish, he/she may symbolically touch the Torah as it is passed to the Jewish parent, who then passes the Torah to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Our custom is to invite only Jewish grandparents to be part of the ceremony of passing the Torah from their generation to the next.

The Torah Pass itself is seemingly restricted to Jews alone, but the non-Jewish parent is able to "touch" the Torah as it is passed. This is an inclusion in that it acknowledges that the non-Jew has had a role in the Jewish upbringing of the child, but is also exclusive in that not allowing the non-Jewish parent to handle the Torah in the same way as the Jewish one will be clearly seen by all those in attendance, thus, separating the non-Jewish parent from the Jewish one.

> [As regards the Torah procession, the policy states]:
>
> At Temple Emanuel, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah carries the Torah. We encourage the parents to walk with him/her, joined by all siblings and those grandparents who feel comfortable doing so.
>
> One of the greatest honors a Jew can receive is to be invited to the Bimah (the elevated area where the ark and Torah are located) to offer a blessing before and after the reading of the Torah (aliyah). [Blessing are shown in Hebrew, transliteration, and translation].
>
> With these blessings the individual affirms that he/she accepts the Torah and its teachings as the central core of Judaism. Our custom is to limit the recitation of these blessings to those who are of the Jewish faith. We invite the non-Jewish parent to stand with the Jewish spouse as he/she recites the blessings.
>
> In Talmudic times, a father was called to the Torah on the day which his son became a Bar Mitzvah and recited a blessing in which he thanked God that his son was now a man and, as a result, he (the father) was no longer legally responsible for his son, now an adult.
>
> At Temple, we encourage our parents to recite a more contemporary version of this prayer, which is found on p. 451 of the New Union Prayerbook.[203] We also encourage one or both parents to offer a few personal words to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah in addition to or in lieu of this prayer.
>
> Both parents may recite the traditional Shehekiyanu prayer in Hebrew & English as a way of expressing their joy at being present on this special day.

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[203] Gates of Prayer, CCAR, 1976.

Though most often participation is limited to silent accompaniment, there are significant inclusions of non-Jews including a role, though limited, in the Torah Pass. Spoken parts are highly limited, but also are major roles. Shehechiyanu, the blessing of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, and parental speeches all allow the non-Jewish parent to be prominently included in the service. On the whole then, this policy is particularistic and somewhere between inclusive and exclusive. I have placed it with the inclusive policies because inclusions of non-Jews are significantly more prominent than its exclusions.

Policy of Rabbi Norman Koch of Temple Sholom of New Milford, CT[204]

> At Temple Sholom in New Milford, CT, where I have been for 21 years, we use a simple set of criteria to determine what a non-Jew can and cannot do during worship. They may not act as shaliach tzibur for any statutory liturgy from barchu through kaddish yatom; they may not recite anything that is "asher kiddshanu b'mitzvotav, v'tzivanu..." or that is "asher bachar banu..." They may read t'hillim , etc., during p'sukay d'zimera (in English of course). They may read the translation of torah or haftara that has just been chanted in Hebrew by the bat/bar mitzvah. They may open and close the aron, they may do hagba and/or glila. They may address the bar/bat mitzvah at the amud during the service. We have allowed a non-Jewish spouse to stand silently with the Jewish spouse reciting an aliya; in such case I call them to the torah as follows: ya'amod ploni ben ploni v'plonit ishto ito; whereas when I call a Jewish Jewish couple it is: ya'amdu ploni ben ploni v'plonit bat ploni and they recite the brachot in unison. We allow a non-Jewish parent to hand the torah to their Jewish child, thus strengthening the symbolism of their support of their child's Jewish identity.
>
> I will add that in 21 years I have never had one person (Jewish or not) have the slightest problem with this. During various stages of parent orientation (group process) and again as I sit privately with each family to plan participation during their simcha I explain both the policy and the rationale. A shaliach tzibur for statutory liturgy from barchu forward must be someone upon whom it is incumbent to recite the liturgy, i.e., a Jew. A non Jew is not among those v'tzivanu or bachar banu as they are not "nu" I am regularly impressed by the positive response of people. They appreciate the clarity of definition, they respect the distinction between Jew and non-Jew, and never feel put down or

[204] Email sent 1/4/00 10:46:52 PM Eastern Standard Time.

> disrespected. I have to believe the feedback that I consistently get that we succeed in making the non-Jews feel welcome, respected, and appreciated in our sanctuary and that they respect and appreciate that non-Jews are not Jews. Just as we would not expect to receive communion in a church they do not expect to be ritually the same as a Jew.

This policy is a concisely worded particularistic one. It stresses the function of the Sheliach Tsibbur and greatly limits participation in the bulk of the service because of this. However, the policy allows more than silent accompaniment. Allowing non-Jews to read translations of the Torah and Haftarah is important because these are lengthy reading parts and occur at a point in the service when many honors may be given. Non-Jews would likely feel more comfortable and honored to read the passage in English than to try and chant the Torah blessings in Hebrew, even if this were allowed. They are also allowed to hold, lift, and dress the Torah as well as open and close the ark, all prominent honors in the service. Additionally, they may recite Psalms, an honor that may be given to other non-Jewish relatives. On the whole then, while tremendously particularistic, this policy is also quite inclusive.

Policy of Rabbi Hillel Cohn of Congregation Emanu El of San Bernadino, CA[205]

> We (I) permit the non-Jewish mother of a Bar/Bat Mitzvah to take part in the candle blessing on the eve of the Bar Mitzvah. She generally reads a prayer in the prayer book or writes one of her own. The actual recitation of the Beracha and its translation is something only a Jew recites. On Erev Shabbat the Bar/Bat Mitzvah chants Kiddush. The prayer introducing the Kiddush is read by the father. If the father is non-Jewish there is no restriction on him reading it. A non-Jew may join a Jew for an aliyah but it is only the Jew who recites the Berachot. I have developed an alternative beracha in English for a non-Jew to recite after each of the blessings.

[205] Email sent 7/13/00 12:02:30 AM Eastern Daylight Time.

> Both parents are seated on the Bema for both the Erev Shabbat and Shabbat morning service. Non-Jews may be honored with opening the ark either before the reading of Torah or after.
>
> On Shabbat morning there is a brief ceremony of the parents presenting the child with the Tallit. Both parents do this (there is no speaking part) and there is no restriction on a non-Jew doing this. In the "Torah transmission" ceremony grandparents and parents are on the Bema and there is no restriction as to whether they are Jewish or not. If any of them are non-Jewish I will generally say something about how Torah in its broad sense is transmitted in many ways and how grandparents or parents who are not Jewish also transmit positive life values to a child. Hagbaha and Gelilla are honors accorded to Jews. I would consider our policies to be quite lenient.

This policy is particularistic because it stresses the content of blessings and restricts that content to Jews. However, it seeks ways to include non-Jews and allows them many opportunities to participate in the service including a role in the Torah Pass, even for non-Jewish grandparents. Also a significant inclusion is Rabbi Cohn's development of alternative blessings that may be recited by non-Jews after each of the traditional blessings is recited. Intermarried families would most likely feel comfortable with this policy

Universalistic Policies

Included in this chapter are the following policies:

38. Policy of Rabbi Lawrence Hoffman, Professor at HUC-JIR in New York[206]
39. Policy of Rabbi Neil Kominsky of Temple Emanual of the Merrimack Valley in Lowell, MA.[207]
40. Policy of Rabbi Don Rossoff of Temple B'nai Or of Morristown, NJ.[208]
41. Written Policy: "Non-Jews at Temple B'nai OR.
42. Policy of Rabbi Avi Magid of Temple Emanu-El of Honolulu, HI.[209]
43. Policy of Rabbi Richard Birnholz and Rabbi Mark Strauss-Cohn of Shaarai Zedek of Tampa, FLA.[210]
44. Policy of Rabbi Victor Appell of Temple Jeremiah in Northfield, IL.[211]
45. Policy of Rabbi Melanie Aron of Temple Shir Hadash of Los Gatos, CA.[212]
46. Written Policy of Congregation Gates of Prayer of Metairie, LA.[213]
47. Policy of Rabbi John Sherwood of Temple Emet of Woodland Hills, CA.[214]
48. Anonymous Views of an Assistant Rabbi.
49. Policy of Rabbi Richard Meirowitz of Temple Shir Tikvah of Winchester, MA.[215]
50. Policy of The Valley Temple, Cincinnati, OH.

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[206] Lawrence Hoffman, "Non-Jews and Jewish Life Cycle Liturgy" (UAHC, 1990), pp. 65-82, pp. 75-76.
[207] Neil Kominsky of Temple Emanual of the Merrimack Valley in Lowell, MA. 1/3/00 11:00:27 PM Eastern Standard Time.
[208] Email from Don Rossoff. 1/3/00 11:10:31 PM Eastern Standard Time.
[209] Email from Rabbi Avi Magid. Temple Emanu-El, Honolulu, HI. 1/4/00 6:06:54 PM Eastern Standard Time.
[210] Email from Mark Strauss-Cohn of Shaarai Zedek of Tampa, FL. 7/13/00 10:04:00 AM Eastern Daylight Time.
[211] Email from Victor Appell, the assistant rabbi at Temple Jeremiah in Northfield, IL. 7/13/00 2:56:16 PM Eastern Daylight Time.
[212] Email sent 1/2/01 11:26:53 AM Eastern Standard Time.
[213] Rabbi Robert Loewy.
[214] Emails from John Sherwood of Temple Emet of Woodland Hills, CA. 7/12/00 5:07:32 PM Eastern Daylight Time and 12/31/00 4:21:11 PM Eastern Standard Time.
[215] Email sent 9/11/00 11:24:09 AM Eastern Daylight Time.

What are Universalistic Policies?

Having examined particularistic policies en masse, beginning with the responsum found in Teshuvot for the Nineties and continuing with numerous similar current congregational policies, we now turn our attention to the alternatives, universalistic policies. What follows are policies that fall in line with the philosophies of Rabbis Morgenstern and Schindler, policies whose primary goal is to help Jews and Jewish families enjoy Judaism and deal with the issues arising from intermarriage in their lives.

Two paragraphs from Rabbi Schindler's essay on the importance of outreach describe the universalistic position well:

> I believe that we must do everything possible to draw the non-Jewish spouse of mixed marriage into Jewish life... If non-Jewish partners can be brought more actively into Jewish communal life, perhaps they themselves will initiate the process of conversion. At the very least, we will dramatically increase the probability that the children of such marriages will be reared as Jews.[216]

> Let no one misinterpret and infer that I am here endorsing intermarriage... I struggle against it, as a rabbi and as the father of five children. But if all of our efforts do not suffice- and, manifestly, they do not do we really banish our children, to sit shiva over them? No. Our task then is to draw them ever closer to our hearts, to do everything we can to make certain that our grandchildren will nonetheless be Jews, that they will be part of our community and share the destiny of our people.[217]

The primary goal of universalistic policies is to keep the children of intermarriages Jewish and to encourage those children to raise their children as Jews as well. Whereas, regarding Jewish survival a particularistic policy would say, "Without Judaism, there will be no Jews," a universalistic policy would say, "Without Jews, there will be no Judaism." There is a desire that the non-Jewish spouse convert, but this desire

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[216] Rabbi Alexander Schindler. "Outreach: The Case for a Missionary Judaism," in Outreach and the Changing Jewish Community: Creating an Agenda for Our Future (UAHC, 1989), pp. 83-91, p. 87.
[217] Schindler, "Outreach," p. 88.

is secondary to that of keeping the children and grandchildren Jewish. In some cases, universalistic policies will go so far as to encourage non-Jews to participate in ways that might be prohibited by particularistic policies solely to not discourage a child of intermarried parents from remaining Jewish and/or raising their children as Jews.

While in particularistic policies, the particularistic content of blessings is affirmed, in universalistic policies, often the performative meaning of prayers is given greater weight. We will see cases in which non-Jewish parents are allowed to recite B'rakhot that includes particularistic language, because the action of doing so speaks louder than the words. Awkwardness and discomfort are often the most important factors determining restrictions in universalistic policies. We will also see congregations that do not allow non-Jews to read Hebrew because of how such an act might be received by the congregation, but they may read the English translation of the very same blessings, a clear indication that the content of the blessing is not the issue. Other congregations may restrict the Torah Pass to Jews because the act represents the direct transmission of Jewish identity to the child. At the same time, other congregations will encourage non-Jewish parents to participate because the act represents their responsibility for raising the child as a Jew. In the majority of congregations with universalistic policies, the rabbis do not believe that Jews are obligated or commanded, though there are exceptions.

Whereas particularistic policies could argue that, even if certain Jews do not agree with the words of the blessings, Jews are obligated to say them, in universalistic policies this is generally not an issue. Some universalistic policies argue that Jews are obligated and that non-Jews can opt to "shoulder mitzvot." These policies are more the exception than the rule. Some of these conflicts may result when a universalistic rabbi or

congregational policy mixes with a particularistic congregational policy or rabbi. To fully move a congregation from Particularism to Universalism or in the opposite direction would seem to require significant congregational transformation and could not simply be enacted at will.

The particularistic view, as the Teshuvot for the Nineties responsum argued, is that if Jews are "obligated," a whole series of consequences follow, not the least of which is that non-Jews, who are not obligated and can only become obligated by becoming Jews, cannot act as Shelichei Tsibbur. A universalistic policy could argue that non-Jews may opt in, but in doing so, it would change the concept of "mitzvah." The Conservative Movement's justification of why a woman may shoulder a mitzvah does not deny that as Jewish women they are not "commanded," but denies that they are forbidden from being Shelichei Tsibbur because they are not "obligated," since they are required to take care of the children in the household. As Jews, however, they are still "commanded." Non-Jews are not "commanded" by any means. Moreover, Orthodox Jews would argue that the justification for allowing women to act as Shelichei Tsibbur by the Conservative Movement is a violation of the Halakhah, which also includes prohibitions against listening to a woman's voice during worship. A Particularist would argue long and hard that what the Conservative Movement does is justified in the Halakhah and that Reform Jews may do the same. A Universalist would argue that we do not permit women to act as Shelichei Tsibbur because the Halakhah allows it, but because we absolutely must allow it in order to be authentic to what we as a movement and as modern enlightened people believe in. He or she might even go so far as to say that we make the decision first based on our non-religious views and needs, our practical concerns, and then seek to ground it

in our religious tradition. The problem with this is that Universalists run the risk of moving beyond the pale of recognizable Judaism.

I am not stating that any of the policies contained in this section necessarily do this by any means, nor that any are even close to doing so. To be fair, I must play the devil's advocate with these policies just as I did with the particularistic ones. Thus, I raise a potential problem. Universalists must be aware that when they abandon the Jewish traditional legal sources as grounds for their practices, they may find that other Jews, even other Reform Jews, might be uncomfortable with the decisions that they have made and may even find that it is increasingly difficult to identify their practices as inherently Jewish. At the same time, Universalists have a much easier time adapting to the needs of intermarried families and to the rapidly changing Reform Jewish scene.

I bring the arguments of Rabbi Ostrich up here as well. Though he clearly was arguing for a Particularistic Inclusivism and here these policies argue for a universalistic version, the arguments are similar. If the needs of the Jewish people require that we move toward inclusivism, even to the point that we take each individual case on its own merit or let each individual Jew and each individual family make its own decisions, Universalists would argue that we must move down that slippery slope.

We must address both heads of the two-headed monster, striving to maintain Jewish identity, while at the same time doing everything that we can to produce and keep Jews to maintain it in the future. Unlike the fiddler on the roof, there is no obvious place to sit in safety and no one knows how far we can go down the roof before we fall off. In my mind our choice is not whether or not to step upon the slope, for we are already upon it striving to keep our footing, but how far down it we must go to reach out and grab a

hold of the mass of Jews sliding down it, keeping them from falling off, perhaps later pulling them back up the slope, while not falling off ourselves in the attempt.

One might think that all universalistic policies would be far more amenable and accommodating of non-Jewish participation than any particularistic ones. As we shall see below, this is far from the case. Some universalistic policies, in fact, are significantly more exclusive than some of their particularistic counterparts. As I noted above, in some cases this may be because a universalistic rabbi took over a congregation that had a particularistic policy or the reverse and the remnants of the old policy are strong. It may also be that these congregations simply have a higher degree of sensitivity when it comes to Jewish ritual practices. In general, as will be seen below, universalistic policies are more accommodating of the needs of non-Jews and may be more appropriate in congregations that do not have a high degree of sensitivity when it comes to Jewish rituals.

Universalist Exclusive Policies

Policy of Rabbi Lawrence Hoffman, Professor at HUC-JIR in New York[218]

> Take the act of lighting the candles Friday night. The verbal content asserts that God commanded us to kindle Sabbath lights. But Bar/Bat Mitzvah parents say the blessing with their own performative meanings in mind. Perhaps the meaning of that liturgical staple is their assertion that they have raised their children to this significant moment, and that they stand before the community proud of their accomplishment. Consider even the handing down of tradition in the ritual by which the Torah is passed from grandparents to parents to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah child. There, it is the action, not the words, that speak loudest. I can imagine that some non-Jewish parents who raise their child as a Jew, despite their own non-Jewish background, might well want to participate in such a ceremony, not as a sign that their own heritage is being delivered from their parents to their child, but as an affirmation of the value of the Jewish tradition that they cared so much to nurture in their offspring. If they wished to, why couldn't a non-Jewish parent hold the Torah scroll and hand it to his or her child as a vivid symbol of the way he or she took Jewish tradition into the home, inculcated it in the child, and now watches that child accept the Torah as his or her life-long spiritual guide?

This is a universalistic policy because it stresses that content is not the only issue and may not be the primary issue. It would allow non-Jews to recite blessings with particularistic language even though they are not included in that language. A non-Jew could say "commanded us" or "given us." As Rabbi Hoffman stated earlier, it may be the case that the non-Jew actually believes this personally.

> There must be areas where any group's sacred service has to emanate from fully identified members of the group in question. The responsa over the years have helped us focus our attention on some of the halakhic considerations that should go into deciding what those areas are.

Here is where the policy takes its exclusive stance. It does not claim that there are specific areas that must be restricted in any congregation, something a particularistic policy would do, but it argues that there must be some limitation, some restrictions. Thus,

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[218] Lawrence Hoffman, "Non-Jews and Jewish Life Cycle Liturgy" (UAHC, 1990), pp. 65-82, pp. 75-76.

where a particularistic policy assumes that everything could and possibly should be restricted and tends to seek ways to include non-Jews, a universalistic policy such as this one, assumes that everything could be allowed and tends to seek ways to exclude. Rabbi Hoffman's suggestion that there must be "areas where any group's sacred service has to emanate from fully identified members of the group" is assumed in Universalistic Exclusive policies. The areas and degrees that they are restricted differ.

> The determination of what we really mean in our liturgies is an ongoing process. Rather than pass congregational rules based on the putative single meaning that a given text's content is said to contain, we should engage in an open exploration of the many meanings, verbal and otherwise, that our liturgical actions and words denote. Why do we light Shabbat candles? What does the Hebrew blessing and its melody convey to us? Is it important for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah parent to light candles at the bimah? If so, why? What would we think if we saw someone refuse to do it? What would we think if we noted a non-Jewish parent who did it? And so forth.
>
> By listening to each other carefully, we would develop a consensus, as well as boundaries beyond which readings of meaning would be held to deviate from that which makes us a coherent reading public called Reform Jews. Finally, there is the step by which we operationalize our consensus in our dealing with non-Jews who wish to join our worship as active participants at their family's life-cycle events. Knowing the meanings we see in liturgical actions and words, we will know where non-Jews too may play active roles in our rituals. If a candle-lighting blessing "means" that its speaker affirms his or her full membership in this covenanted community that now performs a commanded task of kindling Sabbath lights, it may follow that non-Jews may under no circumstances say that prayer — neither non- Jewish parents, nor non-Jewish choir members. If, however, that blessing functions in a symbolic way to affirm the spiritual worth of a parent who has brought his or her child to Jewish adulthood, or if it publicly symbolizes that parent's worth to the child, then we may insist that all parents say it, especially a non-Jewish parent who had an easy option of denying this child's Jewish education, but did not do so. Alternatively, if the blessing means all of the above, we might find ourselves wishing that non-Jewish parents could say it, and then, unable to grant that, but unwilling also to embarrass them before their children (who might not understand why their parents alone are refused permission to participate publicly), we might revise the Friday night ritual so that no parents say that blessing, or so that it is said in such a way that everyone can say it (perhaps the kindling is done by the parents, but the blessing is said by the congregation.)

In many cases, it seems that rabbis dictate policies to congregations that do not agree with their views. I noted that many of the particularistic policies do no allow non-Jews to recite particularistic blessings because they cannot agree with the contents of those blessings. Yet, they make no allowance for the possibility that Jews might not agree with them. For many Reform Jews, as Rabbi Hoffman notes, the candle blessings and candle lighting have solely a performative meaning. The Reform Jews themselves do not believe that they have been commanded or that they are obligated any more than their non-Jewish family members.

Looking back at what Rabbi Friedman pointed out earlier, in universalistic congregations, the candle lighting is a role in the performance, and may be a role specifically designated for the mother of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah regardless of her religion. Rabbi Hoffman states what is perhaps the foremost principle that guides universalistic policies, which is that the feelings of the children are vital. We do not want to embarrass the Bar/Bat Mitzvah by not allowing their parent to participate as other parents do. More so even than that, it my view, we do not want to make the Jewish experience a bad one for the child.

In a particularistic congregation that wishes to maintain all of the traditional blessings and aspects of the traditional ritual (seven aliyot with a special parental aliyah for example), this poses a problem. Having a non-Jew reciting these prayers and doing these actions may violate both the integrity and identity of the congregation. However, the problem may be eliminated if the ritual is altered. One could have the Torah blessings recited by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah alone, for example.

Universalistic congregations have no problem doing this. For them there is indeed a fear of going too far down the slippery slope and potentially putting their identity as a Jewish organization in jeopardy. They are acutely aware of this problem, but as Rabbi Ostrich noted in his article, they feel that they must descend the slope nonetheless. Their integrity and their identity, different from that of a particularistic congregation, demand it.

Policy of Rabbi Neil Kominsky of Temple Emanuel of the Merrimack Valley in Lowell, MA[219]

Rabbi Kominsky wrote me that his congregation is "a small and deliberately hang-loose kind of operation ," which not unexpectedly has a universalistic policy that adapts to the needs of its congregants. His policy follows:

> Written policies on the role of non-Jews would run against the grain of our tendency to take every situation on its own merits. Both the congregation and I are of the opinion that, particularly on the family front, Jew/non-Jew is less a binary dichotomy than a continuous spectrum. There are folks who have converted, folks who have all but converted, folks who figure that while they're not formally anything, they feel more Jewish than anything else, and folks who are genuinely something else and not Jews. One size fits all does not seem to be a viable option.

This is a universalistic philosophy, namely to take everything on its own merits, acting differently in different situations and never assuming that situations are necessarily the same. All B'nei Mitzvah services are not regular Shabbat services by any means. They are never regular Shabbat services. Each is unique. Furthermore, the rabbi and the congregation do not believe that formal conversion is necessary for inclusion. As Rabbi

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[219] Neil Kominsky of Temple Emanual of the Merrimack Valley in Lowell, MA. 1/3/00 11:00:27 PM Eastern Standard Time.

Komnisky states, there is a spectrum from non-Jew to Jew, not necessarily a hard and fast distinction.

> In practice, when a child of a mixed couple becomes Bar/Bat Mitzvah, I will invite the parents together to the bima, but call only the Jewish parent formally to the Aliyah. Occasionally, the non-Jewish parent feels so comfortable with Jewish practice and participation in the service that they will choose to share in reciting the Torah blessings or the candle lighting beracha the night before. I let them decide that--I believe that, when someone who is genuinely y'ray shamaim though not formally a Jew, chooses to shoulder the mitzvah, that is not a beracha l'vatalah.

Here the policy takes on the tone of a particularistic policy, using much the same language and similar concepts. Whereas in a particularistic policy only the non-Jew would be permitted to recite the blessings, in this universalistic policy, non-Jews may do so as well. This policy provides a good compromise, which is to have the parents say the blessings together. In this case a Jew is always leading the blessing, but the non-Jew is not excluded. The policy also allows the non-Jew to decide not to participate. The choice is theirs, which will likely be more comfortable for intermarried families and may result in less participation by the non-Jew than in congregations that expect the parents to fill certain roles in the service.

The presence of commandedness and a worry that a blessing could be said in vain is a strange addition to this policy. Most Universalists would argue that these are uniquely particularistic concepts. Universalists generally do not believe that Jews have been commanded or are obligated and therefore if this is the litmus test, all blessings are b'rakhot l'vatalah. It therefore cannot be the standard. As noted earlier, the performative meaning of blessings and rituals is generally more important.

> For more extended family, I generally suggest that the non-Jews do Ark Openings--which, again, I find a reasonable thing for someone who respects Torah as Scripture to do-- while assigning aliyot to those who experience it as

> mitzvah. In the case of a cross-generational Torah passing ceremony, which is an option, not a requirement in our service, I will invite the non-Jewish parent to participate in the passing on the literal ground that their support for their child's Jewish identity constitutes an enabling of Torah. I do not involve the non-Jewish grandparents (who often are ark openers) in passing the Torah as they are not generally responsible for the child having been brought up as a Jew. When the parents choose to address the child in front of the Ark (again, reshut rather than chovah), both parents generally do so, and, in my experience, it is often an occasion for the non-Jewish parent to voice aloud their pleasure and support for the child's Jewish commitment. But, in any case, the kid has two parents, and that's the message. I recognize that our position--and it is one that is genuinely held in common by most of the congregation and me as their rabbi--is at the extreme liberal end of the spectrum in this boundary drawing era. It works for us, and I am temperamentally much happier opening doors than closing them.

While the language of the exclusivity in this policy is strange for a universalistic policy, it remains a universalistic policy, allowing non-Jews to "experience" mitzvot and therefore function as Jews. More than this, the policy clearly puts the family and its needs high on the list. The policy is actually less at the extreme end than Rabbi Kominsky states, but is a normal Universalist policy with some particularistic influences and exclusions.

Policy of Rabbi Don Rossoff of Temple B'nai Or of Morristown, NJ[220]

> I do something a bit different when it comes to non-Jews lighting candles at Shabbat services. We have the parents of the B'nai Mitzvah light and say the blessings over the candles (usually a mom, but not necessarily) and do the English intro to the kiddush (usually a dad, but not always). For a single, both parents are involved; for a double, one parent from each family. Generally, when there are two families, we use the Jewish parent from each side. That's easy.

The standard expectation at this congregation then is that the mother of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah lights the candles and recites the blessings and the father recites the

[220] Email from Don Rossoff. 1/3/00 11:10:31 PM Eastern Standard Time.

introduction to the Kiddush. Sometimes the father handles the candles and the mother the Kiddush. I assume that this is sometimes the case with intermarried parents.

> But when it is a single and the mom is not Jewish (this works with a dad, too), I do something a bit "un-orthodox." I put the ball into their courts. I say, "The blessings over the candles praise God 'who made US holy through the commandments and commanded us to light...' One who is not Jewish is not commanded, and so it would not make sense for a non-Jew to do this ritual. However, even though one is not commanded, one can accept a commandment and take on the responsibility voluntarily." (The model here is the Conservative movement's rationalization of why women, who are not m'tzuvot, can become sh'lichot tzibur by taking on the commandments themselves.) I say, "I am aware that in some households, non-Jewish parents perform these rituals (like candle lighting on Shabbat) on a regular basis. If this is so, then it would make sense to do so in Temple, as an extension of your home practice. If this is not a regular practice done by the non-Jew at home, then it would not make sense to do it at Temple. The ball is in your court to figure out how this applies to you and I will trust your decision. Different families play it differently. Often, the non-Jewish mom will help light the candles while another Jewish family member, like an older daughter, will say the blessing.

This policy is much like the one above. It uses particularistic language and concepts, but then allows the non-Jew to make the choice and ultimately allows the non-Jew to act like a Jew in the service. The policy also stresses the importance of the Jewish home and the implications that the desire to have families keep a Jewish home has when they come to the synagogue. The roles that family members take in the home do, in the view of this rabbi, carry over to the synagogue. This policy is universalistic because does not create hard and fast distinctions between Jews and non-Jews, but is exclusive in that it sets a standard and seems to desire that the service maintain a degree of integrity in regard to Halakhah. The policy of Rabbi Rossoff is significantly more inclusive than the congregational policy found below, which has a great deal of particularistic tendencies.

Non-Jews at Temple B'nai Or:
'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.'
—Isaiah 56:7

Our Temple Family is a welcoming community for intermarried couples and their families. These couples and families often have similar concerns and questions.

May a non-Jewish spouse be a member of Temple B'nai Or?
Yes. Our Constitution states: "Any person of the Jewish faith and/or any person subscribing to the purpose of this organization may be elected to membership..." And what is the purpose of our Temple? It is "to worship God in accordance with the faith of Judaism; to cultivate a love and understanding of the Jewish heritage; and to stimulate togetherness in the Jewish community."

To the non-Jewish parent: We appreciate the efforts that you make in raising your children as Jews. As much as you may see this as something you and your spouse have chosen for your family, we know that the choice to raise your children as Jews often represents a real sense of loss on your part. We thank you for what you are doing for the Jewish people.

The policy begins by noting concerns for the non-Jewish parent and thanking that parent for their helping the Jewish people. As I stated earlier, universalistic policies place the survival of the Jewish people above the maintenance of Jewish tradition. One would expect in looking at what follows that the policy will seek to accommodate and comfort the family to a higher degree than it will seek to maintain Jewish traditions.

How a non-Jewish spouse might be involved in their children's Bar/Bat Mitzvah:

When a child celebrates becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, the participation of both parents is especially important. It is crucial that youngsters see BOTH parents as standing totally behind the decision to raise them as Jews in order to reinforce "unambiguous" Jewish identities.

There are certain parts in the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony in which non-Jewish parents are encouraged to participate. There are other parts which are given to you as options, while there are those prayers and rituals which would only be appropriate for the Jewish parent.

This portion of the policy is crucial. It clearly expresses the policy's concern for the child. Universalistic policies do what they must do to keep the children of

intermarriages Jewish and hopefully to encourage them to raise their children as Jews as well. At the same time, this paragraph shows that the policy will likely try to be exclusive, "there are those prayers and rituals which would only be appropriate for the Jewish parent."

The non-Jewish parent is encouraged to be on the Bimah for the following:

> The Aliyah.
> If the parents choose to take an aliyah, the non-Jewish parent may come up and stand next to the Jewish parent who recites the blessing.... The blessings over the Torah reading are done only by those of the Jewish religion. This blessing is an essential statement of the Jewish faith: "who has chosen us from all peoples by giving us the Torah...". The Torah is the Jewish means of salvation. A non-Jew saying them would not be unlike a Jewish person taking the Eucharist without believing in Jesus as the Christ.
>
> The Bar/Bat Mitzvah Blessings
> During the rabbi's address and blessing of your child, both parents stand in back of him/her, as well as when s/he is leading the blessings over the wine and challah.
>
> The Passing of the Torah
> During the ceremony, the Torah is passed from the parents to the child, signifying the passing on of the Jewish heritage through the generations. A parent addresses the child at this time about what this moment means to the parents. While it is the Jewish parent who physically passes the Torah, the non-Jewish parent may give the address.
>
> At the Friday night service during the Bar/Bat Mitzvah weekend, the parents take part in the blessings over the Shabbat candles and the wine. These are blessings which are best said by the Jewish parents.
>
> [At the bottom of the last page is the following note]:
> P.S. Judaism in general and Reform Judaism in particular have welcomed with open arms those who wish to explore Judaism with the possibility of becoming "Jews by Choice." Our tradition tells us that one who converts to Judaism is held in higher esteem than the High Priest of ancient days. Please feel free to speak with Rabbi Rossoff if you would like to explore this for yourself.[221]

[221] The policy may be found on the internet at http://www.rj.org/uahc/congs/nj/morris-tbo/non-jews.htm .

This written policy is highly exclusive. It only allows the Jewish parent to recite Torah blessings and does not allow the non-Jewish parent to hold the Torah in the Torah Pass. Furthermore, it stresses a desire for conversion of the non-Jewish parent. The written policy's only hint of Universalism is that instead of saying in regard to the blessings over Shabbat candles and wine, "These are blessings which are said by the Jewish parents," it adds the word "best" before "said," thus leaving open the option that non-Jews might say them.

Since this policy allows non-Jews to function as Jews if they choose to do so, even though this only the case in regard to blessings, the policy qualifies as a universalistic policy. That said, it is significantly exclusive, not allowing non-Jews to hold the Torah in the Torah Pass and only allowing the Jewish parent to recite the Torah blessings, demanding silent accompaniment by the non-Jewish parent.

Policy of Rabbi Avi Magid of Temple Emanu-El of Honolulu, HI[222]

> I permit any member of either family to participate fully as long as they understand the implication of the words used and the concept of hypocrisy. If they cannot say the words in a meaningful way, however they define that, they choose not to participate. In every instance that this has happened, the understanding has been that the Non-Jewish side of the family recognizes the child's choice and endorses it. Frankly, this has become very positive in the long run while recognizing the reality of family lives.

This is another universalistic policy that is influenced by Particularism. Again, in this case, there is a concern for the content of the prayers, but "the reality of family lives" is more important. Thus, a non-Jew can function as a Jew under this policy, but performative meaning is not more important than the literal meaning. Thus, even though

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[222] Email from Rabbi Avi Magid. Temple Emanu-El, Honolulu, HI. 1/4/00 6:06:54 PM Eastern Standard Time.

a non-Jew could be completely included, the policy seems to discourage this. While not making the policy greatly exclusive, this attitude does shift the balance from Universalistic inclusive to exclusive. The difference is that an inclusive policy would seek ways to include, while an exclusive policy would seek ways to exclude. By stressing "the concept of hypocrisy" this policy seeks a way to exclude. I am not making a judgment about the quality of this policy with that statement, but am only seeking to place it along the spectrum of policies. It is a significantly inclusive policy, but falls into the category of Universalistic Exclusive policies.

Policy of Rabbis Richard Birnholz and Mark Strauss-Cohn of Shaarai Zedek of Tampa, FLA.[223]

> Here at Schaarai Zedek (Tampa, FL), we allow non-Jews to stand on the bima, open the ark, read translations of the Torah blessings, kiddush and candle blessings. Non-Jewish parents are allowed to hold the Torah for the "torah passing." The non-Jewish parent may not pass the Torah directly to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah kid. The non-Jewish parent must first pass the Torah to the Jewish parent who then passes it to the child. I guess you could say: we are pretty liberal. The only thing non-Jews are not allowed to do: recite the Hebrew versions of the previously mentioned prayers.

Since there are no restrictions based upon the content of prayers, this policy is universalistic. It is exclusive because it prohibits non-Jews from reciting Hebrew and passing the Torah directly to the child. These exclusions do not prevent non-Jews from participating in any entire portion of the service and are very unlikely to even be noticed by most in attendance. It is doubtful that the majority of non-Jews would even desire to read Hebrew. The lone exception might be the Hebrew of the candle blessings, if these are recited in the home. Overall, the policy is quite inclusive, as are the majority of

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[223] Email from Mark Strauss-Cohn of Shaarai Zedek of Tampa, FL. 7/13/00 10:04:00 AM Eastern Daylight Time.

universalistic policies, but it does seek ways to exclude, most likely based upon the awkwardness that the rabbis and/or congregation feel that having non-Jews reading Hebrew would produce, and thus I include it here among Universalistic Exclusive policies.

Policy of Victor Appell of Temple Jeremiah in Northfield, IL[224]

> Our senior rabbi (both retired and new) officiates at interfaith weddings, so our congregation is quite attractive to interfaith families, and we encounter such situations on a regular and frequent basis.
>
> On Friday evenings, we ask the families to come to services and to participate. We usually have two or three b'nei mitzvah each week. The families are invited to light the Shabbat candles and lead the Kiddush. This is shared by the families equally, and there is no distinction between families where only one parent is Jewish.
>
> On Saturday mornings, the families sit together in the congregation, so sitting on the bimah is not an issue for us. We use Gates of Prayer for Shabbat and Weekdays. After the Cantor sings an opening song, we have a parent read page 99 or page 103. When we have a "double," both readings are read. If there is a non-Jewish parent, we give this honor to that parent. We do pass the Torah from "generation to generation." In interfaith families, this honor is given to the Jewish side of the family. For aliyot, both parents come up together. When only one parent is Jewish, the Jewish parent recites the blessing. In addition the parents come up together to the bimah, address a few words to their child and then read the prayer on page 163 of the siddur. This is equally shared by Jewish and non-Jewish parents. At the beginning of the service the ark doors are opened, and they are closed at the end of the service. This honor is often given to non-Jewish relatives, if there are any.

This policy is universalistic because it makes no distinctions based on the content of blessings. The only substantial restrictions in the policy are that the Jewish side alone passes the Torah from generation to generation and that only the Jewish parent actually recites the Torah blessings. Like most, if not all, congregations that have Universalist

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[224] Email from Victor Appell, the assistant rabbi at Temple Jeremiah in Northfield, IL. 7/13/00 2:56:16 PM Eastern Daylight Time.

policies, this one has a rabbi who performs intermarriages. Additionally, because of the number of B'nei Mitzvah that occur, all Shabbat morning services become life cycle events with all participants filling certain roles. Thus "families" light candles and lead kiddush and it does not matter whether the members are all Jewish or not. On the whole, this policy is a fairly inclusive one, but since it has significant exclusions, it falls in the category of Universalistic Exclusive policies.

Policy of Rabbi Melanie Aron of Temple Shir Hadash of Los Gatos, CA[225]

> Over the years we have evolved a policy of allowing non-Jewish relatives to participate in life cycle ceremonies. At baby namings, the non-Jewish parent comes up on the bimah with the Jewish parent and they read together a universal prayer of thankfulness in English, the shehechiyanu in Hebrew and English, and a statement of commitment concerning the Jewish identity and upbringing of the child.
>
> We often use creative service booklets for B'nai Mitzvah services, but even when we use the prayerbooks (gray and blue), there are English readings (universal readings, an example would be the grey prayerbook page 101) that are part of the service that are read by non-Jewish relatives. Non-Jewish relatives may have other honors as well, excluding aliyot. Sometimes the non-Jewish grandparents open the ark at the time of the beginning of the Torah service, so that they are also on the Bimah at the time of the passing of the Torah through the generations. Non-Jewish parents also address the child along with the Jewish parents. The non-Jewish parent may help pass the Torah from the Jewish parent to the child, signifying their role in the transmission of Jewish heritage within their family. The Jewish parent is called in Hebrew to the Torah for an aliyah. The non-Jewish parent may accompany him/her and sometimes reads the paragraph in English from Jeff Salkin's book [Putting God on the Guest List p. 116].

This seems to be a particularistic policy, albeit a highly inclusive one, but as will be seen, it is really an exclusive universalistic policy. Rabbi Aron has sought out opportunities to include non-Jews and includes them fully in the Torah Pass,

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[225] Email sent 1/2/01 11:26:53 AM Eastern Standard Time.

acknowledging their role in raising the child as a Jew. Creative services allow intermarried families to add readings that they are comfortable with and that the rabbi and congregation are comfortable with as well. This is a good idea for particularistic congregations because it allows the congregation to limit non-Jewish participation in certain areas of the service, while not limiting their overall role, since readings that would be appropriate may be added to the service.

> The Torah Blessings are considered as a special category as even some Jews (i.e., children, those upon whom the mitzvot are not yet incumbent) are not called up for these blessings. We encourage our non-Jewish members, i.e. spouses of Jews, to recite blessings which include "us" and "we," such as lighting shabbat candles and other blessings that enhance Jewish ritual in the home.

This portion of the policy, allowing non-Jews to recite particularistic blessings, makes this a universalistic policy, though one very similar to a Particularistic Inclusive policy, with one exception. This exception, however, pushes it across the border from particularistic to universalistic despite the following statement, which is generally the sentiment of a Particularistic Inclusive policy:

> In the case of the b'nai mitzvah we are looking to maximize family participation so as to acknowledge both sides of the child's family, while still maintaining integrity. With regard to our members who are not Jewish, we hope to encourage the Jewish observance of the family and consider in that sense the non-Jewish members of Jewish families potential converts who are encouraged to engage in Jewish practice.

This policy in essence treats non-Jews as if they were Jews in some ways. The expressed goal of this is to encourage conversion; however, the process allows for non-Jews to worship in much the same way as Jews and even to make themselves part of "us" and "we." In effect then, during the service, they are part of "us" and "we" and therefore the policy is universalistic and not particularistic.

Written Policy of Congregation Gates of Prayer of Metairie, LA[226]

1. Non-Jews, whether members or guests of the congregation, may be seated on our pulpit.
2. One must be Jewish to lead the congregation in reciting the candle blessings or kiddush, with the exception of the parents of a Bar/Bat Mitzvah child, who have the option of reciting candle blessings or kiddush.
3. One must be Jewish to lead the congregation in any prayers wherein the reciter identifies personally with Jewish history, or with the covenant of Judaism, or seeks God's particular favor for the Jewish people.
4. Prayers which do not fit in the above categories may be recited by non-Jews.
5. Torah Rituals-
    a. Non-Jews may open and close the ark and curtains.
    b. Non-Jews may dress and undress the Torah.
    c. Non-Jews may hold the Torah.
    d. Only Jews may participate in Torah or Haftarah readings or blessings.
6. Non-Jews may sing in our volunteer choir.

This policy is universalistic for the simple reason that it allows a non-Jew to read the candle blessings or Kiddush and allows non-Jews to sing in the choir, which a particularistic policy would note as functioning as a Sh'liach Tsibbur. Beyond that, it is significantly exclusive, more so than some particularistic policies, not even allowing non-Jews to read translations of the Torah or Haftarah. There seems to be a strong particularistic tendency behind the policy. Overall, I have categorized it as a universalistic and exclusive policy.

[226] Rabbi Robert Loewy.

Universalistic Inclusive Policies

Several rabbis told me that they had no policies and that the families themselves determine what role their non-Jewish family members will play based on their own comfort level. Generally, these rabbis did not wish to have their names and/or congregations included here or did not wish to elaborate, except to state that they had no policy. The one exception to this is Rabbi John Sherwood, whose policy is found below. Since universalistic policies begin with the assumption that there are no hard and fast restrictions and with the assumption that one cannot seek to be more lenient than to permit anything and everything, policies that allow non-Jews to determine their own comfort level and allow them to participate as they wish in the service are policies that I call Universalistic Inclusive.

In effect, however, often these policies do not result in services that are dramatically different from their particularistic counterparts with the exception that, instead of having the rabbi or congregation prevent the non-Jew from uttering words that they cannot agree with in mind of the rabbi and/or congregation, the non-Jew him or herself makes that determination.

Generally congregations with universalistic policies do not have regular Shabbat morning services, or if they do, they hold B'nei Mitzvah at virtually all of those services. Moreover, their B'nei Mitzvah services are much more likely to be considered by them to be family life cycle events than regular Shabbat morning services.

Policy of Rabbi John Sherwood of Temple Emet of Woodland Hills, CA[227]

> In my more than thirty three years in the pulpit, I never had a single restriction. If the non- Jewish parent wants to participate in the Jewish growth of his or her child, more power to him or her.
> I believe that rabbis who restrict non-Jews from participation make an egregious error. Even using the justification of a non-Jew reciting "asher bachar banu" makes no sense. In the first place, in Reform, we do not take the words of the book literally. Secondly, in reciting the Hebrew, 90% of the people do not even understand what they are saying, be they Jews or non-Jews. They are simply enjoying the sounds of time-honored formulae.

Rabbi Sherwood's policies are highly universalistic. Content is not a major concern because in his mind even Reform Jews do not believe it, "we do not take the words of the book literally," or necessarily even understand it, since their Hebrew knowledge is often limited. Therefore, there is no justification for us to restrict these particularistic blessings to Jews, unless we first confirm that the Jews in particular agree with them. We saw earlier in the policy of Rabbi Norman Cohen the reference to "committed Jews." If we truly wish to avoid hypocrisy then we must enforce the same litmus test for Jews as for non-Jews, unless the performative meaning of the prayers supercedes that of the content. If indeed the Jews are "simply enjoying the sounds of time-honored formulae," then it may be reasoned that it does not matter who utters them, unless, as is the case with Universalistic Exclusive policies, the congregation feels that it would be awkward to hear a non-Jew utter them.

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[227] Emails from John Sherwood of Temple Emet of Woodland Hills, CA. 7/12/00 5:07:32 PM Eastern Daylight Time and 12/31/00 4:21:11 PM Eastern Standard Time.

Anonymous Views of an Assistant Rabbi[228]

> When I came to my congregation, the senior rabbi had a long established policy of welcoming non-Jews into the congregation. He felt that if there were anything they were not allowed to do, they would not feel totally welcomed. His hope was that by being so welcoming, eventually they might want to convert. Based on that, we have NO restrictions for non-Jews. Non-Jews can do everything including blessing candles and saying kiddish on Friday night, passing the Torah to their child, and reciting the blessings for the Torah. (Unrelated to B'nai mitzvah, non-Jews can also be on the board and even be president.)

This senior rabbi and congregation have a Universalistic Inclusive policy. Every accommodation is made to make non-Jews feel welcome. No distinctions at all are made between Jews and non-Jews. The expressed intention of this accommodation is that the non-Jewish parent will eventually convert. The question that I would ask is not whether or not this policy makes non-Jews feel comfortable, because they are not being forced to do anything that they believe would violate their own integrity (an accusation often leveled by particularistic policies), and may opt not to participate. I would ask whether or not Jews feel comfortable in this environment. It is a worry that they would begin to lose their own identity when the boundaries that define that identity are not enforced. It is possible that their identity is defined by the inclusion of non-Jews in their families and that therefore the inclusion of non-Jews actually reinforces that identity. In this case, the policy would be appropriate. Jews visiting the congregation may feel much less comfortable with the lack of distinctions being drawn. This assistant rabbi felt that way at first, but has modified his/her views since he/she came to the congregation:

> I have adjusted to most of this. A non-Jew passing the Torah bothered me a great deal at first but the senior rabbi explained that since the non-Jewish parent has agreed to raise their child as Jewish, they indeed are passing the Torah on to their

[228] These are the views of an assistant rabbi, who was apprehensive about letting the congregation and/or current rabbinical leadership know his/her true views for fear of upsetting either congregants or the rabbi or simply being forced to defend his/her views.

> child, even if it really isn't theirs to begin with. He also hoped, again, that they would be so moved that the non-Jewish parent would want to become Jewish. This actually did happen and the father who converted after his daughter's Bat Mitzvah is very active. I still can't get used to non-Jews reciting Torah blessings. But since I am the assistant Rabbi, and I knew this ahead of time when I took the job, I just accept it.

Having talked to this rabbi and judging by what is written above, it is clear that his/her views are particularistic. He/she told me that when he/she came to the congregation his/her views were much more exclusive than they are now. He/she has come to agree with the policy of allowing non-Jews to pass the Torah because it represents their role in passing Judaism on to their child. The non-Jewish parent chose this for their child. He/she is still bothered by non-Jews reciting particularistic blessings, the most prominent of which are the Torah blessings, but also the candle blessings.

He/she is unsure how his/her views concerning his/her senior's policies would be received and wished to avoid any difficulties that might come from having them aired here. I felt that his/her sentiments were a valuable testament to the problems that could arise when Particularists confront Universalist policies, though I would argue that similar sentiments could arise when Universalists confront Particularist ones.

Policy of Rabbi Richard Meirowitz of Temple Shir Tikvah of Winchester, MA[229]

> Good luck on your thesis. I'm a graduate of JTS 1975, but have been affiliated with the Reform movement since I was the first headmaster of the Rashi School starting in 1985 and have been a member of the CCAR since 1989.
>
> At my temple, Jews and non-Jews are treated equally with regard to all ritual matters: we leave it up to the individual's integrity and understanding of the liturgy to decide for themselves about what they will do at a bar mitzvah ceremony. They may or may not pass the Torah from generation to generation, read the prayer on page 163 in Gates of Prayer (Into our hands), say the bracha over the Torah, stand silently while

[229] Email sent 9/11/00 11:24:09 AM Eastern Daylight Time.

> the Jewish parent reads the Bracha, etc. Non Jewish parents have said things at the speech (which is free form) "as a non-Jewish person, I'm delighted that you have chosen to be part of this tradition, etc..." Once a non-Jewish spouse rewrote page 163 to reflect the fact that it wasn't into his ancestors' hands that the Torah was passed. No references to Jesus are allowed, however. We draw the line at the content of the prayers and center the ceremony on the fact that the child is becoming a member of the Jewish community. We allow the non-Jewish parent to self-affiliate with the community into which his or her child is joining to the degree that the individual parent finds appropriate.

It is highly interesting to me that someone could go through JTS and have this kind of policy, even having changed movements. I would generally expect that those who grow up in the Conservative movement would have highly particularistic and exclusive views, yet this policy is universalistic and highly inclusive. The very fact that the policy expressly states, "Jews and non-Jews are treated equally with regard to all ritual matters," places this policy at the universalistic and inclusive end of the spectrum.

Policy of The Valley Temple, Cincinnati, OH

For the past year and a half, I have served as the Rabbinical Intern at The Valley Temple in Cincinnati. For the first six months of that time, I worked with Rabbi Solomon Greenberg. Since his retirement, in March of 2000, I have been the rabbinical authority of the congregation and have largely maintained the ritual policies of Rabbi Greenberg, particularly in regard to B'nei Mitzvah services.

In 1973, Rabbi Greenberg wrote a Bar/Bat Mitzvah service for use at The Valley Temple with Hebrew based on the Union Prayer Book. The service includes numerous original readings and English readings not found in traditional Jewish prayer books. It does not include Hebrew texts that are not to be recited by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. There is only one aliyah and it is done by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. There is no candle lighting ceremony since the ceremony is conducted on Saturday morning and there is no

expectation that the Bar/Bat Mitzvah attend the service on Friday night, although I have encouraged this. Kiddush is done by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah after the service. Certain portions of the service may be read by guests or relatives. All of them are in English and only one contains any identification with Judaism. Generally, that one is assigned to a Jewish relative, but there is no restriction as to who may read it.

The Torah is passed from generation to generation. Generally only Jewish parents and grandparents wish to participate, but anyone is allowed. Often older siblings are also included in the passing since in many cases they helped with the tutoring. I have made it a practice to pass the Torah literally from generation to generation. I hold the Torah and allow each generation to symbolically grasp it. The only other person who actually holds the Torah during the Torah Pass is the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah dresses and undresses the Torah. Usually the Jewish parent holds the Torah during the reading of the Haftarah, but there is no prohibition against the non-Jewish parent holding it and, when large scrolls are used, it is not strange for the non-Jewish father to sit with the scroll. Usually, the parents open the ark regardless of their religion. Families are given the option of speaking to the congregation and generally one or both of the parents speak. On occasion, other relatives will as well. It makes no difference what religion they are and their words are not restricted by us, though they may be by the families themselves. Non-Jews may read translations of either the Torah or Haftarah. All blessings in the service are read by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

There are no Saturday morning services unless there is a Bar/Bat Mitzvah and everyone in attendance is there for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. No accommodation need be made for anyone who is not attending for that reason. In the vast majority of cases, the

number of non-Jews attending the service is significantly greater than the number of Jews. It was a practice of Rabbi Greenberg's, and one that I have adopted, to explain the ritual in detail as we go along, taking a few moments to explain to those in attendance what a Bar/Bat Mitzvah is and to explain the Torah ritual. This practice has been very well received and makes the non-Jews in attendance feel welcome at the performance that they are witnessing.

I say performance because the entire service is highly choreographed and well rehearsed. Roles are indeed filled and the actors do change. What I would consider to be the service portion of the ceremony begins with the blessing of the child before the ark and continues with the rabbi leading the aleinu and kaddish prayers. Everything leading up to that point is a performance of family centered life cycle liturgy that the student simply wishes to get through without incident.

The choir has non-Jewish members who are responsible for singing/leading some Hebrew prayers. There is a high degree of intermarriage in the congregation and no restrictions concerning ritual participation have ever been imposed. The choice of who participates in the service is the family's.

Intermarried families feel extremely comfortable and welcomed. This policy of the congregation is a Universalistic Inclusive one. That said, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah service edited by Rabbi Greenberg has the Bar or Bat Mitzvah lead blessings and other traditional portions of the service, including the single Aliyah. There are numerous English readings added to the service, some of which were written by Rabbi Greenberg, that allow for a great deal of non-Jewish participation if desired. The service itself is

particularistic and is a comfortable experience even for more traditional Jews, because all of the particularistic parts of the service are done by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

Section III: Related Historical and Halakhic Topics

The History of Non-Jewish Participation in Jewish Worship

For a long period of time, the question of how non-Jews might participate in Jewish worship was largely a moot one. There was little or no desire among the vast majority of non-Jews to interact with Jews in any way that might be seen as supporting the Jewish religion. Religious interaction between Jews and non-Jews centered around the attempt to convert Jews from Judaism or the persecution of Jews in order to remove them as an element from the larger society, to limit their participation in the society, to exile them, or to kill them if necessary.

Functionally, there are only three spans of time when the question of how non-Jews might participate in Jewish worship is relevant, the modern period, essentially beginning with late nineteenth Century, the First Temple period, and the Greco-Roman period. From the rise of rabbinic Judaism in the aftermath of the Second Temple's destruction in 70 CE through the early 1900s, if not into the post-WWII period, religious interaction between Jews and non-Jews was highly limited, though we will see some examples below of involvement by non-Jews in synagogues in the centuries immediately following the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem.

In the past few decades, with the dramatic rise in intermarriage rates, our congregations are now seeing more and more non-Jews attending services and, most importantly, desiring to participate in whatever way they feel comfortable and are permitted.

While the Temples stood, non-Jews who dwelled in the land of Israel or who passed through the land, came to offer sacrifices at the Temple. During the time when the Second Temple stood and for the next 250 years, non-Jews attended Jewish religious gatherings in large numbers and participated in ways largely unknown to us. Our sources for the history of the period are few and, more often than not, unreliable. In the numerous

contemporary congregational policies regarding non-Jewish participation in worship that we have examined, it appears that little or no concern is given to the historical background of such participation. For particularistic rabbis and congregations, it is the meaning of the prayer-formulae and Jewish tradition as grounded in the Halakhah that determine policies, sometimes modified by concerns for the comfort level of congregants and issues of awkwardness. For universalists, policies are guided by practical concerns and rationality, also sometimes modified by concerns for the comfort level of congregants and issues of awkwardness. It seems that if, in setting policies, rabbis and congregations ever look back to the distant past, it is to help settle disputes, to give an extra bit of evidence that may sway the decision to one side or another, or simply to teach about Jewish history. Though it is only marginally relevant to the issue of non-Jewish participation in modern Bar and Bat Mitzvah services, I have included the following discussion to further those aims.

The First Temple Period

According to the Tanakh's description of the United Monarchy, a time when all who worshipped Yahweh in the land were deemed to be united under one government whose center of power was in Jerusalem, we have evidence of other deities being worshipped even in Jerusalem. Some of Solomon's wives worshipped other gods.[230] It is not surprising then, in this relaxed religious environment that, we find an openness in regard to non-Israelites participating in Israelite cultic activities.

The Deuteronomistic historian, recounting the dedication of the Temple in Jerusalem, attributes to Solomon a prayer in which he asks God to listen to the stranger who comes to pray in the Temple. Included in that prayer are the following lines:

> Likewise when a foreigner, who is not of your people Israel, comes from a distant land because of your name-- for they shall hear of your great name, your mighty

[230] I Kings 11.

> hand, and your outstretched arm-- when a foreigner comes and prays toward this house, then hear in heaven your dwelling place, and do according to all that the foreigner calls to you, so that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you, as do your people Israel, and so that they may know that your name has been invoked on this house that I have built.[231]

In Leviticus, we are told that blemished animals are not accepted even from gentiles. This indicates to us that non-Israelites brought sacrifices to the Temple. The passage in Leviticus explains the rules concerning what type of peace-offering is to be accepted. Therein, we find the following:

> When someone offers a peace-offering to Adonai, in fulfillment of a vow or as a freewill offering, from the herd or from the flock, to be acceptable it must be perfect; there shall be no blemish in it. Anything blind, or injured, or maimed... Any animal that has its testicles bruised or crushed or torn or cut, you shall not offer to Adonai; such you shall not do within your land, nor shall you accept any such animals from a foreigner to offer as food to your God; since they are mutilated, with a blemish in them, they shall not be accepted on your behalf.[232]

This indicates that unblemished animals may be accepted from gentiles. The text even goes so far as to explicitly tell us that the reason the blemished animals would not be accepted is because of the blemish and not because they were offered by gentiles. Leviticus seems to be familiar with non-Israelite participation in the sacrificial cult. If we move one step further and connect the first line of this regulation to the last line, we might surmise that gentiles were making vows and freewill offerings to Adonai as well.

Deut. 14:21 tells us that in regard to an animal that dies on its own, "You may give it to a foreigner, but you may not eat it." This implies that Jews must maintain a higher degree of purity than gentiles and that eating the meat of an animal that died in such a way would make Jews impure. The question is, is it acceptable for gentiles to eat such meat because they are not forbidden to do so, but if they had been forbidden they would not be able to eat? Is it because nothing that they do will make them impure? Or is

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231 I Kings 8:41-43. CF. Josephus, Antiquities VIII 4:3 (116).

232 Leviticus 22:21-25. See also Mishnah Shekalim 1:5 concerning the kinds of sacrifices that are not acceptable even from gentiles. Also see M. Shek 7:6, M. Zeb 4:5, M. Men 5:3, 5, 6; 6:1; and 9:8. Emil Schürer, The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Christ (Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1979), p. 310.

it because they are so impure already that no additional offense would increase the level? This question is not answered.

During the Divided Kingdom, there were multiple places of worship with at least two distinct priesthoods (Jerusalem and the North [Dan, Beth El]). No central authority functioned. During the time of the Southern Kingdom, post-722 BCE, non-Judaites/non-Israelites were likely to be the enemy.

At the time of the restoration, we find in Nehemiah 9:2-3 that, "Those of Israelite descent separated themselves from all foreigners and stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their ancestors. They stood up in their place and read from the book of the law of the Lord their God ..." Taking Ezra's extreme purity laws, found in Ezra, chapter 9, particularly concerning priestly marriages, in company with these verses from Nehemiah, we find that there is a demonstrably new and greatly increased desire for separation and a seemingly new strong belief in the ritual impurity of gentiles.

For the purposes of this thesis, we also find a clear reference in the Nehemiah passage to the reading of "the" Torah and note with interest that particularly during this time, the Israelites separated themselves from others. This would lend support to all of the policies, both particularistic and universalistic, that limit participation in the blessings and the reading of the Torah itself to Jews alone. However, when we look further on at practices of the ancient synagogue, we will see that the manner and degree of separation that took place when the Torah was read in regularly held Jewish gatherings is not clear.

The Ger Toshav

The most common term for non-Jews in the Tanakh is Ger, "resident alien." The term is applied to foreigners who lived among Jews in the land of Israel. While the strangers who dwelled within the midst of the people were at least tolerated and perhaps even well accepted, the practice of idolatry and the immoralities connected to it were not

tolerated from any people.[233] Emil G. Hirsch notes that these people were placed under the protection of the law, though distinctions may have been made between those who were transients and those who were permanent residents.[234] It may have been the case, as Elie Wiesel argues, that the Ger was an assimilated non-Israelite.[235] In other words, these were non-Israelites who lived within the Israelite community. The question that is unanswered is whether or not they were allowed to practice their own ancestral religions, including the use of images, in that environment, as was seemingly done by non-Israelites living in the community during Solomon's reign.

Coping with the Religion of the Canaanites

As Hirsch notes, "the aboriginal population of Canaan was the stumbling-block for Israel," exposing it to the dangers of contamination by idolatrous practices.[236] Hirsch cites two Toraitic sources, Exodus 34:11ff. and Deuteronomy 7:1ff., as evidence that the indigenous population of the land was to be treated with little mercy and that marriages with them were not to be tolerated. Let us examine the two passages more closely.

Exodus 34:11-12 state that the people should "take care not to make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land to which you are going, or it will become a snare to you" when "I drive out before you the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Hittites...." The people should beware of the indigenous population of the land so that they are not led astray and follow idolatrous practices. There is no merciless treatment of these nations. There are commandments given in Ex. 34:14-16 again largely warning the people that their associations with indigenous populations might result in the adoption of idolatrous practices. They should not make covenants with these nations lest they be led to eat

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233 E. G. Hirsch, "Gentile," in The Jewish Encyclopedia (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1903). V: 615-626. p. 615.
234 Ibid.
235 Elie Wiesel. The Stranger in the Bible (HUC-JIR, 1981). p. 18.
236 Hirsch, p. 615.

idolatrous sacrifices in so doing.[237] However, in regard to marriages with people of these nations, the text assumes that they will occur, "You will take wives from among their daughters for your sons."[238] It does not prohibit such marriages, but instead warns that "their daughters who prostitute themselves to their gods will make your sons also prostitute themselves to their gods."

The Deuteronomist does not warn against the dangers of association with the these nations, but commands their annihilation. As we find in Deuteronomy 7:2, "And when Adonai your God gives them over to you and you defeat them, then you must utterly destroy them." Following this commandment, we find the commandment not to make a covenant with these people, "Make no covenant with them and show them no mercy." The Deuteronomist further adds "show them no mercy." Whereas, Exodus 34:16 warned against the potential consequences of intermarriage with the indigenous population, we find in Deuteronomy 7:3, "Do not intermarry with them...."

What we see in analyzing these two works is that it is the Deuteronomist who believes that the Israelites should show no mercy to the indigenous population and it is the Deuteronomist who is intolerant of intermarriage with that population. The author/redactor of the Exodus passage is not so intolerant. In essence, the Exodus passage tells us, "If you are going to have these kinds of interactions with non-Israelites," and assumes that they will occur, "beware of the following things happening...." The Deuteronomist tells us, in essence, "Do not have these kinds of interactions with non-Israelites," assuming that they have been happening and have been causing problems.

Hirsch points out that there are other references to intermarriages with members of peoples other than those enumerated in the two passages mentioned above and even

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237 Ex. 34:15.
238 Ex. 34:16.

some that directly violate the law.[239] As Hirsch notes, "The animosity against non-Hebrews...assumed to have been dominant in Biblical times among the Hebrews, was by no means intense." He concludes his view on these strongly worded passages by stating, "The caution against adopting the 'hukkot ha-goyim' (Lev. 18:2), and the aversion to the customs of 'the nations,' rest on the recognition of the morally pernicious character of the rites indulged in by the Canaanitish heathens." Here we find worries about the "slippery slope" even in Leviticus!

The two texts, Exodus and Deuteronomy, were written at different times and for different audiences. There is a consistent theme that such interactions are not ideal and that problems may arise. How to handle them differs between the texts, something that is very relevant to the task of this work, namely providing evidence of the various ways in which relations between Israelites and non-Israelites were handled, thus shedding light upon the possible ways in which religious relations between Jews and non-Jews may be handled today.

The aftermath of the Babylonian exile required many changes in the ways Jews associated with the non-Jews around them. Hirsch notes that Ezra and Nehimiah imposed rigorous measures to insure the purity of the holy seed of Abraham and that these new measures were necessitated by the situation.[240] "In pre-exilic times the intercourse between Israelites and non-Israelites (non-Canaanites) was not very active or extensive, and non-Israelites (Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians) always appeared as enemies. But the Exile brought Israel into closer contact with non-Israel."[241] While it is not necessarily the case that in pre-exilic times there was little or no contact between Israelites and non-

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239 Ibid. Hirsch cites Ruth 1:4; II Sam. 3:3; I Kings 7:14, 13:21; and I Chr. 2:34 for evidence of marriages with other peoples and Judges 3:6; II Sam. 11:3; I Kings 11:1 and 16:31 as evidence for prohibited marriages that occurred.
240 Hirsch, p. 616. Neh. 9:2, 13:3, 13:23; and Ezra 9:2 and 10:3.
241 Hirsch, p. 616.

Israelites, nor that they always appeared as enemies, it is definitely the case that the exile dramatically increased such contact.

This contact caused problems. Most importantly, it exposed the people to idolatrous ways, and exposed the leadership even to a greater degree than the common folk by removing them from their pure and isolated environment and placing them in the midst of idolaters in the exile. Even trying to keep themselves separated from their surroundings, they could not have avoided interaction with their non-Jewish neighbors on some level. Many seem to have chosen not to limit such interaction and even married with non-Jews in the exile.

When they returned from the exile and attempts were made to re-establish cultic purity, problems were encountered. We see this in Ezra 9:

> After these things had been done, the officials approached me (Ezra) and said, "The people of Israel, the priests, and the Levites have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands with their abominations...For they have taken some of their daughters for wives for themselves and for sons. Thus the holy seed has mixed itself with the peoples of the lands, and in this faithlessness the officials and leaders have led the way."

For our purposes, however, Ezekiel 44:6ff. is telling in regard to this new and dramatically increased particularism:

> Thus says the LORD God: O house of Israel, let there be an end to all your abominations, in admitting foreigners, uncircumcised in heart and flesh, to be in my sanctuary, profaning it, when you offer to me my food, the fat and the blood. You have broken my covenant, in addition to all your abominations. And you have not kept charge of my holy things; but you have set foreigners to keep my charge in my sanctuary. "Therefore thus says the LORD God: No foreigner, uncircumcised in heart and flesh, of all the foreigners who are among the people of Israel, shall enter my sanctuary."

Few would dispute that these views are representative of a particularistic exclusive point of view, rigidly separating Jews from non-Jews and banning even the admission of non-Jews to the sanctuary. They clearly oppose intermarriage and argue for

the maintaining of the Jewish religious character of the ritual. Yet, as has been seen and will be seen, such rigid views were often not enforced in practice.

The Greco-Roman Period

Emil Schürer wrote, "It is a well-attested fact that despite the rigid barrier erected between Jews and Gentiles in regard to religious matters, Gentiles participated in Temple worship at Jerusalem."[242] Schürer stressed the fact that by "Gentiles" he was not referring to those who in any way accepted the Jewish religion, but people who wished in no way to confess their faith in the "superstitio Iudaica."[243] He points out that to offer at a famous shrine was often nothing more than "an expression of piety that had become cosmopolitan."[244] An offering was often given in honor of the nation or the city.[245] As Schürer notes, this was the case in other sanctuaries, so why not Jerusalem?[246]

Josephus writes that at the beginning of the rebellion in 66 CE, one of the first things that happened was that a declaration was issued stating that no more sacrifices would be accepted from gentiles.[247] The politically astute leadership among the people argued that "all our forefathers received sacrifices from Gentiles" and that Jerusalem would acquire a reputation for "ungodliness" if Jews alone refused foreigners the opportunity to offer sacrifice.[248]

Schürer cites the most prominent of these cases, the story of Alexander the Great coming to sacrifice in Jerusalem, which is surely a legend and not a historical fact.[249] It is argued by Schürer that the existence of this story shows that such actions were "quite in

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242 Emil Schürer. The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Christ (Revised edition; 4 vols.; Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1987), 2:309.
243 Ibid.
244 Ibid.
245 Ibid.
246 Ibid.
247 War II 17, 2-4 (408-421). Schürer p. 310.
248 War II 17, 4 (417) and 3 (414).
249 Ant. XI 8, 5 (329-330).

order" according to Jews at that time. While this story may well represent Josephus' particular bias of showing the honor paid to the Jewish people by prominent dignitaries of the past, none more prominent than Alexander the Great, it is not unlikely that Alexander would have sent a sacrifice to be offered at the local shrine as a sign of his sovereignty over it. This type of sacrifice is described during the reigns of Ptolemy III, Antiochus VII Sidetes, and several Roman Caesars.[250] Some even offered during the festivals. Vitellius went to Jerusalem at the time of Passover in 37 CE to sacrifice.[251]

Schürer points out that these acts of piety shown by gentile rulers must have been relatively frequent, since Augustus expressly praises Gaius Caesar for not having offered in Jerusalem during his travels from Egypt to Syria.[252] Accordingly, Tertullian may say that the Romans had once "honored the God of the Jews with sacrifices and their Temple with votive offerings."[253] Josephus goes so far as to say that the Temple in Jerusalem is "the altar venerated by all Greeks and Barbarians."[254] Even the former location of the Temple was a holy place.[255]

It is argued that gentile governmental authorities also offered sacrifices, though in general none of the sources cited by Schürer are highly reliable on the subject. Darius, for example, is said to have ordered that the cost of public sacrifices should be covered by the state, adding that prayers should be said "for the life of the king and his sons," but the authenticity of this statement in Ezra is in question.[256] Then there are statements made in Josephus' Antiquities concerning sacrifices offered by Antiochus the Great, and in the Letter of Aristeas concerning sacrifices offered by the High Priest on behalf of Ptolemy

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250 Ag. Ap. II 5 (48), XIII 8, 2 (242-243), Ant. XVI 2, 1 (14) and Ant. XVIII 5, 3 (122).
251 Ant. XVIII 5, 3 (122).
252 Suetonius, Div. Aug. 93.
253 Tertullian, Apol. 26. Schürer p. 311.
254 War, V 1, 3 (17).
255 War IV 4, 3 (262)
256 Ezra 6:9-20. The authenticity of this decree is questionable according to Schürer, citing Eric Meyers, Die Entstehung des Judentums, pp. 50-52; Roland de Vaux, "Les décrets de Cyrus et de Darius sur la reconstruction du Temple", RB 46 (1937), pp. 29-57.

Philadelphus.[257] However, the latter source is a myth concerning the writing of the Greek translation of the Torah and Josephus is a source well-known for his desire to make the Jews look good in the eyes of Roman authorities. Neither can be trusted to relay accurate information concerning the honor given the Temple in Jerusalem by gentiles. Neither, necessarily, can I Maccabees, which in 7:33 describes a sacrifice offered for the king. This statement which insinuates that the priests were sacrificing on behalf of the kings at the very time that they were at war with them is doubtful and is likely an attempt to show the piety of the priests and the sanctity of the Temple cult at all times.

Much more trustworthy historically are accounts concerning the Roman period itself. According to Philo, Augustus commanded that two lambs and a steer should be sacrificed daily at the expense of the emperor.[258] Josephus also describes this daily sacrifice which was offered until the outbreak of hostilities in 66 CE; however he states that it was offered at the expense of the Jewish people.[259] Philo even goes so far as to say that lavish sacrifices were offered on special occasions in honor of gentiles and at public expense.[260]

Prayers for the gentile authorities are recommended in Jeremiah 29:7 and Baruch 1:10-11. Mishnah Avot 3:2 even cites Rabbi Hanina, the Prefect of the Priests as saying, "Pray for the peace of the government," meaning the gentile government.

In addition to sacrifices, gentiles often brought votive offerings to the Temple in Jerusalem.[261] The most reliable of all the incidents described, due to its damaging nature

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257 Josephus, Ant. 3, 3 (140) and Wendland's edition of the Letter, 45.
258 Philo, Legat. 23 (157); 40 (317). See also J. Juster, Les Juifs dans l'empire romain, Vol. I, pp. 346ff.
259 War II, 10, 4 (197) and War II, 17, 2-4 (408-421). On the payment for the sacrifices, Ag. Ap. II 6 (77). Though it is impossible to know which is the case, Philo's view or Josephus', Josephus' bias must bring the veracity of his argument that the Jews paid for the sacrifices for the Emperor, something that would have made the Jews look better in Roman eyes, into question. However, it is equally possible that taxes levied on Jews were the source of the funds. For this, see E. Meyers, Die Entstehung des Judentums, pp. 53ff.
260 Philo Legat 45, (356); 32 (232).
261 Josephus Ant. XII 2, 5-9 (40-77); Ant. XIII 3, 4 (74-79); Ant. XIV 16, 4 (488); Ag. Ap. II 5 (48-49); War V 13, 6 (562-3); War IV 3, 10 (181); War II 17, 3 (412-3); 2 Macc. 3:2, 5:16; Philo, Legat. 23 (157), 37 (297), 40 (319).

as far as the Romans would have been concerned, is the refusal to erect a statue of Caligula in the Temple. This was obviously deemed inappropriate.

Gentiles in the Temple Complex

E. P. Sanders points out that while gentiles could not go beyond the Court of the Gentiles in the Temple during the last century BCE and first century CE, this was not always the case.[262] Numbers 15:14-16 tells us that gentiles could bring sacrifices in the same way as Israelites. According to Sanders, by the late third or early second century BCE, gentiles and impure Israelites were not allowed to enter the Temple enclosure.[263] Josephus cites a declaration by Antiochus III stating that this was the case.[264] There is some question about the veracity of the proclamation. It seems at least possible that Josephus knew that this policy was in effect at some point during the second century and that he wanted to peg it to the most respected Seleucid ruler during that period, namely Antiochus III. More likely, it was the change in the priesthood itself that brought about the change in Temple regulations, namely the overthrow of the Oniad priesthood by the Hasmoneans which took effect by 159 BCE.

By the Herodian period, this policy was well established. When Herod built inside the Temple complex, unlike in the palace constructions, he trained priests to do the work so that he would not have to use gentile laborers.[265] He used these priests when he constructed the balustrade separating the Court of the Gentiles from the rest of the Temple complex.

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262 E. P. Sanders, Judaism Practice and Belief 63 BCE-66 CE, p. 72.
263 Ibid.
264 Ant. 12:145ff.
265 Ant. 15:390.

The Court of the Gentiles

Much of the area enclosed by the outer wall of the Temple comprised the Court of the Gentiles.[266] Anyone could enter the Court of the Gentiles "except women in their impurity".[267] The Court of the Gentiles was separated from the area reserved for Jews alone by a chest-high balustrade with three gates upon which were signs in Greek and Latin warning gentiles not to pass.[268]

One such sign that has been found reads, "No foreigner is to enter within the forecourt and the balustrade around the sanctuary. Whoever is caught will have himself to blame for his subsequent death."[269] According to Josephus in War 6:124-126, the priests were allowed to enforce this prohibition:

> Titus, yet more deeply distressed, again upbraided John and his friends, 'Was it not you,' he said, 'most abominable wretches, who placed this balustrade before the sanctuary? Was it not you that ranged along it those slabs, engraved in Greek characters and in our own, proclaiming that none may pass the barrier? And did we not permit you to put to death any who passed it, even were he a Roman?

As Sanders notes, admission to the Temple in general was restricted by purity.[270] Thus, the simplest explanation for why access by gentiles was restricted is that they were considered impure. It is questionable whether or not Jews generally considered gentiles to be impure, but a reasonable assumption that the priests themselves must have. There is contradictory evidence in relation to this issue. It seems that by the end of the Second Temple period there was a general belief in the ritual impurity of gentiles, though not to a significant degree. However, this is not necessarily true during earlier times.

Israelites from the earliest periods to which the Torah seems to have applied seem to have believed that the Torah as a whole only applied to Israelites and that only the laws

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266 Sanders, p. 61.
267 Ag. Ap. 2:102-105.
268 Sanders, ibid. Josephus, War 5:193.
269 Peretz Segal, "The Penalty of the Warning Inscription from the Temple of Jerusalem," IEJ 39, 1989, pp. 79-84.
270 Sanders p. 73

applying to "the stranger dwelling in the land" applied to non-Jews.[271] The laws of Nidah for example did not apply to Gentiles. Leviticus 15, for example, which declares menstruating Israelites impure, is interpreted in M. Nidah 7:4 and corresponding discussion in the Tosefta to exclude gentiles, meaning that gentile menstruants are not impure, or at least that they cannot become pure.[272]

Practical logic concerning this issue, however, prohibits any belief in the communicability of whatever impurity was connected to non-Jews, meaning that contact with gentiles, even idolaters, could not have transmitted impurity to Jews. From where does this conclusion arise? As E. P. Sanders points out, it makes no sense that gentiles would have been allowed into the outer court where they would surely have been in close contact with Jews, if such contact rendered the Jews impure for even a day, much less a week.[273] Therefore, one must believe that whatever impurity gentiles possessed could not be transmitted to Jews. This is further evidenced from the contrast with Jewish lepers, who were excluded from the entire city and Jewish menstruants, who seem to have been barred from the Temple complex (Lev. 15:19-23).

Beyond stating that non-Jews are not "icky," I am not certain that this argument provides any help in deciding what non-Jews should be allowed or not allowed to do in a synagogue service. The issues discussed above applied to the Temple in Jerusalem, not to synagogues that existed at that time or at any time. Furthermore, the discussion of access differs significantly from one concerning participation. For the purposes of this thesis, the question of gentile impurity may come into play in a discussion about whether or not

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271 Sanders p. 73. Dt. 5:14ff.
272 T. Nidah 6:15. Sanders, E. Jewish Law From Jesus to the Mishnah (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1990), p. 156.
273 Sanders, JPB, p. 75.

non-Jews should be able to hold a Torah scroll. It is up to the rabbis and congregations deciding these issues to apply or not to apply the history detailed above.

The Early Synagogue

In trying to determine what role non-Jews played in the ancient synagogue, we cannot avoid the question, which synagogue? This is an important question because there were synagogues and other gathering places for Jews scattered around the world. As Lee Levine notes in his new book, The Ancient Synagogue: The First Thousand Years:

> Despite the well-known problems in estimating demographic statistics for antiquity, it appears quite certain that the Jewish population of the Diaspora, ranging perhaps between three and five million, outnumbered that of Judea well before 70 C.E.
>
> The number of such institutions [synagogues] must have reached into the many hundreds, if not thousands. However, the information available regarding the pre-70 Diaspora synagogue relates only to a very small percentage of the places, and, what is more, varies greatly in what is presented, and how. [274]

What this tells us is that there were likely significantly more synagogues outside the land than within it. Furthermore, our sources about those synagogues are both highly limited and highly unreliable. It does not seem a great leap to argue that the rabbis living at the time did not have significantly more information about synagogues around the world, nor necessarily better information. They may not even have known of such synagogues as the ones mentioned below:

> There is evidence that several Egyptian synagogues, one in Alexandria and the other in Naucratis, had statues. Statue bases were discovered in each, one with the

[274] Lee Levine, The Ancient Synagogue: The First Thousand Years (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), pp. 74-5. Baron, Social and Religious History of the Jews, I, 167-171, 369-372. See also M. Stern, "Jewish Diaspora," in S. Safrai and M. Stern, eds. The Jewish People in the First Century, I, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), pp. 117-83; Smallwood, E.M. Jews under Roman Rule: From Pompei to Diocletian (Leiden: Brill, 1976), pp. 356-88; Kasher, A. "Jewish Migration and Settlement in the Diaspora in the Hellenistic-Roman Period," in A. Shinan, ed. Migration and Settlement among Jews and the Nations (Jerusalem: Shazar Center, 1992), pp. 65-91.

> explicit inscription, "to the synagogue," the second mentioning a Sambathic association.[275]

Clearly, rabbinic tradition would argue strongly against any kind of statue being erected in any Jewish house of worship. Yet, in not one, but several Egyptian synagogues we find statues, some with dedicatory inscriptions!

> Despite an attempt to explain away this phenomenon (both inscriptions deal with Judaizers and not full-fledged Jews: these were people who "did not share the sensibilities of some Jews about images"; this was a pagan institution), we may well have here evidence of communities whose conception of Judaism did not preclude such images, not unlike those who built a synagogue in third-century Nehardea which had a statue.[276]

Here, we find an argument that not only explains these differences, but may actually affect our discussion of the role of non-Jews in synagogues today. Different communities had conceptions of Judaism that were at odds with those expressed in the Talmuds. Granted, it is a bit of a leap through time, noting that talmudic ideals do not agree with first century CE practices. However, what is significant is that at some point in time in the past, there were radical differences between what should be and/or should have been done according to the Talmud and what was actually done.

> Philo speaks of Jews in Rome conducting regular weekly meetings on "sacred Sabbaths," when they are "trained" in their ancestral philosophy.[277] He refers to proseuchae as schools (didaskaleia) for the inculcation of virtue, emphasizing the instructional dimension of these synagogue gatherings, which were based on scriptural readings.[278] These sessions were led by a priest or elder and may have

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[275] Levine, p. 80. W. Horbury, and D. Noy, Jewish Inscriptions of Greco-Roman Egypt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), nos. 20, 26.
[276] Levine, Ibid. B. Rosh Hashanah 24b. See T. Rajak, "Jews as Benefactors," in B. Isaac and A. Oppenheimer, eds. Studies on the Jewish Diaspora in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods, Te'uda 12, (Tel Aviv: Ramot, 1996), pp. 27-28.
[277] Embassy to Gaius, 156.
[278] Vita Moses 2, 215-16; Special Laws 2, 62, 63; Embassy 312.

> lasted for a good part of the day;[279] Philo himself mentions the late afternoon as a terminus ad quem.[280]

Synagogues during the Roman period, at least some synagogues, were gathering places in which scriptural passages were read and expounded upon. Sessions were led by priests or elders in these particular synagogues, which is not surprising since individuals of some standing probably lead most gatherings even today and during that time priests and elders were afforded high standing. The question that must be asked is whether or not priests led the discussions because they had a higher purity status, because they had the priestly rank and these gatherings were organized along the lines of Temple worship (as the Teshuvot for the Nineties responsum suggests), or because they were considered to be of a higher social status. All this considered, the practice of reading texts and studying them intensively all day was not universal by the second century CE:

> To assume that ordinary Jews would be interested in such intensive study sessions (as Philo depicts) or would be willing to stay in the synagogue for much of the day flies in the face of all we know of human nature and Jewish practice de facto... In first- and second-century Palestine, Jews abandoned liturgical study sessions or intense political discussions for their Sabbath midday meal.[281]

We know little about what went on in second-century CE synagogues and even less about what went on during the first century CE. As Levine notes, "The number of sources in rabbinic literature relating to the pre-70 Roman Diaspora is almost negligible;

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[279] See Letter of Aristeas 310.

[280] Levine, p. 82. Hypothetica 7, 13: "And indeed they do always assemble and sit together, most of them in silence except when it is the practice to add something to signify approval of what is read. But some priest who is present or one of the elders reads the holy laws to them and expounds them point by point till about the late afternoon, when they depart having gained both expert knowledge of the holy laws and considerable advance in piety."

[281] Levine p. 83, n. 61. See, for example, Josephus, Life 279; B. Betzah 15b. However, A. Kasher, ("Synagogues as 'Houses of Prayer' and 'Holy Places in the Jewish communities of Hellenistic and Roman Egypt,'" in D.Urman and P. V. M. Flesher eds. Ancient Synagogues: Historical Analysis and Archaeological Discovery [Leiden: Brill, 1995], p. 211) suggests that the extended scriptural readings in Egyptian synagogues, as described by Philo, originated in the desire to imitate the original reading of the Septuagint as described in the Letter of Aristeas, implying that this was practiced widely.

even rarer are the references to the Diaspora synagogue."[282] What we do have comes from a passages found in Tosefta Sukkah 4:6; Yerushalmi Sukkah 5, I, 55a-b; and Bavli Sukkah 51b:

> And a Hazzan of the synagogue stood on [the bimah] with kerchiefs in his hand. When one took hold [of the Torah scroll] to read, he would wave the kerchiefs and they [those present] would answer "Amen" for each benediction; and he would again [wave the kerchiefs] and they would respond "Amen." And they would not sit indiscriminately, but goldsmiths would sit by themselves, silversmiths by themselves, weavers by themselves, Tarsian weavers by themselves, and blacksmiths by themselves. And why to such an extent? So that if a visitor comes he can make contact with his trade, and thus he will be able to make a living.[283]

The synagogue was a social gathering place, a place to meet to conduct business or at least to make business acquaintances. It would appear that many in attendance could not even hear what was being said, but simply responded "Amen" when the leader raised a kerchief. Thus, it seems reasonable to argue that, for the man sitting so far from the reader that he can neither hear the reading of the text nor the benedictions, everything said primarily had a performative meaning. He could not, after all, even hear the content of blessings to which he was to respond, "Amen."

It is also the case, however, that whoever led the service seems to have had some status and training as well and more importantly therefore was almost certainly a Jew. There could have been problems with early Christians who were knowledgeable in the ways Jewish worship and could recite the Hebrew blessings, when they visited synagogues, because it is possible that no one in the synagogue would know that they

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[282] Page 84.

[283] Translation from Levine, p. 84. On this source, see the comments in Lieberman, S. Tosefta Ki'Fshuta: A Comprehensive Commentary on the Tosefta, IV, (New York: JTSA, 1955-1988), pp. 889-92; S. Krauss, Synagogale Altertumer, Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1966, pp. 261-263; Fraser, P. M. Ptolemaic Alexandria, I, Oxford: Clarendon, 1972, pp. 284-285; A. Kasher, The Jews in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt: The Struggle for Equal Rights, (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1985), pp. 349-355. See also H. L. Gordon, "The Basilica and the Stoa in Early Rabbinical Literature," Art Bulletin, 13, 1931, pp. 359-362.

were not Jews. I am assuming that there was an assumption that whoever was capable of doing this had to be a Jew and therefore no rules needed to be enforced to prevent non-Jews from doing it. This may be an additional reason why there are no early discussions of non-Jewish leadership of any form of Jewish worship, namely, it may have been assumed that only Jews were capable of doing it, and therefore there needed to be no rules specifically prohibiting non-Jews from doing so. This assumption seems to hold, since it is through the synagogue and Shabbat gatherings that Christianity seems to have spread. No restrictions, or few restrictions, must have been put on the qualifications of the leader of worship, certainly none that would have prohibited an outsider, perceived to be a Jew, from coming into the synagogue and preaching the virtues of a new interpretation of Judaism to those in attendance.

Lee Levine notes several things regarding Shabbat worship practices recorded in the Book of Acts:

> The antiquity of the custom of reading Scriptures in the synagogue on the Sabbath is considered here, as in other sources, to derive from Moses himself (Acts 15:21). In fact, it is Sabbath worship which regularly provides the setting for Paul's encounters (e.g., Acts 13:42; 16:13; 17:2; 18:4). Clearly, the Sabbath was the primary occasion for the community to congregate, particularly in a worship context (Acts 17:11).[284]

Levine notes that Acts 13:15, "offers us a fleeting glimpse of the Sabbath-morning liturgy in the Antioch of Pisidia synagogue. Four elements are featured in this schema: a selection from the Torah is recited; then a selection from the Prophets is read; the archisynagogue invites Paul to speak; Paul addresses the congregation.... Perhaps the remarkable fact in this account is the receptivity of the local community to the participation of outsiders." It seems then that the synagogue service for these

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[284] p. 109.

congregations simply was comprised of reading a selection from the Torah and one from the Prophets, which was then followed by a speech or sermon that, according to Acts, could have been delivered by anyone, including a guest of the congregation, and one whose religious beliefs differed from the congregations. That these congregations did not know aforetime that Paul's opinions were likely to be at odds with their own does not discount the fact that l'hathilah, he was allowed to speak. That said, Paul, having once been a Jew could certainly act like a Jew and confuse/fool the congregation into believing that he was still a Jew.

The question for which it would be nice to know the answer is whether or not non-Jews were allowed to speak if they were known to be non-Jews. Were major benefactors for example allowed to address the congregation even if they were not Jewish? A second question is also relevant, namely, were they allowed to read Torah and/or Prophets if they could do so. Unless the reading was in Greek, it is doubtful that many could, but what about Greek? Levine points out that the weekly reading of scripture in the Egyptian Diaspora may have come from the practice described in the Letter of Aristeas of reading portions of the Septuagint weekly, thus it may have been the case that both the Hebrew text and the Greek translation were read, though the very existence of the Greek text may argue against the Hebrew text being read.[285] We do not know whether or not the Hebrew text was read, much as is today, without the comprehension of the congregation and followed by a translation of the text that the congregation would understand, or if the Hebrew text was not read at all.

Additionally, we must ask, if the translation was given the same or even similar sanctity as the Hebrew, then perhaps non-Jews were prohibited from reading it if they

[285] Levine, p. 83, n. 61.

were known to be non-Jews. However, it seems at least possible that this was not the case, just as today there is much less belief in the sanctity of a translation of the Torah than in the original. There is no evidence that non-Jews were not allowed to read translations nor that they were allowed to do so. However in many synagogues in Palestine and Babylonia, the role of the Aramaic translator was given to one individual, likely a distinguished member of the Jewish community. The practices of the Meturgeman, the translator, were even regulated in some instances. The Yerushalmi preserves statements of Rabbi Samuel b. Rabbi Isaac stating that one should not lean against a column when translating, nor should the same person recite both the Torah and the translation, and the translator should not read from a book.[286] One would assume that only a Jew would be given this role formally. However, an important question is whether in some synagogues there was a less formal structure and non-Jews were allowed a higher degree of participation. The answer is that we have no evidence of this and that it is reasonable to assume that only Jews were allowed a high degree of participation in synagogues.

God-fearers in the Synagogue

> One inscription found in the area of the city of Panticapaeum in the Bosphorus.[287] "...To cite one example: 'I release in the proseuche, Elpias the son [?] of my slave, bred in my house; he shall remain undisturbed and unassailed by any of my heirs, except for [his duty] to visit the proseuche regularly; the community [synagogue] of the Jews and the God-fearers [?] will be [together with me] guardian [of the enfranchised]."[288]

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[286] Y. Megillah 4, I, 74d.
[287] Frey, J.B, Corpus Inscriptionum Judaicarum, I, (New York: KTAV, 1975), nos. 683, 684; Lifshitz, B. "Prolegomenon," 65-66 in Frey, J.B., CIJ.; MacLennan, R.S. "In Search of the Jewish Diaspora, " Biblical Archeology Review 22/2 pp. 44-47.
[288] Lifshitz, B. "Prolegomenon," in J. B. Frey, CIJ, p. 66; P. R. Trebilco, Jewish Communities in Asia Minor, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 155-56.

> Of interest here is the reference to a group of "God fearers" (Theon Sebon) mentioned together with the Jews. If this interpretation is correct, it would indicate that God-fearers held a legally recognized position in the synagogue alongside the regular Jewish community, a presence even more institutionalized then than later on, in third-century Aphrodisias.[289] Such a situation has far-reaching implications regarding these God-fearers' numbers as well as their social and political standing.[290]

As Levine notes, it appears that God-fearers had a recognized status within the synagogue. He points out that they may have "held a legally recognized position in the synagogue alongside the regular Jewish community." It seems to me that something even more striking is being said here, namely, that there is no "Jewish community," rather a "community of the Jews and the God-fearers." In other words, these are not two distinct communities that exist alongside one another, but one community. This is not unlike what universalistic policies argue about their communities. They do not have a distinctly Jewish community that excludes non-Jewish spouses and their non-Jewish relatives, but one community that includes them all.[291]

Unfortunately, we can only guess at what role these "God-fearers" might have played in the worship of the congregation. It seems clear that as worship came to be more regulated and rabbinic authority established, the role of non-Jews must have diminished significantly. At the same time that this was going on, due to conflicts between Jews and the various governments ruling them, the number of non-Jews attending worship must

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[289] Lifshitz, "Prolegomenon," 66. See also P. Figueras, "Epigraphic Evidence for Proselytism in Ancient Judaism," Immanuel, 24-25, 1990, pp. 202-3. Note also the Miletus inscription, which arguably may be read: "A place for Jews and God-fearers" (Frey, CIJ, II no. 748); see below, Chap. 8.

[290] P. 115. I. A. Levinskaya (The Book of Acts in Its Diaspora Setting, [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996], pp. 74-76) rejects this reading and suggests the following toward the end of the inscription: "that he (the freed slave) works for the prayer-house under the guardianship of the Jewish community, and honours God."

[291] See Rabbi Michael P. Sternfield "Interfaith and Judaism By Choice," Chicago Sinai Congregation Bulletin, August, 1998:

> Our purpose is to preserve the Jewish religion primarily by passing it on to the next generation. When an interfaith couple wishes to raise their children as Jews and to make the Temple their spiritual home, then we have every reason to make the entire family feel welcome and accepted.

have declined markedly as well. Thus, eventually, there were few if any non-Jews present in the vast majority of synagogues.

Communal Prayer

All of our extant sources are unanimous in their lack of evidence of institutionalized communal prayer pre-70 CE. They all speak only of scriptural readings and sermons. Additionally, as Levine notes, those buildings usually identified as synagogues vary in their plans, styles, and orientation. The lack of unified orientation is significant because "facing Jerusalem... was associated with prayer early on and with all prayer halls in late antiquity."[292] However, it may have been the case, as Levine points out, that the extant sources only mentioned those things unique to Jewish worship, namely the reading of the Torah, the reading of the Prophets, and their discussion.[293] He argues that prayers may have been said, but since saying prayers did not distinguish the synagogue from non-Jewish religious institutions and gatherings, they were not significant to mention.

The problem is that this is an argument from a profound silence. In this case, we are not dealing with an absence of source material, but with an absence of mention of prayer within the sources that we do have, sources that often seem to add extraneous detail to their descriptions of Jewish practices. Therefore, the lack of mention is a strong argument against institutionalized communal prayer and perhaps even an argument against prayer being a significant part of such places at all. However, the term *proseuche*, "prayer house," applied to many Egyptian Diaspora institutions is an indication that at

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[292] p. 152
[293] p. 154.

least some of the communal gathering places in the Western Diaspora were places in which prayers played an integral part.[294]

Who was a Jew in Antiquity?

Shaye J. D. Cohen in his book, The Beginnings of Jewishness, discusses the development of those practices and characteristics that distinguished Jews/Israelites from non-Jews/Israelites through Jewish history.[295] He begins by asking the obvious question, Who was a Jew?

> Who was a Jew in antiquity? How was "Jewishness" defined? In their minds and actions the Jews erected a boundary between themselves and the rest of humanity, the non-Jews ("gentiles"), but the boundary was always crossable and not always clearly marked. Gentiles do not always behave as they might be expected to behave: a gentile might associate with Jews, or observe Jewish practices, or "convert" to Judaism. Jews do not always behave as they might be expected to behave: a Jew might cease associating with Jews, or cease observing Jewish practices, or deny Judaism outright. Such gentiles and Jews have crossed the boundary, or, at least, raise serious questions about the boundary and its efficacy in keeping Jews "in" and gentiles "out." Or a Jew might threaten the boundary through marriage with a gentile: in such a situation, is the Jew still a Jew? Has the gentile partner somehow become a Jew? What is the status of the offspring of this union? The "Jewishness" of all these boundary crossers had to be determined by various jurisdictions and groups.[296]

The boundaries between Jews and non-Jews were not clear in antiquity, much as they are not clear now. Intermarriage in particular has led to a blurring of bounds, but so has the dramatically increased involvement of non-Jews in Jewish synagogues and even Jewish worship. There are non-Jews whose status in the Jewish community is not as clear as "out" and there are Jews who may well not be "in." Some congregations, including at least one whose policy is included in this thesis, find it desirable, but impossible, to

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[294] Ibid.
[295] Shaye J. D. Cohen, The Beginnings of Jewishness (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999).
[296] Cohen, p. 11.

distinguish Jews from non-Jews without registering them. Jews and non-Jews in America generally look alike (even racial biases are no longer accurate because of intermarriage and adoption), dress alike, and speak the same language. All of this, as Cohen points out, was the case in antiquity as well, as evidenced by an intriguing story from the Talmud:

> Once the (Roman) government sent two soldiers and said to them, Go and make yourselves Jews, and see what is the nature of their Torah. They went to R. Gamaliel in Usha, and they read Scripture, and they studied the Mishnah, Midrash, laws and narratives. When the time came for them to leave, they (the soldiers) said to them (the school of R. Gamaliel), All of the Torah is fine and praiseworthy, except for this one matter which you say, an object stolen from a gentile is permitted (to be used), but (an object stolen) from a Jew is prohibited, but this matter we shall not report to the government.[297]

In the story, two non-Jewish Romans were able to pass as Jews. They came as spies to infiltrate the Jewish community and report on its beliefs to the Roman authorities. It is striking that no one within the community would have questioned whether or not they were Jews. However, other versions of the same story are not problematic in this way, but in others:

> In the two parallel versions of this story, the command to "make yourselves Jews" is absent: the Roman officials come as Romans and leave as Romans.[298] They are not spies but inspectors. These versions of the story, however, present a problem: how could the sages teach Torah to gentiles? The Talmud explicitly says: "Transmitting words of Torah to a gentile is prohibited," and R. Yohanan says, "...a gentile who studies Torah is liable to the death penalty."[299] This problem, which bothered the medieval commentators, also bothered the editor of the Sifrei, who solved it by having the Roman officers "make themselves Jews."[300] ...It is hard to imagine Romans pretending to be Jews, entering a rabbinic academy, there to study the entire rabbinic curriculum, without once blowing their cover or revealing their true identity.[301]

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[297] Cohen, pp. 37-8. Sifrei Deuteronomy 304 401F and parallels.
[298] Y. Baba Qamma 4:3 4b; B. Bava Qamma 38a.
[299] B. Hagigah 12a and B. Sanhedrin 59a.
[300] See Tosafot on Bava Qamma 38a s.v. "qaru."
[301] Cohen, p. 38.

Later authorities were bothered that non-Jews could receive instruction in Torah from the sages. This bothered them so much in fact that at some point a tradition was started that the Roman soldiers tried to act like Jews and pass as Jews, thus not having to deal with the possibility that, at an earlier time, it was permissible to teach Torah to non-Jews. Cohen assumes that the later redactor altered the story. I agree with that assumption. However, I do not necessarily believe that the story describes a real event, that it describes something that actually happened.

It seems to me that this story could have easily been motivated by a desire to convince the Roman authorities at the time that Jewish texts and Jewish traditions were nothing seditious. The story is, after all, one in which the Roman soldiers find only one small fault with everything that is contained in the Torah, Mishnah, Midrash, laws and narratives. In other words, the story purports to be a Roman stamp of approval on the study and public recitation of Jewish texts, something that was in jeopardy post-135 CE, after the Jews had proven rebellious and their textual traditions could come under fire for motivating their rebelliousness. Thus, even though the story exists, it does not necessarily provide us evidence that the Rabbis ever actually knowingly taught non-Jews.

That said, we have already seen significant evidence that non-Jews were regularly present at times when the Torah was read and discussed, at least in the Western Diaspora. Therefore, even though there is a possibility that the story about the Roman soldiers is fictional, it is likely not a fantastic one. There is no reason that it could not have happened during a time period when the community was one of Jews and God-fearers. At a much later date, when the community consisted of Jews alone, and more often than not, Jews who were familiar with all or most of those in attendance, dressed unlike non-Jews,

and spoke their own language, it would be virtually impossible for it to happen, particularly when significant rules of conduct that developed over time would have to be violated.

During the Middle Ages, there is no question that Jews and non-Jews were relatively distinct and in Ultra-Orthodox communities today the same is true. However, in ancient times, Jewish identity was not so easily defined:

> Like many other Diaspora peoples ancient and modern, the Jews of antiquity succeeded in maintaining their identity without becoming conspicuous. How then, did you know a Jew in antiquity when you saw one? The answer is that you did not. But you could make reasonably plausible inferences from what you saw. First, if you saw someone associating with Jews, living in a (or the) Jewish part of town, married to a Jew, and, in general, integrated socially with other Jews, you might reasonably conclude that someone was a Jew. Second, if you saw someone performing Jewish rituals and practices, you might reasonably conclude that someone was a Jew. Each of these conclusions would have been reasonable, but neither would have been certain, because gentiles often mingled with Jews and some gentiles even observed Jewish rituals and practices. ...By observing Jewish practices and by associating with Jews, gentiles will have been called Jews and will have been mistaken as Jews.[302]

It seems that over the course of time, there arose a desire to increase the characteristics that distinguished Jews from non-Jews. Religious barriers were set up to prevent non-Jews from acting as if they were Jews in the context of worship. Barriers erected after the revolt of 70 CE, the Bar Kochba rebellion, and the declaration of Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire ensured that Jews and non-Jews would be separated socially. For most of the last two thousand years, it would be highly unlikely that a non-Jew without significant knowledge of Jewish practices could have passed for a Jew for an extended period of time, nor would there have been much, if any, desire to do so. It is only in recent times that non-Jews have desired once again to participate in Jewish worship, however, because Jews and non-Jews once again look alike

[302] Cohen, pp. 67-68.

and speak the same language. For this reason it is possible, in fact easy, for a non-Jew to pass as a Jew. How then do we know who is a Jew and who is not? We can only ask, and even then there are those who call themselves "Jews" whose Jewishness some, if not most, will question. Without knowing the background of someone's Jewishness we have no way of enforcing any boundaries that we might desire to exist.

Patrilineal descent, for example, causes a situation in which many of those whom we as Reform Jews consider to be Jews are not considered to be Jews by many others. Then there are "Jews for Jesus" whom no Jews in any of the major movements of Judaism would consider to be Jewish, yet who may say that they are Jewish if asked. If we do not question their Jewishness, we would have no idea that we do not agree with it.

Once again it seems that "the boundary is crossable and not always clearly marked." We have returned to a time when many non-Jews are in our midst and it is simply impossible to distinguish them from Jews without being told. It is strange how the problems that we face today reverberate with echoes from the past. In the words of Shaye Cohen:

> The uncertainty of Jewishness in antiquity curiously prefigures the uncertainty of Jewishness in modern times. Then as now, individual Jews are not easily recognizable; they simply are part of the general population.... Before the rabbis came and standardized the rules of conversion, there were numerous ways by which gentiles crossed the boundary and became Jews. Before the rabbis came and invented the matrilineal principle, the offspring of Jewish fathers were deemed Jews, and the offspring of gentile fathers were deemed gentiles.... Now, as in the non-rabbinic communities of antiquity, the offspring of Jewish fathers and non-Jewish mothers are deemed Jews (at least in some circles). According to rabbinic law there is no such thing as a "half-Jew," but in American society there is a growing category of people who regard themselves as "half-Jews." There is even a small but growing group of "God-fearers," gentiles who see themselves no

longer as Christians but as gentiles on the periphery of Judaism.[303] Our post-rabbinic world mirrors the pre-rabbinic world of antiquity.[304]

[303] On "half-Jews," see also Cohen's "Bring back the 'God-Fearers'?" Sh'ma 27, no. 534 (May 16, 1997) 3-5. On modern "God-Fearers," see J. David Davis, Finding the God of Noah: The Spiritual Journey of a Baptist Minister from Christianity to the Laws of Noah, (Hoboken, NJ: KTAV, 1996).

[304] Cohen, p. 346. See also Martin Goodman, "Identity and Authority in Ancient Judaism," Judaism 39 (1990) 192-201.

Halakhic Topics Related to the Sanctity of Portions of Jewish Worship

In looking at the current Reform responsa concerning non-Jewish participation in Jewish worship, we encountered and discussed in detail several halakhic topics related to the sanctity of portions of the service, including the concepts of the Sh'liach Tsibbur, Minyan, Mitzvah and Chiyuv. Below I have included a number of other halakhic topics related to the issue. When I began this thesis, I was under the impression that by looking at halakhot related to portions of the service, rabbis and congregations might be helped in forming policies regarding what role non-Jews might play in respect to those portions of the service. While discussing these topics may help to rank the sanctity of portions of the service, since each congregation and each rabbi have their own unique points of view--one most likely based upon comfort level and awkwardness rather than the sanctity of parts of the service-- I am no longer convinced that what is included below adds significantly to the debate, though for some who are unsure about whether or not to allow participation in certain parts of the service, the following may be enough to sway the decision to one side or another.

Sh'liach Tsibbur

In addition to what was discussed earlier, there is more that could be relevant in the Halakhah concerning the Sh'liach Tsibbur. Traditionally, a listener may have their obligation to say a blessing fulfilled if the speaker's obligation to recite that blessing of is at least as great as the listener's.[305] In cases where the speaker is not obligated, then their recitation of the blessing cannot fulfill the obligation to recite the blessing for anyone so

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305 Biur Halakhah 47.

obligated. Thus, according to this halakhah, a woman may not recite a blessing for which she is exempt and fulfill the obligation of a man. In regard to non-Jews reciting blessings, this would mean that such recitation would not fulfill anyone's obligation.

However, the tradition makes a point here that is relevant for universalistic policies, which is that the obligation is fulfilled if the speaker's obligation is at least as great as the listener's. Since universalistic policies generally do not believe that Jews are obligated at all, the obligation of a non-Jew is "at least as great" as that of a Jew, namely no obligation at all.

This is doubly problematic when accompanied by a concern not to say a blessing in vain and a concern to be truthful. For instance, someone who has not been commanded should not say, V'tsivanu, "and he commanded us."[306] If someone not so commanded would say this, it must be considered a falsehood. Thus, as noted in particularistic policies, non-Jews should not recite particularistic blessings.

Tradition does not allow for people to recite blessings for reasons other than their expressed content, reinforcing the particularistic position. Universalists argue against the tradition here by saying that there are other meanings to blessings and other reasons for reciting them, such as performative meaning.

Those Prayers and Practices that Women are Obligated/Not Obligated to do

The traditional Jewish sources do not discuss what non-Jews might be allowed to do in a service specifically, since those sources cannot imagine this being done, but they do discuss what women are obligated to do, what they may do if they wish, and what they may not do. Looking at these requirements and prohibitions might give us an understanding of what, in the view of tradition, are the most important parts of the service

306 Tslach in his commentary on Tractate Berakhot 26b. Fuchs, Yitzhak. Halichos Bas Yisrael. New York: Feldheim, 1985, p. 34.

and the ones that we should be most sensitive about in deciding whether or not to allow non-Jewish participation and in what ways.

The traditional sources tell us that women are not obligated to perform time-bound mitzvot, with certain exceptions.[307] In regards to Toraitic commandments, those things directly derived from or explicitly directed by the Torah itself, women must do the following: eat matzah on the first night of Pesach;[308] rejoice on Yom Tov;[309] gather for the reading of Deuteronomy in the Temple once every seven years;[310] observe all of the mitzvot related to Shabbat;[311] and perform mitzvot related to the season and not to any particular day or time.[312]

In regards to Rabbinic Mitzvot, there is a disagreement. Yitzhak Fuchs states plainly that the rule exempting women from time-bound mitzvot exempts them from Rabbinic Mitzvot as well as Toraitic ones.[313] Rashi as well as some other later authorities are said to have disagreed with this statement.[314] Certain time-bound Rabbinic Mitzvot seem to be required of all, however. These include those mitzvot associated with miraculous events, because "they, too, were included in the Miracle."[315] Women are

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307 Kiddushin 29a says that women are exempt from any mitzvah that must be done at a specific time and Eruvin 96b says that they need not perform time-bound mitzvot at all.
308 Kiddushin 34a and Pesachim 43b as deduced from Deut. 16:3. Outside of Israel, this applies to the first two nights.
309 Kiddushin 34a. Based on "And you shall rejoice on your festivals, you and your sons and your daughters" as found in Dt. 16:14.
310 "Gather the people, the men, the women..." Dt. 31:12.
311 Berakhot 20b. The tradition teaches that all of those included in "Shamor" (Ex. 20:8), the negative commandments associated with Shabbat, are also included in "Zakhor" (Dt. 5:12), the positive ones, even though they are time-bound mitzvot.
312 Among these mitzvot are First Fruits. Fuchs, p. 2.
313 Fuchs, p. 3. Tosafot, Berakhot 20b and Pesachim 108b as well as later authorities.
314 Fuchs, Ibid. Berakhot 20b and Sefer Haminhag, Hilkhot Shabbat 44.
315 Pesachim 108b. Fuchs notes that Tosafot, citing Talmud Yerushalmi, explain that women were also saved from dangers that threatened the people in Egypt and at times of Persian and Greek oppression (p. 3). Rashi and Rashbam attribute a woman's obligation to perform these mitzvot to the fact that they were instrumental in helping the miracles to occur.

obligated for the drinking of four cups of wine on Pesach,[316] lighting the Chanukah candles,[317] and all of the mitzvot of Purim.[318]

Why are women exempt from time-bound mitzvot?

There is disagreement concerning the answer. Some authorities cite a woman's need to take care of children in the home and that her obligations may occur at unpredictable times.[319] Maharal (R. Judah Loew of Prague) cites a basic psychological difference between men and women regarding men's aggressive tendencies.[320] He argues that it is only with the sublimation of these tendencies through constant involvement with Torah and performance of mitzvot that men will attain the peace and serenity of the Olam HaBa. Women on the other hand do not need this in order to obtain their reward. Samson Raphael Hirsch in his commentary on VaYikra 23:43 explains that men's constant interaction with society and their pursuit of a livelihood cause them to forget life's true goal. Only with regular reminders, the time-bound mitzvot, are they able to realize that material comforts should be subordinate to divine service. Women are not as subject to the lure of physical pursuits and therefore do not need regular reminders.

Voluntary Fulfillment of Mitzvot

Women may fulfill any mitzvot from which they are halakhically exempt,[321] except those specifically restricted to men.[322] The only mitzvot expressly limited to men are Tzitzit and Tefillin.[323] Ashkenazic women follow the ruling of the Remah (R. Moses Isserles of Cracow), who permits blessings to be said over the voluntary fulfillment of

316 Pesachim 108b; Shulchan Arukh, Orach Chayim 472:14.
317 Shabbat 23a; Shulchan Arukh, Orach Chayim 675:3.
318 Megillah 4a; Shulchan Arukh, Orach Chayim 689:1.
319 Avudraham in Seder Tefillot Shel Chol. Also see Kol Bo 73 and Sefer Chassidim 611.
320 Drash on the Torah. Fuchs, p. 4.
321 Tosafot, Rosh HaShanah 33a; Maimonides, Hilkhot Tzitzit 3:9; Shulchan Arukh, Orach Chayim 589:6, Remah, Orach Chayim 17:2.
322 Birkey Yosef, Orach Chayim 38.
323 Fuchs, p. 5.

mitzvot.[324] This is based on the view of Rabbeinu Tam who argues that these are not blessings made in vain because a woman who fulfills a mitzvah receives a reward whether she is obligated or not. Sephardic custom, following the Beit Yosef, forbids women to recite blessings over mitzvot from which they are exempt.[325]

There are varying opinions for the Sephardic custom. One argues that this is based on the fact that these blessings contain the word "v'tzivanu" and the belief that someone not obligated cannot sincerely say that.[326] Another, citing the opinion of Rabbeinu Yeshayah, argues that when a woman recites these blessings she gives the impression that she is so obligated and this may be a violation of the prohibition against adding to the Torah.[327] Still others rule that women may recite the blessings over time-bound mitzvot, for which they are said to be exempt.[328] The distinction between Sephardic and Ashkenazic practices differs still more and there are examples where blessings are forbidden by the Remah, the lenient authority in most cases, and cases where the Beit Yosef, the more stringent, permits blessings to be said.[329]

Women's Obligations In Regard to Prayer

Most authorities argue that women are obligated to recite the Shachrit and Mincha Shmoneh Esrei on weekdays, Shabbat and Yom Tov, though there is a significant dispute.[330] Maimonides and Nachmanides offer contrary opinions concerning the interpretation of Mishnah Berakhot 3:2, "Women...are obligated in the mitzvah of

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324 Remah, Orach Chayim 589:6 and 17:2, based on Rabbeinu Tam, citing in Tosafot Eruvin 96b.
325 Shulchan Arukh, Orakh Chayim 589:6.
326 Smag, Asin 42.
327 Shibuley HaLeket, 295.
328 Chiddah in Devash LePhi, Ma'arekhet Nun 14; Zekher LeAvraham (Alkalay), Orach Chayim Vol. 1: Hilkhot Berakhot, 50; Kaf HaChayim, Orach Chayim 17:40 and 589:23.
329 Fuchs, p. 6.
330 Shulchan Arukh, Orach Chayim 106:1; Mishnah Berurah 106:4. Fuchs, p. 21. Ma'ariv is excluded because is is voluntary. Men accepted it as an obligation. Women did not. This will be discussed later in the chapter.

Tefillah, Mezuzah, and Birkat HaMazon." The dispute is not over whether or not women should pray but over what and when.

Maimonides in Hilkhot Tefillah 1:1 argues that, though Torah Law requires a person to pray daily, "Torah Law does not indicate the number of times that one must pray in a day, neither does it prescribe a formal wording for prayer or set a fixed time for this mitzvah. Therefore women are required to fulfill this obligation since it constitutes a positive commandment that need not be performed at a specific time." As Fuchs points out, according to Maimonides there is an obligation to prayer, but that obligation may be fulfilled by saying almost any kind of short prayer at any time during the day.[331] The time-bound nature of this mitzvah derives from rabbinic decrees.

Magen Avraham 106:2 tells us that, following this ruling by Maimonides, it was customary for women to say a short prayer each day, but not the Shmoneh Esrei. This short prayer is to contain praise to God, a personal request, and words of thanks to God.[332] Rav Aryeh Leib, the son of the Chafetz Chayim, wrote that his mother hardly ever recited the Shmoneh Esrei while the children were in her care and that she was exempted from this practice by his father.[333] Rabbi Dov Eisenberg in A Guide for the Jewish Woman and Girl states it is the opinion of Rav Yaacov Kanievsky that "a woman who is involved in child care has the status of one who is attending the sick and is exempt from the obligation to pray."[334] However, a woman who has a few moments to recite Shachrit and Mincha is required to do so. By doing this she will be enriching the spiritual atmosphere of her home.[335] Fuchs notes that seeing a mother take the time to pray will

331 Fuchs, pp. 21-22.
332 Fuchs, pp. 22-23.
333 Sichot Chafetz Chayim, Chap. 1, par. 27.
334 p. 30
335 Fuchs, p. 23.

make a strong impression on children. She fulfills the mitzvah of saying the prayers even if she only concentrates during the first blessing.[336]

Here we actually may find support for non-Jewish parents participating significantly in Jewish worship services. Seeing one's parent, who is not obligated to pray but makes an effort to do so, "will make a strong impression on children." Obviously this is not the intent of the Halakhah, but since Universalistic policies violate the Halakhah in many ways, that the intent of the Halakhah is not in this direction is of little concern. If our concern is not to coincide with the tradition, but to learn from it and adapt it to our current practices then here we have something directly relevant to our situation that we may use as support from the Jewish tradition in favor of the participation of a non-Jewish parent. There is a directive in the Halakhah here to encourage parents who are not obligated to the mitzvot to practice them nonetheless and to do so publicly and vocally.

Nachmanides, on the other hand, argues that Torah Law only requires prayer at all when one is in actual distress. According to Nachmanides, the requirement for people to pray daily is entirely rabbinic and is equally binding upon men and women. Women, then, must recite the Shachrit and Mincha Shmoneh Esrei despite the fact that these are time-bound. He bases his over-riding of the exemption of women from time-bound mitzvot by interpreting Berakhot 20b to be saying that prayer is incumbent equally upon men and women because they both need divine goodness. Mishnah Berurah tells us that most of the authorities agree with Nachmanides. Yalkut Shimoni (Shmuel, Remez 80) cites "And Chanah prayed" as the source for a woman's obligation to pray, "For Chanah recited the Eighteen Blessings."[337]

Here the Nachmanides also offers something that may be of use to us, namely that "prayer is incumbent equally upon men and women because they both need divine

336 Shulchan Arukh, Orach Chayim 101:1.
337 See also Kaf HaChayim 70:1.

goodness." While this is discussing the obligations of male and female Jews, it tells us that if we would like those in our communities to receive divine goodness then we should allow all of them to pray. This does not give us any ideas as to how we might put this into action in regard to prayers said by non-Jews, but it does offer us encouragement in allowing them some form of participation.

In communities where men customarily recite Aleinu L'shabeiach, women should recite it as well.[338] Women, like men, have the obligation to praise. Here also we find evidence that all are obligated to offer praise. This may be taken as support for allowing non-Jews to read Psalms, for example, since they may also be considered as obligated to praise and certainly may themselves feel obligated.

Priority of prayers to be said by women if they have time[339]

1. Short Prayer including Praise, Petition, and Thanks.[340]
2. Shachrit and Mincha Shmoneh Esrei.
3. The first verse of the Shema and Barukh Shem...
4. Emet v'Yatziv[341]
5. Barukh She'amar, Ashrei, Yishtabach[342]
6. Birkhot HaShachar
7. Birkat HaTorah as well as Yivarekh'kha and Elu Devarim[343]
8. The two blessings preceding Shema[344]

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338 Machazeh Eliyahu 20. Fuchs, 40.
339 Fuchs, p. 24.
340 Required if not able to say Shmoneh Esrei.
341 As a lead in to the Shmoneh Esrei. It is the blessing after the Shema mentioned in Berakhot 11a. See Fuchs, ibid.
342 According to Fuchs, the three must be said if the first is said. Barukh She'amar is the introduction to the P'sukei D'Zimra of which Ashrei is considered the most important. Yishtabach is the concluding blessing of the P'sukei D'Zimra. The rest of the P'sukei D'Zimra is of a much lower priority.
343 These verses contain both Written and Oral Law, and as Fuchs points out, have the effect of combining learning with the blessing of Torah study. The blessing includes L'asok b'Divrei Torah, V'ha'arev'nah, and Asher Bachar Banu.
344 Yotzer Or and Ahavah Rabbah

9. The entire Shema[345]

10 The Pesukei D'Zimrah[346]

Rabbi Dov Eisenberg objects to the order of priority given by Fuchs, which follows Birur Halakhah 70.[347] He notes that Beit Yosef, Magen Avraham, and Pri Megadim clearly argue that women are obligated to recite Birkat HaTorah and therefore these blessings should take precedence over Birkhot HaShachar where the obligation is not as clear. Additionally, Rabbi Eisenberg notes that P'sukei D'Zimra should take precedence over the Shema and the two blessings that precede it, because all authorities agree that women are exempt from the commandment of reciting the Shema and the preceding blessings, but many authorities require P'sukei D'Zimra.

The Shulchan Arukh 47:14 states that women are obligated to recite Birkat HaTorah. This ruling is based on the AGUR who notes that women are obligated to learn those laws which relate to them, even though they are exempt from the general commandment of study for its own sake. Interesting is the Vilna Gaon's rejection of this ruling. He maintains that, since women are exempt from the mitzvah of Torah study for its own sake, they are not obligated to recite the blessing over this mitzvah. He does however permit women to recite it, just as he permits women to recite blessings for any mitzvah *for which they are exempt*.[348] Rav Yitzhak Ze'ev Soloveitchik on Maimonides, Hilkhot Berakhot 11:16, citing his father, Rav Chayim of Brisk, argues that the blessing which precedes Torah study is different from those which precede other mitzvot. He argues that it is in fact not a blessing over the study of Torah. Instead, the act of Torah study calls forth an obligation of praise and gratitude, regardless of whether or not it is an obligation. Women must recite this blessing in gratitude for the gift of Torah. However,

345 All of the verses in the traditional Shema including the V'ahavtah and all that follows.
346 The order of the priority within the P'sukei D'Zimra is found in Shulchan Arukh, Orach Chayim 52.
347 Eisenberg, D. A Guide for the Jewish Woman and Girl, p. 34. See Fuchs, p. 25.
348 See Fuchs, page 31.

at least one authority completely disagrees with this and argues that women are forbidden to say this blessing.[349]

To summarize the authorities on the obligation of women to recite the blessing, some argue that they must do so because they are obligated (Shulchan Arukh and the Agur), some argue that they may not recite it (Chikurei Lev), and some argue that they should recite it despite their exemption from the mitzvah of Torah study because of their obligation to praise God for the gift of Torah (Soloveitchik). However, one of the authorities, namely the Vilna Gaon, argues that women are not obligated to say it, but are permitted. This latter ruling calls into question the prohibition against saying a blessing in vain.

The discussion of the obligations relating to the Torah are important for our topic because they indicate that there is a high degree of sensitivity in the tradition for the Torah blessings in particular. The tradition is highly uncomfortable with those who are not obligated reciting the blessings, even among Jews. Therefore, even in universalistic congregations, concern may be taken in regard to these blessings. Since universalistic policies deal with comfort level and awkwardness, they should especially be mindful of the Torah blessings. Thus, policies that limit non-Jews to accompaniment, vocal or even silent, or even prevent them from coming forward for an aliyah would be well supported by the tradition. Those policies that offer no limits here run the risk of allowing a very uncomfortable situation to develop, namely a non-Jew reciting the traditional Torah blessings. The situation may prove so uncomfortable that even to allow a non-Jew, as the Freehof responsum suggests, to recite an alternative blessing might be discouraged. Those policies that limit the number of aliyot or even only have one aliyah may avoid this highly charged and uncomfortable issue.

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349 Chikurei Lev, Orach Chayim, 10.

Regarding the Shmoneh Esrei

The tradition is greatly concerned with everything revolving around the recitation of the Shmoneh Esrei, including the context in which it is said. We are told in the Shulchan Arukh that a woman should make sure that her clothes are clean and neat before reciting the Shmoneh Esrei and that she should not recite the prayer in a bath robe or apron.[350] When there is an infant or toddler in the house, a woman should not recite the Shmoneh Esrei before checking the child's diaper.[351] If she does not do so and then discovers that the child's diaper is soiled, she must repeat the Shmoneh Esrei if the child was less than four cubits away from her.[352] If a child is disturbing her recitation of the Shmoneh Esrei she may signal the child to get it to stop, but may not interupt the Shmoneh Esrei by speaking.[353]

All of this suggests that the recitation of the Shmoneh Esrei is to be considered as one of the most important, if not the most important, portion of the traditional service. Unfortunately many Reform Jews do not know the blessings well if at all and our prayer books over the years have greatly truncated this portion of the service, even summarizing parts of it. In that light, though tradition would require us to be extremely sensitive to this portion of the service, Reform tradition would seem to be far less sensitive.

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350 Shulchan Arukh, Orach Chayim 91:5 and Mishnah Berurah. Fuchs, p. 27.
351 Shulchan Arukh, Orach Chayim 76:7-8, and Mishnah Berurah. Fuchs, ibid.
352 There is a substantial discussion concerning details of this ruling such as the age of the child in question, whether or not the mother smelled the odor, whether or not the excrement was showing, etc... as described by Fuchs in note 21, pp. 27-28.
353 Fuchs gives this ruling in the name of Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach.

Regarding the Reading of Torah

Some authorities, siding with Magen Avraham, rule that women are obligated to hear the Torah read on Shabbat.[354] However, Orukh HaShulchan criticizes this view. He argues that, since women are exempt from studying Torah and since the reading of the Torah is time-bound, there is no reason to obligate them.[355] Additionally, in contradiction to Magen Avraham's view, it was common in many places for women to leave the synagogue during the Torah reading.[356] Nonetheless, HaGaon Rav Yosef Sholom Eliashiv argues that since today's women are often capable of understanding the Torah reading, it is highly recommended that they remain in the synagogue and listen to it.[357] Yet, this same rabbi argues that if a woman arrives late to services and misses the recitation of the Amidah, she may recite the Shacharit Amidah during the Torah reading.[358] All authorities agree that a woman may not read the Torah for the congregation or be called for an Aliyah.[359] However, at one time, that did not apply to minor males, who were permitted to read from the Torah and haftarah.[360]

Tradition appears to tell us here that the Torah reading itself is nowhere near as important as the Amidah. People may or even do walk out while it is read! This seems to indicate that Tradition grants the Torah reading less importance than it does some prayers and other parts of the service, most notably the Amidah. However, since the topic under discussion is the level of obligation of women, solely, to these portions of the service, it does not apply to men. The tradition might argue that for men, the Torah reading is the

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[354] Magen Avraham 282:6, citing tractate Sofrim. Magen Avraham compares listening to the Torah to Hakhel, the mitzvah of gathering to hear Torah read every seven years during Sukkot. Fuchs p. 51.
[355] Orukh HaShulchan 282:11.
[356] Mishnah Berurah 282:12.
[357] Fuchs p. 52.
[358] Fuchs, ibid.
[359] Shulchan Arukh, Orach Chayim 282:3 based on Tractate Megillah 23a.
[360] M. Megillah 4:6.

most important portion, even more so than the Amidah. In looking at the laws regarding the importance of portions of the service and laws relating to women, we must keep in mind that there are mitigating factors and that the tradition never intended for these laws to be used in the manner in which I am using them here. The tradition would never say that a man need not pay respect to the Torah or that he might recite the Amidah while the Torah was being read. A man is obligated for both Torah and the recitation of theAmidah, whereas a woman is only obligated to the Amidah. Thus, he must both study Torah and pray the Amidah, whereas a woman need only pray the Amidah.

Yet, universalists would likely disagree with the belief that anyone is obligated at all. Thus, the playing field is leveled and the question becomes which is more important. It seems to me that the tradition places greater weight on the Amidah by placing it even above the Shema on the list of priorities of prayers to be recited if one has time, and far ahead of the blessing for Torah study. Since women are not even permitted to read Torah, this is not included in the list. Furthermore, since there are only a limited number of aliyot each time the Torah is read and certainly a limited number of readers, such actions are more honorific than obligatory because not every man in attendance would be given the opportunity to read at every service or recite the blessings. Thus, even if women were permitted to do so, the Torah blessings would not be on the list of obligations.

Section IV:
A Guide for the Formulation of Policies Regarding Non-Jewish Participation in Bar and Bat Mitzvah Services

Decision 1: Universalistic or Particularistic?

Particularistic policies fit rabbis and congregations

- Who affirm the particularistic content of blessings, such as "asher bachar banu mikol ha'amim v'natan lanu et torato," "who has chosen us from all the peoples and given us his Torah;" and/or
- Who would find it awkward for non-Jews to say these words even though they may believe in the explicit meaning of their content; and/or
- Who seek to strongly differentiate Jews from non-Jews in the context of worship (generally, there is no allowance that non-Jews may function as Jews traditionally do or in any capacity in which they assume the role of a Jew); and/or
- Who, in the great majority of cases, are rabbis who do not perform intermarriages and/or congregations that discourage them; and/or
- Who hold regular Shabbat morning services without B'nei Mitzvah or consider B'nei Mitzvah to be part of their regular Shabbat services; and/or
- Who believe that if Judaism and the Jewish people are to survive, individual Jews and Jewish families must adapt to the needs of Judaism rather than the other way around.

Universalistic policies fit rabbis and congregations

- Who believe that the performative meaning of particularistic blessings, such as the candle blessings and perhaps even the Torah blessings, is more important than the explicit meaning of their content (i.e., who hold that it is more important that the mother of every Bar or Bat Mitzvah say the candle blessings than it is that she be able to agree with their contents); and/or
- Who do not believe in the content of the blessings, such as denying the reality of choseness and/or commandness; and/or
- Who believe that B'nei Mitzvah are life-cycle events and/or the family's service and do not see them as part of a larger Shabbat service; and/or
- Who are rabbis who perform intermarriages and/or congregations that are highly intermarried; and/or
- Who have non-Jewish soloists and/or choirs; and/or
- Who believe that if Judaism and the Jewish people are to survive, Judaism must adapt to the needs of individual Jews and Jewish families rather than the other way around.

Decision 2: Candle Blessings and Kiddush?

- **Particularistic Exclusive** policies will most likely not allow any non-Jewish participation in the candle blessings beyond silent accompaniment, and may discourage that. In no circumstances will they allow non-Jews to physically light the candles.

• **Particularistic Inclusive** policies will often allow a non-Jew to read an introductory paragraph, altered or unaltered. Some will not allow them to do more than silently accompany a Jew for the recitation of the blessings, but others may go so far as to allow the non-Jew to recite the blessings along with a Jew, though this may be discouraged, and may also allow the non-Jew to physically light the candles.

• **Universalistic Exclusive** policies will almost always allow non-Jews to read an introductory paragraph and may encourage it. They will also allow non-Jews to read the Hebrew and/or English of the blessings, often to encourage the performance of the candle lighting ritual in the home, though some may require a Jew to say it along with them. They generally will allow non-Jews to physically light the candles. There is a possibility that a non-Jew may be the only person called up for the candle lighting and blessings. Generally, the English texts of the introductory paragraph and the blessings will be unaltered, though to do so would certainly be allowed.

• **Universalistic Inclusive** policies will have no restrictions on participation or leadership and may encourage a non-Jew to recite the traditional candle blessings if that is the role traditionally given to the mother of the Bar or Bat Mitzvah regardless of her religion, or allow a non-Jew to recite the introduction to the kiddush and drink the wine if that role is traditionally given to the father.

Decision 3: Psalms?

- **Particularistic Exclusive** policies may prohibit non-Jews from reading Psalms or discourage the practice. However, they are more likely to see the recitation of Psalms in English prior to the Barchu as one of the few parts of the service that would be permissible for non-Jews to lead.
- **Particularistic Inclusive** and **Universalistic** policies generally not only allow non-Jews to read Psalms, but encourage them to do so.

Decision 4: Yotzer?

- **Particularistic Exclusive** policies generally prohibit non-Jews from participating in any prayers in the service from Barchu through the Amidah and may prohibit any non-Jewish participation even through the Aleinu. Often, the Bar or Bat Mitzvah will recite this prayer.
- **Particularistic Inclusive** policies might allow non-Jews to recite this prayer in English, since it contains no particularistic language, but in most cases the Bar or Bat Mitzvah recites it.
- **Universalistic** policies will often allow non-Jews to recite this prayer in English, some would allow in Hebrew if desired, but most often, it will be recited by the Bar or Bat Mitzvah.

Decision 5: Amidah?

- **Particularistic Exclusive** policies will generally not even consider the possibility that a non-Jew could participate in any portion of the Amidah.

• **Particularistic Inclusive** policies also generally do not consider the possibility of non-Jewish participation in any part of the Amidah, but some will allow non-Jews to read such things as a prayer for peace. Others may allow for the insertion of additional readings or alternative blessings to be read by non-Jews during this part of the service.

• **Universalistic** policies generally allow non-Jews to participate where possible during this portion of the service. Most often the great majority of this portion of the service is done by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah and the cantor/soloist/choir. The standing portion of the Amidah is generally done by the Bar or Bat Mitzvah, but the remainder may be permissible for non-Jews to read from the Bimah.

Decision 6: Universalistic Prayers (Shecheheyanu and Prayer for the Nation)?

• **Particularistic Exclusive** policies may even go so far as to not allow non-Jews to recite universalistic prayers, though most will allow such participation.

• **Particularistic Inclusive** and **Universalistic** policies will virtually always allow non-Jews to recite this type of blessings.

Decision 7: Torah-related Honors?

a. Ceremonial Torah Pass?

• **Particularistic Exclusive** policies will almost never allow non-Jews to participate in a Torah Pass. They may even eliminate the ceremony from the service in cases where the parents are intermarried. The Torah Pass in these

congregations generally symbolizes the faithful transmission of Torah from generation to generation.

- **Particularistic Inclusive** and **Universalistic Exclusive** policies are split on whether or not to allow non-Jews to participate. Generally the deciding factor is the meaning given the ceremony. In those congregations where the ceremony symbolizes the faithful transmission of Torah from generation to generation, non-Jews are not allowed to participate or may only stand silently by the Jewish parent. In cases, where the ceremony symbolizes the transmission of a Jewish identity from one generation to another, some congregations will allow or even encourage the non-Jewish parent to participate on account of their role in raising the child as a Jew. Others will still not allow this and may even remove the ceremony from the service in cases where parents are intermarried.
- **Universalistic Inclusive** policies certainly would allow a non-Jewish parent to participate and may even encourage them to do so, if they have such a ceremony in the service.

b. Opening and Closing the Ark?

- **Particularistic Exclusive** policies will generally allow non-Jews to open the ark, but some prohibit them from doing so. In these cases, the congregations usually prohibit non-Jews from any role in relation to the Torah service.
- **Particularistic Inclusive** and **Universalistic** policies will almost always allow non-Jews to open and close the ark.

c. **Hakafot?**

• **Particularistic Exclusive** policies will generally not allow a non-Jew to hold the Torah and may even not allow them to be part of the procession if there is one as part of the service.

• **Particularistic Inclusive** and **Universalistic Exclusive** policies generally will allow non-Jews to be part of the procession, but are more or less split on whether to allow them to hold the Torah, if there is a procession in the service.

• **Universalistic Inclusive** policies are generally held by congregations that are likely not to have a Hakafah, but if they do non-Jews would be welcome to participate and perhaps even to hold the Torah.

d. **Aliyah?**

• **Particularistic Exclusive** policies will not allow non-Jews to recite the words of the Torah blessings at all and may not even allow a non-Jew to silently accompany a Jew to receive this honor. Some may, however, call the non-Jew up by name along with their Jewish spouse, though they will not grant the non-Jew a Hebrew name. Many of this type of policy will not allow non-Jews any role in the Torah service whatsoever.

• **Particularistic Inclusive** policies will not permit non-Jews to lead Torah blessings, but may allow them to recite the blessings along with a Jew. Most of these congregations will allow silent accompaniment if not vocal accompaniment. Some policies may allow non-Jews to read alternative

English blessings that do not include particularistic language. Most congregations will call up the non-Jewish spouse by name if they call up the Jewish spouse, though they will not grant the non-Jew a Hebrew name.

- **Universalistic Exclusive** policies will generally not allow non-Jews to read the traditional Torah blessings in Hebrew and may not allow them to do so in English. In most cases, they will allow silent accompaniment and will call up the non-Jew by name along with the Jew. In some cases, non-Jews will not be called up at all. In other cases, they may be called up and allowed to recite the Torah blessings. Usually, this is done in English and congregations may even prohibit the non-Jew from reciting the Hebrew even if they know how to do so.
- **Universalistic Inclusive** policies will allow the non-Jew the option of reciting the Torah blessings if such an honor is available. In many cases, these congregations will have only one aliyah and that would be done by the Bar or Bat Mitzvah.

e. English Translation of the Torah?

- **Particularistic Exclusive** policies generally will not allow non-Jews to read a translation of the Torah reading.
- **Particularistic Inclusive** and **Universalistic** policies will most likely allow non-Jews to do this.

f. English Translation of the Haftarah?

• **Particularistic Exclusive** policies will sometimes allow non-Jews to read a translation of the Haftarah reading.

• **Particularistic Inclusive** and **Universalistic** policies will almost always allow this to be done.

g. Hagbah and G'lilah?

• **Particularistic Exclusive** policies will prohibit non-Jews from receiving either of these honors in the majority of cases. Few will allow a non-Jew to dress the Torah. Virtually none will allow a non-Jew to raise the Torah.

• **Particularistic Inclusive** policies will often allow a non-Jew to dress the Torah, but are highly unlikely to allow a non-Jew to raise it.

• **Universalistic Exclusive** policies are likely to allow non-Jews to dress the Torah and may even allow a non-Jew to raise it, though in many such congregations this action will either not be regularly done or will be done by the rabbi him- or herself.

• **Universalistic Inclusive** policies will allow a non-Jew to do either of these actions and may encourage a non-Jewish parent to help dress the Torah. In many such congregations there will be no ceremonial raising of the Torah.

h. Sitting with the Torah?

• **Particularistic Exclusive** policies may prohibit non-Jews from receiving any honors related to the Torah and will generally prohibit a non-Jew from holding the Torah.

- **Particularistic Inclusive** and **Universalistic Exclusive** policies will generally allow a non-Jew to sit with the Torah, but some may restrict all Torah honors to Jews.
- **Universalistic Inclusive** policies would allow this without question and may encourage it.

Decision 9: Parental Speech?

- **Particularistic Exclusive** policies in most cases allow non-Jews to address their child from the bimah. There are some that prohibit this.
- **Particularistic Inclusive** policies almost unanimously allow this and may encourage it, often asking that the non-Jew not mention things specific to his or her religion.
- **Universalistic** policies will not only allow for such participation in the service and in most cases, encourage it, but may even allow the non-Jew to speak as a non-Jew and use sentiments from his or her own tradition.

Decision 10: Sit on Bimah?

- **Particularistic Exclusive,** and in some cases **Universalistic Exclusive**, policies may not allow non-Jews to sit on the bimah during the service, but most do.
- **Particularistic Inclusive** and **Universalistic Inclusive** policies would unquestionably allow non-Jews to sit on the bimah and might find it absurd to consider not doing so.

Decision 11: Wear Kippot and/or Tallitot?

- **Particularistic Exclusive** policies generally ask that all males wear a kipa in services and may require it of all males on the bimah. In some cases, they will allow non-Jews to wear tallitot on the bimah, require all Jews to wear to do so. In other cases, they may require Jews to do so, but prohibit non-Jews from doing so.
- **Particularistic Inclusive** policies may require that all males wear a kipa on the bimah, though they may not ask that they do so in the congregation. Some may ask that those receiving an aliyah wear a tallit, but may not require it. In general, no restrictions or requirements are imposed that physically differentiate Jews from non-Jews.
- **Universalistic** policies generally have no requirements or restrictions relating to dress. In many such congregations, it may be traditional for Jews, and certainly for non-Jews, to worship without a kipa, much less a tallit.

Decision 12: Include Special Prayers for Non-Jews to read?

- **Particularistic Exclusive** policies sometimes allow for additional prayers to be added to the periphery of the service to be read by non-Jews or for the purpose of acknowledging/blessing the non-Jewish family members.
- **Particularistic Inclusive** policies generally go to great lengths to include non-Jews and thus often add prayers specifically written for non-Jews to read or allow them to choose additional readings that are meaningful to them, often poems.

• **Universalistic** policies do not necessarily need to add readings for non-Jews since they are allowed to participate in many ways. However, they would certainly not be averse to doing so.

Conclusion

The Choices We Face

In this thesis, I have tried to show how rabbis and congregations go about defining the Jewish identity of the Jews in their communities, as well as the Jewish identity of their communities as a whole, and what they feel is necessary to defend those identities. I began by looking at the history of the debate within the Reform movement. I thought that the issue of non-Jewish participation in worship would be connected to the larger issue of intermarriage and thus I looked at the discussion of that issue as well in the Reform movement. The points of view represented in the discussion concerning the performance of intermarriage at the1947 CCAR convention seemed be the same ones underlying the subsequent debate concerning non-Jewish participation.

It became increasingly clear to me that the primary issue guiding the formation of policies regarding non-Jews was the universalism versus particularism debate as articulated at that convention. The argument at that time was that universalists would perform intermarriages, while particularists would not. This argument has evolved over time, but retains the same basic outline. Whether rabbis choose to adapt the practices of Judaism to the social reality that they and their congregants face, a universalistic point of view, or choose to defend the practices of Judaism in the face of that reality, a particularistic view, is of importance in virtually every aspect of congregational life, but in no aspect more directly than the Bar or Bat Mitzvah service when even those rabbis who refuse to perform intermarriages must deal with intermarried families.

Non-Jews are now, and most likely will always be, in our midst, parenting Jewish children. Those very same Jewish children will define their own identity based upon the

way that their family defines that identity and their community reinforces it. We must therefore be extremely aware that when family identity is undermined by the community, problems will occur. In my opinion, the child could and most likely would side with his or her family against the community and then would either remain uncomfortably within that community or seek out a different community that would reinforce the family's identity. Hopefully, they would choose an alternate Jewish community rather than a non-Jewish community. This is a primary worry for universalists who, as Rabbi Morgenstern stressed, seek "to recover for Judaism and for the Jewish people the offspring of as many of these mixed marriages as possible."[361]

Universalists seek to prevent this discontinuity, to discourage the possibility of this terrible choice, and to reinforce the child's family's identity in the Jewish community. Particularists, seeking to define boundaries and reinforcing differences between Jews and non-Jews even within families, generally believe that, for Judaism to survive and the Jewish way of life to survive, some family identities, those without boundaries for example, may not be supported by the community. Moreover, it is assumed by many that inevitably some, if not many, of the children of these families must be abandoned in order to maintain the integrity of Judaism. The hope is that many others will ultimately reject their own family's version of Jewish identity and accept the community's version.

Universalists would argue that such a goal is doomed to failure and that the reason that many grandchildren of intermarried couples, even ones who raise their children as Jews, leave the Jewish community is precisely because the Jewish community rejected the familial identity of the children of the intermarriage. Thus, Universalists perform

[361] CCAR Yearbook 1947, p. 178.

intermarriages and seek to reinforce the Jewish identity of those families and those children in any way they can. Communal identity is not seen as homogenous, but as a collection of identities of individuals and individual families.

May they be accused of violating the norms of Judaism, radically altering the Jewish way of life? In many cases, the answer is yes. However, defending Judaism and the Jewish way of life is not their primary goal. Rather, they first seek to do whatever is necessary to foster the survival of the Jewish people, and only then do they seek to defend the boundaries of Judaism itself. While Particularists would argue that the two are intimately intertwined, that one cannot do one without the other, Universalists would say that in many cases, one cannot do both at the same time.

In the course of working on this thesis, if I have discovered anything, it is that both of these points of view exist in Reform Judaism and that what is appropriate for one Reform Jew and one Reform Jewish congregation is not appropriate for another. The CCAR Responsa Committee offers a great deal of guidance in the formulation of policies for particularistic rabbis and congregations. The responsa concerning non-Jewish participation in B'nei Mitzvah services are especially helpful for rabbis and congregations desiring to strongly differentiate the role of the Jew from the role of the non-Jew and who wish to dramatically limit the role of the latter. However, it is clearly of little help for a universalistic rabbi or congregation, beyond letting them know that they are not following the Halakhah, something of which I would assume that they are already aware and are most likely comfortable with.

Comfort is exactly the issue for them. The goal of universalistic policies is to establish a type of Jewish practice and a Jewish way of life that is comfortable for the

Jews and non-Jews within their own community. In some cases, this results in a type of Judaism that would be extremely uncomfortable to Particularists in general and Particularistic Exclusivists in particular.

Rabbis and congregations must be aware that moving a congregation from universalism to particularism or the reverse is not something that may be done simply by altering the policy, but must result from significant transformative change. Furthermore, it may not be possible to accomplish this change at all. If a rabbi enforces a particularistic policy because he or she believes in the ideologies of chosenness, commandedness, and obligation and not because of any awkwardness resulting from a non-Jew reciting these words, it would seem then that his or her congregants must also believe in those concepts, and not simply be educated about them. Otherwise, the result, it seems to me, will be hypocrisy, because one cannot logically prevent non-Jews from reciting blessings that involve these concepts because they do not believe in them if at the very same time the Jews in the congregation do not either. The result of this cognitive disconnect is that the congregants could find that the type of Judaism being practiced is not meaningful to them and/or that they do not belong in the congregation. They may even decide, if their Jewish identity differs enough from that officially recognized by the congregation, that their identity is not Jewish. Particularistic rabbis in particular must be aware of this possibility and willing to accept its consequences, namely the continued loss of numerous potential Jews and potential Jewish parents (the impact of which upon the number of Jews will increase over time).

Ultimately, it seems to me that it is highly advisable that rabbis seek out congregations that fit their views and that congregations seek out rabbis who do so. One

should not assume that the other would or could change to adapt to their views. Moreover, the damage that may be done to the Jewish identities of all of those involved may be substantial and irreversible if they feel that their own community has rejected them.

While it is more likely that a move toward particularism would cause such identity problems, moves toward universalism may be equally problematic. Jews-by-choice, for example, might object vehemently to such a change since they could feel that the dramatic and highly emotionally charged life-altering change that they spent a great deal of time undergoing is practically irrelevant to such a community. More conservative Jews might simply leave the congregation and join a more conservative one, if that is an option, or would be highly critical whenever particularistic boundaries are crossed. Thus, rabbis and congregations need to be acutely aware of where their congregations and potential congregations are to be found on the spectrum from particularistic to universalistic.

In the conclusion of The Beginnings of Jewishness, Shaye Cohen notes that though we may not be able to clearly define those boundaries, they nonetheless exist:

> Jewishness, the conscious affirmation of the qualities that make Jews Jews, presumes a contrast between Us and Them. The Jews constitute an Us; all the rest of humanity, or, in Jewish language, the nations of the world, the gentiles, constitute a Them. Between Us and Them is a line, a boundary, drawn not in sand or stone but in the mind. The line is no less real for being imaginary, since both Us and Them agree that it exists. Although there is a boundary that separates the two, it is crossable and not always distinct.[362]

There are clearly both an US and a Them. Non-Jews are not Jews. Yet, it is also clear that there has developed, to use the words of Rabbi Kominsky, "a spectrum" from non-Jew to Jew in many Reform Jewish congregations. Though some would argue that

[362] Cohen, Beginnings, p. 341.

there are clear boundaries, that a non-Jew who has not converted to Judaism formally is not a Jew at all, others do not agree with this statement. As Shaye Cohen noted earlier, there has developed a "half-Jew" status.

Beyond the borders of Jewish identity itself, however, there is the issue of the identity of the community in which Jews worship. There are those who argue that it is a Jewish faith- or Jewish religious community in which non-Jewish spouses are but guests. Others see the community as a community of Jews and those non-Jews who have associated themselves with the community, much like the communities of Jews and God-Fearers that were discussed earlier. The two, in this type of community, are not easily separable, or are much less so. Often, it is difficult to distinguish one from the other without inquiry. Just as many Jewish families now include non-Jews, so too do Jewish communities. The question is whether or not one can see an Us that excludes non-Jews or at least an Us that makes no allowance for their presence in our midst as has been done in the past and is still done in traditional Jewish communities.

The awkwardness felt by Rabbi Friedman when she heard a non-Jew identify with the "us" in the Torah blessings may be viewed in two ways. First, in the way that Rabbi Friedman saw it, that the non-Jew should not be reciting those words because he or she cannot possibly identify with the "us" of the Torah blessings. However, it seems to me that there is a second way, namely that non-Jews are now part of the Us, not the "us" that received Torah at Sinai, but the Us that prays as a community including intermarried Jewish families, and, what is at least as awkward if not more so, is that our liturgy and our worship practices often do not reflect that.

For example, many rabbis' and congregational policies state that the reason that non-Jews are not allowed to participate in a Torah Pass is that they were not responsible for the child being brought up as a Jew. What happens if they clearly were? For example, several rabbis have told me about instances in which the Jewish parent died while the child was still fairly young, if not very young, and the non-Jewish parent both promised to raise the child as a Jew and carried out their promise. Is there a doubt in this instance that the non-Jewish parent is the one responsible for this? This of course does not even take into consideration the fact that the non-Jewish parent had to agree to allow the child to be raised as a Jew and more than likely helped to foster that identity by taking the child to religious/Hebrew school, attending services, etc., in families with a living Jewish parent.

It is undeniably true that in many congregations the symbolism, meaning, and context of various parts of the liturgy differ dramatically from those in other congregations, notably from their traditional Jewish counterparts, and that these differences will undoubtedly significantly affect the religious practices of those congregations. Some argue that we must do our best to "reeducate" the divergent congregations. I am sure that the feeling is mutual. Classical Reform-oriented congregations are aghast at recent moves toward tradition among other Reform congregations, particularly the reintroduction to worship of rituals once deemed "superstitious" and prayers read in Hebrew which the vast majority of their congregants do not understand, and would happily reeducate those diverging to tradition.

Ultimately, everything revolves around one thing, identity. How we see ourselves, how we define the Us and the Them, will determine how we function as Jews.

Universalists and Particularists differ tremendously on how they deal with this issue. All of us desire the same thing, namely that Judaism and the Jewish people will survive. Yet, all of us differ on how we envision that Judaism and that Jewish people.

At a Bar or Bat Mitzvah, a thirteen year-old child stands before his or her community and proudly declares to be a member of that community. It is a community that includes mostly Jews, but many non-Jews. He or she declares him or herself to be a Jew, placing him or herself squarely in the Us and in the "us" of the blessings. Yet, though he or she knows that a non-Jewish parent is not a Jew and not technically part of the "us," in most cases, he or she believes that his or her parent is part of the Us, part of his or her family and his or her religious community even though not a Jew. It is up to rabbis and congregations to formulate policies that foster and defend the identities, not only of the "us," but of the Us, the Them, and the child. I hope that this thesis will be of help to rabbis and congregations in this process.

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