



# INVOLVING JEWISH MEN IN JEWISH LIFE

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## FJMC Annual Keruv Report Summary of Activity 2011-2012

The FJMC fiscal year is coming to an end and this closure provides me with the opportunity to summarize the success of the FJMC Keruv Initiative and to share our goals for 2012-2013 and beyond.

The annual rabbinic think tanks continually provide opportunities for us to learn more about how synagogue communities are responding to intermarriage and to share the techniques and insights gained from their observations as well from the ongoing lay training programs. For the first time in this program's history a number of rabbis have already registered for the next seminar which will take place in December in Caldwell, New Jersey.

Two of the outcomes of the lay training program were the publishing of a new manual, *Intermarriage: Concepts and Strategies for Families and Synagogue Leaders* and the enclosed paper *Congregations & Intermarrieds: Implicit or Complicit?* which summarizes a Congregational survey of *Bima* practices for the non-Jewish Spouse.

The manual reflects the insights of lay leaders, Jewish professionals, and academics that focus on gender studies. It presents a broad picture for a family member or a synagogue decision maker so they can more effectively determine how to position themselves in order to address their changing families or their religious community. The paper represents our first attempt and what I believe to be the first attempt to gather information about congregational practice *Vis a Vis* intermarrieds in the Conservative/Masorti Movement. We anticipate that it will provide rabbis who desire a warmer more welcoming synagogue with needed information.

The third aspect of last year's effort was the teacher training programs. This effort now was well received and requests for the coming year have already been calendared.

## Goals 2012-2013

1. The annual Keruv Rabbinic Think tank will take place December 18-19 in Caldwell, New Jersey
2. Four regional Teacher training seminars designed to sensitize teachers to children who have intermarried parents have been scheduled. They will take place in Cincinnati, Chicago, Tampa-St. Petersburg and Pittsburgh. The Chicago and Cincinnati and Tampa-St. Petersburg are in conjunction with a local Board of Jewish Education or an organization with a similar function. The Chicago training seminar is being co-sponsored with Interfaithfamily.com. FJMC is providing the expertise and Interfaithfamily.com is assisting with coordination and some educational input.

### 3. Lay Training programs:

In an effort to broaden our scope and to attract more individuals two FJMC Regions have been targeted for one day seminars with the intent of encouraging the most capable of those attending to receive further training at the annual advanced training weekend in April 2014 at the Pearlstone Retreat Center. It is our hope that this will broaden our reach and at the same time limit our expenditures.

### 4. (NEW) Creating curriculum.

#### Background:

This past April at the annual advanced training weekend, a one hour unit was presented to sixty men and women who attempted to explain the three-fold nature of welcoming as a process that moved from tolerance to acceptance to inclusion. The presentation was extremely well received and as a result, a committee was formed to further develop this concept. Brandeis faculty member Amy Sales was recruited and a number of other professionals were invited to assist us in this process. A goal was established to develop a series of units which can be taught to congregational leadership and professionals over a three-five hour period of time. An outline was created and a budget is in process. FJMC plans to field test this curriculum in the spring of 2014 and to offer the seminar to congregational leaders at the FJMC biennial Convention in Boston in July 2014.

If the seminar in Boston is successful, FJMC will select a designated number of synagogues to further develop and study in the following year.

Personally, I find this to be very exciting.

Sincerely,

Rabbi Charles Simon