

The JEWISH Proclaimer

PROCLAIM JUDAISM THROUGHOUT THE LAND

Spring – Summer 5773/2013

No. 13-1

TAKE NOTE—NEW NCEJ ADDRESS, AND ZIPCODE CHANGE, TOO

IF WE ARE NOT FOR OURSELVES...?

| | |
|--|---|
| The best defense is a good offense, right? | 1 |
| NCEJ can help your outreach, your growth. | 1 |
| Hebrew Union College, outreach on the web. | 2 |
| NYC Temple Israel outreach, w/o advertising. | 2 |
| Charlotte expands Taste to 4 classes. | 2 |
| HUC article on Outreach Institute. | 3 |
| Greensboro adds 101 and 101, for good numbers. | 3 |

| | |
|--|----------|
| Cleveland Center spends on ads, attracts flock. | 4 |
| Montgomery sees “30” as the start. Fullerton, too. | 4 |
| LA AJU keeps rolling up numbers, revamps. | 4 |
| Los Gatos. San Diego, UJF pace-setter. | 5 |
| Tampa restores the spirit of 76. | 5 |
| Binghamton tries both print and Facebook. | 5 |
| Rabbi Federow on outreach backup documenting. | 6 |
| NCEJ GRANT APPLICATION FORM | 7 |

WELCOMING FOLKS INTO JUDAISM IS AN ACT OF SELF-SURVIVAL

CAN JEWS SPREAD THEIR OWN RELIGION?

We’re just asking. We’re not so sure.

-When Jews describe themselves as “secular Jews” or “cultural Jews”...

-When Jews object to non-Jewish spouses being invited to explore Judaism...

-When Jews in the wide open American religious marketplace refuse to point out the good reasons for being Jewish...

-When Jews act as if they’re still in the shtetl, and shh, don’t let them hear you...

-When Jewish organizations devote themselves to tikkun olam, or their own existence, but ignore the Jewish reasons for bettering the world, or doing what they’re doing, the basic religious essence...

Well, what’s a fella to think?

The National Center to Encourage Judaism says, Let your community know it can explore Judaism, your doors are open, your rabbinate is open, your congregations are open—and by gosh, the Jewish framework for life is a fantastic one.

How did there get to be seven-eight million Jews or Judeophiles in the Roman empire? Why have Jews existed and persisted for these thousands of years?

Judaism makes more sense today for more people worldwide than ever before:

The evolved Jewish concept of God is of a universal abstract that covers everybody, including non-believers.

Jewish emphasis is on the present (see: Torah) rather than after-life.

Jewish emphasis is on actions, above belief; deed before creed.

Jewish emphasis is on community betterment, ahead of individual salvation. (This all leads to tikkun olam.)

{It’s the present, the present era, the present time, we’re concerned about.}

You don’t have to agree, but we’d like you to think about welcoming strangers as well as members, opening your doors and keeping them open, and inviting people to learn about Judaism and decide for themselves what they’d like to do.

We can help you (Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, Reconstructionist...). Hold Taste of Judaism, or Introduction to Judaism or similar classes, and advertise them in secular community media (not Jewish.) NCEJ will offer a considerable subsidy after the fact. See our application form on page 7 of this issue, or on the web at NCEJudaism.org (where there are past Jewish Proclaimers and other ads.)

Sponsor positive pro-Jewish religious ads, and we can help there, too. See our issue 12-2 for sample ads and headlines. Run such ads of your own making past us, and we’ll tell you if we’ll go along. The point is, try something positive, not blah-ish.

Judaism is worth preserving, and so is worth expanding—and needs it, too.

NATIONAL CENTER TO ENCOURAGE JUDAISM, a nonprofit foundation, invites synagogues and other Jewish institutions, as a light unto the nations, to reach out to and encourage more to be Jewish.
1109 Ruppert Road, Silver Spring, MD 20903-1020. 301-593-2319. E-mail: NCEJudaism@verizon.net.
Web: www.NCEJudaism.org. This is the first of two issues for 2013. (D13) Editor: Ash Gerecht

Why couldn't 10 percent of the U.S. be Jewish, just as in the Roman empire? There's a Why Not to tangle with.

Jewish Outreach Across the Continent:

OUTREACH HELP ON THE WEB AT HUC

New York City—Hebrew Union College has put a beta version of the materials used in its outreach retreats for students and alumni on the web at www.huc.edu/gerecht.

Rabbi Aaron Panken, director of the HUC Gerecht Family Institute for Outreach, says this contains hundreds of online resources, including conversion ceremonies and rabbis' manuals, statements of individual converts, models for congregational outreach, original Hebrew texts and translations of pertinent documents, poetry and other resources. Site will be open to all 3,000 alumni, students, and faculty. Once all is in place, the site will be rolled out and publicized.

In addition to yearly training for students at its three campuses, HUC held its first Gerecht Alumni Institute in February 2012, with eight attending. This may become biennial.

Student comments:

-“I learned so much practical information about conversion and how to go about the process.”

-“Before this Institute, I knew very little about conversion. Now I feel I have a solid foundation to guide people on their path to Judaism.”

-“This is by far the best HUC conference and will be so useful in the future.”

An alumnus: “I appreciate the opportunity to spend three days in study. The presentations opened my eyes to many ways we can improve the profile of outreach in my congregation. I also got many concrete ideas and materials about how to sponsor someone for conversion.”

Another: “Extending this effort to alumni is a great gift.”

A similar Outreach Institute is potentially available to select Conservative and Orthodox seminaries.

NYC TEMPLE ISRAEL HOLDS 2 CLASSES

New York City—Temple Israel (R) holds a free 3-week Taste class for 60 and a 5-month Judaism 101 (\$130/150 couple, \$100/120 single) for 14, in the first half of 2011. About half were not Jewish, says Rabbi Sara Sapadin.

Students preferred having one instructor to a number. (Opinion on this varies, in our reports.)

One of the conversion approaches, says the rabbi, “includes a public statement during a service. We have had some conversion students speak during our High Holiday services. This has proven to be enormously powerful. It makes a very public statement about inclusion and outreach.”

CHARLOTTE HIKES TASTE CLASSES

Charlotte, NC—Temple Beth El, with over 1,100 members, expands the Taste minicourse from 3 to 4 sessions, with enthusiastic response.

The June 2011 program drew 36, all but one not Jewish. This is the “first time we had almost all non-Jews,” says outreach co-director Shari Hackman. “Lots of interest in Judaism recently.”

The January 2011 3-session Taste also attracted 36, 4 of whom were Jewish. Six reported interest in converting.

A student who subsequently enrolled in the conversion program: The Taste “course was fabulous! It cleared up some of the basic questions I had about Judaism and reinforced what I thought I already knew.”

The previous June 2010 class had 19, all but 2 not Jewish. Two of the students converted within a year.

The January 2012 class drew 61, all but 6 not Jewish. There were 12 conversions in 2011.

A week after Taste ends the temple has a Contemplating Conversion session to give students interested in conversion more information.

The June 2012 sessions attracted 25, 10 of them Jewish, a higher percentage than usual. Only 2 were members. Advertising included a specific add-on, being on the Observer newspaper's website. Thinking is, while it's hard to gauge, this would attract more in the 20-30 age group. It's part of a religious institution package the Observer offers.

This class, Ms Hackman says, had probably the highest percentage of Jewish students yet—“folks are really looking toward their ‘roots’ for some renewed meaning in their lives.”

A student: -“For once in my life I felt religion made sense. Like all the dots connected for me.”

-“You have made me and my family feel very welcome.”

-“Discovered that Judaism is simple and complex at the same time.”

-“What I heard was entirely different from what I had been told in Christian-oriented classes.”

New Approaches to Outreach and Conversion: The Gerecht Family Institute at HUC-JIR

Rabbi Aaron Panken '91, Ph.D., Director, Gerecht Family Institute; Assistant Professor of Rabbinic and Second Temple Literature, HUC-JIR/New York

The genesis of the Gerecht Family Institute for Outreach and Conversion at HUC-JIR came about in a unique way. While serving as Dean of the New York School in the mid-'90s, I was in Rockville, MD, and had just completed a public lecture when a distinguished gentleman approached me and asked: "Does the College-Institute have a Professor of Outreach?" After a subsequent meeting in Washington, DC, Ash Gerecht agreed to create a generous endowment, and the Gerecht Family Institute was born.

Over the next decade, with the help of students, faculty, alumni, such luminaries in the field as Dru Greenwood and Kathy Kahn (who headed the Union for Reform Judaism's outreach programs), and the cooperation of the directors of the rabbinical programs on our stateside campuses, we created a well-respected co-curricular educational program that now trains all of our rabbinical and cantorial students on key issues of conversion and outreach. During the required three-day workshops, students learn the textual background that undergirds the

Jewish ideals relating to outreach and conversion across the many eras of Jewish history and the many streams of contemporary Jewish life. They study the psychology of conversion and the phases and feelings converts experience when moving from one faith to another. They hear from panels of those who have converted to Judaism - and their spouses - about their experiences, their challenges, and their joys. They consider what steps are necessary to create congregations that are welcoming to those not yet part of Jewish life in a formal way. They practice interviewing techniques and consider conversion curricula. They discuss circumcision, immersion, and *beit din* practices in Reform Judaism and beyond, in North America, Israel, and elsewhere abroad. They share best practices with extraordinary HUC-JIR alumni in the field who offer their own experiences and advice. Through constant review and improvement, the program has consistently garnered the most positive of responses, with evaluations regularly calling it one of our students' most valued experiences.

The staff and consultants of the Gerecht Institute

are now looking beyond these educational settings to influence the Reform Movement and the greater Jewish community through additional generous support from the Gerecht family. We are developing online resources that will soon be available to assist all HUC-JIR alumni with building effective conversion programs, continuing their professional learning in these areas, and building a deeper culture of welcoming and accessibility within congregational and organizational settings. This past year, the Gerecht Institute held a very successful first retreat for alumni, a program that will recur every one to two years, with the goal of helping alumni benefit from the program if they graduated before it was in place.

As has been the case throughout Jewish history, our community has benefitted greatly from the addition of "fellow travelers" to our ranks. Through the work of the Gerecht Institute, we hope to continue to extend and enhance our efforts, making Reform Judaism stronger, intellectually deeper, more vibrant, and ever more welcoming. ■

A taste of JUDAISM
...Are you curious?

Do you want an introduction to Jewish life?
Do you know someone who wants a greater feel for Jewish traditions?

JOIN US to explore the Jewish perspective on living in today's world.
ALL ARE WELCOME, Jewish or not.

| | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jewish Spirituality • Jewish Values • Jewish Community | <p>SEATING IS LIMITED REGISTRATION REQUIRED FOUR 90 MINUTE CLASSES CLASSES ARE FREE</p> |
|--|---|

Wednesdays, January 4, 11, 18 & 25, 2012
7:00 - 8:30 pm

To Register Contact:
Temple Beth El, Charlotte
Shari or Janie (704) 749-3051
shackman@beth-el.com or jmeyers@beth-el.com


TEMPLE BETH EL

Sponsored by the Union for Reform Judaism
William & Lottie Daniel Department of Outreach & Membership

Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion

 **JUDAISM 101**
& **HEBREW 101**

**Jewish Ethics, Customs,
& Spirituality**
+ Hebrew for Beginners

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC!
\$54.00 for each course, or take both
classes for \$90!

\$36/72 for Beth David members

TUESDAY EVENINGS for 5 WEEKS!
November 1 - 29

Judaism 101 6:30-7:30 ~ Boaz Avraham-Katz
Hebrew 101 7:30-8:30 ~ Yudit Natkin

Beth David Synagogue
804 Winview Dr., Greensboro 27410

To register, call Beth Socol
294-0007 or
email bsocol@bethdavidsynagogue.org

GREENSBORO: JUDAISM 101 + HEBREW 101

Greensboro, NC—Beth David Synagogue (C), with 425 members, offers two 6-week courses in tandem, Judaism 101 along with introductory Hebrew. Fee was \$54 apiece, including materials, or both for \$90; \$36/72 for members.

Its fall 2010 classes attracted 16, ¼ not Jewish. It had 5 conversions in the preceding year.

More than half the first-time Hebrew class reported a Jewish ancestor, usually a grandparent or great-grandparent, discovered as an adult and thus

sparkling their interest. One, from a Sephardic background, which had “remained hidden for generations,” had already adopted a Hebrew name and considered herself Jewish.

The Hebrew class, which was continuing, “has become a chavurah of sorts, and wants to continue to study together,” comments programming director Beth Socol.

The November 2011 classes drew 15, all but one not Jewish. The synagogue is now offering a second Hebrew class, combined with the study of Psalms.

CLEVELAND CENTER SPENDS OVER \$8000

Cleveland—Jewish Education Center budgets over \$8,000 to advertise Taste programs throughout its area. One, in Lorain, drew over 75 non-Jews, a high so far.

Some individual synagogues also do Taste, but don't advertise in the papers, says coordinator Sherri Kaufman (216-371-0446).

Fall 2011 classes were in 3 locations. For 2 that began in a sukkah, in Temple Israel, Mayfield Heights, and Beth Israel, Lakewood, 65 attended. For the January 2012's 2 locations, 55 attended.

Over 80 took part in a subsequent Feast of Judaism continuation, with the last of 6 sessions really a feast. The emissary from Israel spoke about her childhood and army service there.

One student: “My daughter married a Jewish man. Their home will observe Jewish traditions.”

—“My father was Jewish, but I was brought up Lutheran. I want to learn more about my father's faith.”

To maximize coverage, ads go into Cleveland's largest paper. The metro and Saturday's religious news sections bring the largest response. Ads also go into zone-specific community papers. Jewish preschools are targeted with additional flyers.

THIRTY'S THE MONTGOMERY BEGINNING

Montgomery, AL—Temple Beth Or draws 30 to its URJ-funded Taste program, all not Jewish, with 3 interested in converting. Three had Judaism in their family background. The 170-member congregation averages about 2 conversions yearly.

In an article in the Advertiser, Rabbi Elliott Stevens says it's not proselytizing or missionizing, it's more a welcome to the Jewish faith.

The article also quotes the program chair, Katie Wetherbee, who was raised Christian but converted as a young adult. After working at a Reform summer camp in Pennsylvania, “she was attracted to the faith by a sense of community that she hadn't felt before.”

The lengthy article includes: “As a faith, Judaism does not really say anything about the world to come, about sin and repentance, heaven and hell. Such questions are left undefined, Stevens said, which is different for those who come from a Christian background—but some spiritual seekers find such an open-ended faith very appealing.”

Among student comments:

—“Judaism appears to be a ‘happy’ religion and one to which I relate.”

—“The friendliness to Christians was a very nice surprise.”

—Rabbi Stevens' “enthusiasm and humor and vocabulary are thoroughly engaging. I definitely want to explore Judaism...”

—“I like the fact that Rabbis are teachers not priests (no lording it over the people.)”

THIRTY AT TASTE IN FULLERTON, CA

Fullerton, CA—Temple Beth Tikvah (R) has 2/3 non-Jews at its spring 2012 Taste mini-course.

AMER. JEWISH U AD; BIG MENORAH

Los Angeles—American Jewish U. features a large menorah in its latest ads, for its ongoing classes in Judaism.

Classes begin almost monthly in various sites in the greater metropolitan area.

The program includes support groups led by professional therapists, who become a resource for conversion issues.

In 2012, with 88 conversions reported, AJU concentrated its advertising in the LA Times & Daily News, serving the region. Some ads went to the LA Weekly, with a young, diverse demographic. The Weekly placed the course in its “Top Ten Classes.”

Current fees are \$354 single, \$533 couple.

Students numbered 66 Jews, 164 non-Jews, with 136 possibly interested in converting.

Among comments:

—A 10/11 convert: “It was a truly amazing experience from start to finish and one that I couldn't imagine having gone through anywhere else. I even dragged my Jewish then-boyfriend (now husband) with me and he loved it and was so happy he was able to learn more about Judaism himself.”

—A male convert: The “program provided an incredibly warm and encouraging environment for someone making this hugely profound life change. From beginning to the end, the good folks at AJU

Louis & Judith Miller
**Introduction to Judaism Program
 at American Jewish University**



We welcome all Jews, Non-Jews, and those considering conversion for our 18-week course offered throughout Southern California.

LOCATIONS:
 Bel Air, Orange County, Pasadena,
 Santa Monica, West Los Angeles,
 West & East Valley

For more information, please give us a call at (310) 440-1273
 or email us at intro@ajua.edu • www.ajua.edu/intro

The Louis & Judith Miller Introduction to Judaism Program, established in 1965, is endorsed by the National Alliance, as well as other religious organizations, for purposes of conversion, and by the State of Israel for making aliyah.

SAN DIEGO—FEDERATION VANGUARD

San Diego—Jewish Federation of San Diego County leads all the rest—other federations—in its continuing sponsorship of Taste of Judaism courses.

As Federations ponder what they should be doing, how they should be changing—here's a no-brainer: They should be working to expand the Jewish population, by outreach and retention programs.

The UJF here held two Taste I courses, for 9 & 12 attendees, two Taste II follow-ups, for 15 and 8, in April & May 2012. 2/3 were not Jewish; 1/8, interested in converting. Five were 19-24; 11, 24-45; and the rest were older.

A Shalom San Diego guidebook was given to all, who could also sign up for a Center for Jewish Culture newsletter of social and learning programs.

never applied any pressure to convert, but at the same time challenged and provoked the students in a positive way.”

—The instructor, “Rabbi made himself available to all of us and expressed a genuine interest in us not just as his students but individuals as well.”

—“Rabbi Sara Zacheria was amazing. She has helped me grow on so many levels.”

—Rabbi Camras’ “kindness and welcoming spirit gave me the confidence I needed to begin my journey.”

Rabbi Adam Greenwald, who became executive director of the Miller Introduction to Judaism program in July 2012, says it’s taking steps to increase the marketing impact. A graphic artist is creating materials “that will have a hip, modern look and are designed to appeal to our key 20s-30s demographic.”

A pro bono marketing consultant will help to consider new venues. On-line advertising will expand the use of social media, with a redesigned website.

LOS GATOS IS BIG ON WELCOMING

Los Gatos, CA—Cong. Shir Hadash (R) holds its outreach programs—Taste in Sept. 2011, Intro in Nov., with ads emphasizing welcoming.

The Intro headline is “Four Rabbis Agree...on inviting you to Introduction to Judaism.” (Don’t count—not explained.)

And a prospects dinner ad—first 10 free—starts. “50% Jewish, 100% welcome.”

One person attended the Taste program because “my son is dating a Jewish girl.”

Budget limitations forced a change in ad placements from the local paper to an alternative freebie crowded with ads, which may have decreased attention and attendance.

Fewer engaged couples attended. The area has a new 11-step program, Pathways, for interfaith. Facebook ads, newly used, will be considered for a more targeted approach. Of 2.2 million impressions there were 200 clicks and 6 actions.

SPIRIT OF 76 REIGNS IN TAMPA AGAIN

Tampa—Cong. Schaarei Zedek (R) returns to NCEJ after a 3-year absence. This regular outreach participant draws 76, half not Jewish, to its free 9-week Intro course in Aug.-Oct. 2011, using its snappy headline, The only requirement is that you’re a Jew or a non-Jew.

The 1000-member synagogue had 6 conversions that year, with 4 joining, 2 of them quite active. Of 7 interested in conversion in the Intro class, 6 with spouses joined the temple.

ALL’S CONCORD IN BINGHAMTON, NY

Binghamton, NY—Temple Concord (R) uses both print and Facebook in publicizing its June 2012 Taste course. It drew over 50 registrations but because of room size limited the class to 27, with a second series then slated for July for the overflow.

The 240-member temple had 4 conversions in the previous religious year.

The Facebook ad, which cost \$123, had over 564,000 impressions, 116 clicks and no connections.

The temple, founded in 1950, is the only Reform synagogue in a 50-mile radius. A survey in 2006 found 35% of Jews in the area were not affiliated, and the intermarriage rate under 45 was 50%. There may be 500-700 unaffiliated Jews in the 6-county area.

DISPUTATION II: RESPONSE ON OUTREACH

Houston—Rabbi Stuart Federow, Shaar Hashalom (C) responds to the exchange in *Proclaimer* 12-2. He just published “Judaism and Christianity: A Contrast,” which forthrightly dismembers some Christian claims. (iUniverse.com; \$19.95) He writes:

In the most recent *Jewish Proclaimer*, you tell of a rabbi objecting to our seeking out converts. He justifies his attitude by referencing the Talmud, Yevamot 47a. As you can see below, had he continued reading into Yevamot 47b, he would have read where it states, “He is not, however, to be persuaded or dissuaded too is told of the great responsibilities of becoming a Jew, so is he to also be informed of the rewards of becoming a Jew. Yevamot 47a that he cites tell us not so much to dissuade, as simply to inform the prospective convert of the seriousness of such a decision::

Talmud, Yevamot 47a-47b: *Our Rabbis taught: If at the present time a man desires to become a proselyte, he is to be addressed as follows: 'What reason have you for desiring to become a proselyte: do you not know that Israel at the present time are persecuted and oppressed, despised, harassed and overcome by afflictions'? If he replies, 'I know and yet am unworthy', he is accepted forthwith, and is given instruction in some of the minor and some of the major commandments. He is informed of the sin [of the neglect of the commandments of] Gleanings, the Forgotten Sheaf, the Corner and the Poor Man's Tithe. He is also told of the punishment for the transgression of the commandments. Furthermore, he is addressed thus: 'Be it known to you that before you came to this condition, if you had eaten suet you would not have been punishable with kareth, if you had profaned the Sabbath you would not have been punishable with stoning; but now were you to eat suet you would be punished with kareth; were you to profane the Sabbath you would be punished with stoning'. **And as he is informed of the punishment for the transgression of the commandments, so is he informed of the reward granted for their fulfilment.** He is told, 'Be it known to you that the world to come was made only for the righteous, and that Israel at the present time are unable to bear...Yevamot 47b:...either too much prosperity. or too much suffering'. **He is not, however, to be persuaded or dissuaded too much.** If he accepted, he is circumcised forthwith. Should any shreds which render the circumcision invalid remain, he is to be circumcised a second time. As soon as he is healed arrangements are made for his immediate ablution, when two learned men must stand by his side and acquaint him*

with some of the minor commandments and with some of the major ones. When he comes up after his ablution he is deemed to be an Israelite in all respects.

Later, in Yevamot 47b, balance between dissuading and welcoming the convert is justified by the story of Ruth. There, as soon as Naomi understood that Ruth would not be dissuaded, her attempt to dissuade her ceased: *'He is not, however, to be persuaded, or dissuaded too much'. R. Eleazar said: What is the Scriptural proof? — It is written, And when she saw that she was steadfastly minded to go with her, she left off speaking unto her.*

I also believe he misrepresents Maimonides. In his Mishnah Torah, Chapter 14, Halacha 2, the RaMBaM writes:http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/960662/jewish/Chapter-Fourteen.html *We do not teach him all the particulars lest this cause him concern and turn him away from a good path to a bad path. For at the outset, we draw a person forth with soft and appealing words, as [Hoshea 11: '] states: "With cords of man, I drew them forth," and then continues: "with bonds of love."*

Above, the RaMBaM clearly wished “at the outset,” to encourage “with soft and appealing words” the potential convert, and not to dissuade him.

I also believe he misrepresented the Shulchan Orech. Yoreh Deah 268 states, ***Do not expound on this at too great a length, and in as much as you have informed him about the punishments (for the transgressing) of the commandments, so too should you inform him of the rewards of (following) the mitzvot, that in the doing of these mitzvot he will merit life in the world to come, and that there is no such thing as a complete saint except for one who has wisdom and that does these commandments and knows them.***

Say to him, “As for the world to come, it is not hidden, rather it is for the righteous ones, that is, Israel, and that those who see Israel in sadness in this world, they will see goodness for them (in the world to come), for they are not able to receive the majority of their goodness in this world as idolaters lest they shoot them and they make a mistake and they lose their reward in the world to come. The Holy One, blessed be He, does not bring them most of the calamities in order that they are not destroyed, rather all of the idolaters are tools (of God), and they are standing. **Expound at length upon this in order to make the words attractive.**

Again, the text tells us to make sure that the prospective convert knows what he or she is getting in to, but the tone of the text tells us to encourage them to convert. The Shulchan Aruch tells us to “not ex-

NATIONAL CENTER TO ENCOURAGE JUDAISM -- APPLICATION, 2013-2012

1109 Ruppert Road, Silver Spring, MD 20903-1020 - 301-593-2319 - E-mail: NCEJudaism@verizon.net

We help you inform your broad community all are welcome to learn about Judaism and become Jewish. NCEJ grants, to synagogues, consortia, agencies, regional offices, etc., for 2012-2013 programs, are for a maximum of \$1250 up to one-half the cost of the secular (non-Jewish) media advertising. Individual synagogues may win a 20% bonus atop a yearly basic grant, if you received an NCEJ grant the year before, for a \$1500 maximum—in effect, a 60% grant. Current URJ full-grant Taste program recipients may receive half a regular NCEJ grant as well. You may apply for each of two grants yearly for separate programs in distinctly different quarters. Grants are at NCEJ's sole discretion.

Eligible courses are two types: 1) Introduction to- Taste of- Basic Judaism, or similar classes. 2) Adult Education classes of interest to prospective converts--these ads must state, "Open to All" or "Open to Jews and non-Jews." **Ineligible** are such ads as: Institutional, High Holy Day, Shabbat or Shabbaton, membership, Hebrew, Chanukah, Passover, cooking, dancing, interfaith, or lectures not of help to prospective converts. Aborted programs are ineligible.

Send in your completed applications after your program starts. **Must include** a) demographic information, b) student reactions, c) a copy of the ads (radio/tv, of text) and d) of the specific billing. Incomplete submissions incur delays.

[For course grants, complete Sections (1) & (2); Power of Positive Advertisements, Secs. (1) & (3).]

(1) Organization _____ Cong. membership numbers _____ Date _____
 (___ Reform ___ Conservative ___ Reconstruction ___ Orthodox ___ Mix of: _____ No affiliation _____

Address _____ City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ Fax _____ E-mail: _____

Web? _____ Contact(Rab-Ctr-ExD-Adm-Coord-Pres-Chr) & Title _____

Ads ran in these venues _____

Dates run _____ Size of ads _____ Total print/air cost of ads _____

How many conversions at your synagogue/consortium/institution (specify) last secular\ religious year? _____

PROGRAM BONUSES FOR SYNAGOGUES: Award winners are eligible for a one-time bonus for each new initiative of ongoing out-of-the-ordinary welcoming/convert-encouraging activities, at NCEJ's discretion. Supply details; cursory response doesn't qualify. Examples:

-You welcome attendees at oneg shabbat/kiddush with more than such routines as bima announcements or colored cups; staff & board take part. - Programs integrate interfaith & converts. More than Dec. dilemma-type sessions or monthly interfaith--what others can learn from and copy. -You supply free pamphlets/booklets on becoming Jewish, a rack or table in an open area, pamphlets free to take any time; send us the list, and copies of any you yourself prepared.

(2) **COURSE TITLE** _____ Date held _____ Fee (Members/non) _____

Course length: _____ # Students: _____ (Numbers or %:) Members _____ Nonmembers _____ Jews _____ Non-Jews _____

In interfaith relationship _____ Interested in converting _____ Your comments on class makeup?

Student comments on class (report the most interesting on separate sheet; pro forma reply causes delay.)

What follow-up programs & contacts do you have?

You have any thoughts/suggestions about classes, alternatives, follow-ups, approaches to increase conversion (separate sheet):

3. POWER OF POSITIVE ADVERTISEMENTS (See website instructions, or issue 12-2.)

You run an ad featuring a positive approach to Judaism, 2"x2 column minimum, using one of our suggestions or your own approved by us in advance. (We'd like detailed comments from you, on a separate sheet.)

How many newcomers showed up: _____ What increase in normal attendance? _____

What reaction from congregation on ad and this approach? _____

What's your own reaction to having tried this? _____

When might you advertise like this again? _____

What advice to others thinking about doing this? _____

pound...at too great a length" on the negatives of conversion, but to expound *at length* on the positive reasons for conversion and to make our words of welcome attractive.

In your response to this rabbi's objections, you cite the old saying that one is to reject a potential convert three times before accepting him. I am not sure where this idea came from. If anyone can cite a source that tells us explicitly that we are to reject someone and we must do it three times, I would like to know about it. On the other hand are these often cited quotations to the contrary: Pesachim 87b: "HaKadosh Baruch Hu dispersed the people of Israel among the nations in order that they might acquire proselytes." Rabbi Eleazar ben Pedat

Avot De Rabbi Natan, Chapter 12: "Every Jew should endeavor to actively bring men under the wing

of Gd's Presence, just as Abraham did." <Jewish tradition sees Abraham and Sarah as missionaries for Judaism in their interpretation of Genesis 12:5, where "the souls they had made" refer to the converts they had made!>

Leviticus Rabbah 2:9 "When a person comes to be converted, one receives him with an open hand so as to bring him under the wings of the Divine Presence."

Tanhuma B, Lech Lecha 40, "If a man wishes to convert to Judaism, but says, 'I am too old to convert,' let him learn from Abraham who when he was 99 years of age entered into Gd's covenant."

Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcanus, usually suspicious of converts: "When a person comes to you in sincerity to be converted, do not reject him, but on the contrary, encourage him." Mechilta Amalek 3

Moses ben Jacob of Coucy (referenced in the Encyclopedia Judaica): "So long as the Jews act deceit-

**NATIONAL CENTER
TO ENCOURAGE JUDAISM
1109 Ruppert Road
Silver Spring, MD 20903-1020**

No. 13-01

Spring-Summer 5773 2013

**When Judaism is inclusive
It can grow bigger, broader, better.
You can perpetuate Judaism
And strengthen it by reaching out,
By welcoming. We can help you.**

fully toward Gentiles, who will attach themselves to the Jews?" Semag Asayin 74

So very often, Jews who do not know better believe that whatever the Christians believe, then we Jews must believe the opposite. So, if the Christians believe in proselytizing, then we Jews must believe in not proselytizing. This is simply not the case, and the attitude against Jewish missionizing was either forced upon us by Gentiles, or it was derived from our own fears of what lies on the other side of the Ghetto and Shtetl walls.

We do not live, physically or mentally, in a Shtetl or Ghetto except by our own choices. Supposedly we live in a free society where we Jews are just as free as non-Jews to zealously advocate for our beliefs.

If we want to have more Jews in the pews, then make more Jews!

If we want to have more resources to help our struggling synagogues and Jewish organizations, then make more Jews!

If we want more people in the world to hold our distinctive Jewish values, and thereby create a better world for ourselves and the rest of the world, then we need to make more Jews!

Quite simply, in this free society we are allowed, and our faith encourages us, to make more Jews. As Psalm 96 tells us, 96:1-3, 10 1 Oh sing unto the Eternal a new song: sing unto the Eternal, all the earth. 2 Sing unto the Eternal, bless his name: shew forth his salvation from day to day. 3 Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people.... 10 Say among the heathen that the Eternal reigns.

RabbiStuart@hotmail.com. WhatJewsBelieve.org