

Brief Communications

A Religious Perspective on Divorce

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Jewish tradition stresses the importance of undergoing significant personal experiences as part of a community . . . So too, in the case of a divorce, the process can be made less painful and more productive of future success, if it is done with some support from elements in the Jewish community.

Most people who are going through, or have recently gone through a divorce, are filled with feelings of failure, depression and guilt. They need reassurance that their future will be better than their past. They need faith in themselves and in something greater than themselves. Religion is one source of such support, but in the case of divorce it is rarely invoked because it is totally associated with the other side of the issue; keeping marriages together. However, in Jewish tradition, there lies the material for an understanding of the post divorce process as an act of religious redemption. I have found that developing the following concept and activity with recently divorced people has been unusually productive.

Divorce is a painful experience, an affliction, sometimes a tragedy. It is a breakdown of something that was good. When a marriage fails the people involved suffer. They are hurt and in pain. They often feel guilty because they feel they have hurt their children or their parents. They sometimes feel ashamed because they think others view them as failures. Even when they know in their heads that this isn't true the feeling may still persist. All of this is the natural result of love that has gone sour. But there is no reason for Jews involved in a divorce to feel that they have acted wrongly; or judge themselves as sinners.

Jews should take this for granted, but because we live in a Christian society we tend to be influenced by other ideas. There are millions of Christians, both Protestant and Catholic, who for years to come will bear on their conscience the knowledge that they have sinned by getting divorced. Most of these

people have been taught since childhood that marriage is "till death do you part" and that "what God has joined together no man can put asunder." They have also been taught that anyone who is divorced and remarries is committing adultery. Since divorce (according to Jesus) is invalid and immoral, then remarriage is also invalid and immoral. (Matthew 5:32)

Judaism on the other hand, teaches us that divorce is a *mitsvah*. Everyone makes mistakes. Picking a marriage partner is a difficult process. Some people do it when they are too young. Others are right for each other when they marry but grow apart over the years. Sometimes a divorce decision is mutual, sometimes one-sided. In any case, if a marriage doesn't work out, and you've really tried; divorce, and try again. Remarriage is a *mitsvah*. It may be a greater *mitsvah* than first marriage because now one really knows what marriage is all about. To be willing to love again is to revive hope, and to express faith in the future. To be willing to trust someone else again is to revitalize faith in one's self also. This is exactly what God wants us to do.

We can understand the religious view of divorce better if we see it from the perspective of Yom Kippur. To observe Yom Kippur is a *mitsvah* even though it can be an exacting and draining experience. We confess and atone for our mistakes. For those who take Yom Kippur seriously, the 24 hour fast is the easiest part of the day. Honest introspection and the need to apologize to those we have hurt are much more difficult and painful than simply foregoing food. In the same way, divorce is an admission

of the failure of one's love; of mistakes made which can no longer be rectified. Painful as the process is, no one who takes marriage seriously can feel that divorce is anything other than an affliction and a tragedy. Yet it is still a *mitsvah*, for the eventual result is to give people a second chance. Just as Yom Kippur gives one the opportunity to redirect one's life to a new love.

Now, it becomes clear why divorce is a *mitsvah*. A *mitsvah* is something one has to do because one is a Jew. It isn't always pleasant. It isn't always easy and it isn't always immediately apparent why it is right to do it. Yet the miracle of Jewish life is that if one has faith and does the *mitsvot*, they eventually serve to elevate and strengthen. So too, if one thinks that the new future that one faces will give new opportunities to grow, and believes that God will help one to grow, that person will find he has more courage and drive than he ever suspected. One will encounter new people and situations. Not all of them will be pleasant or ego-building. Yet nine out of ten people do build a new better life for themselves. There is no guarantee that a second marriage will result in happiness, stability and spiritual fulfillment, but the chance for a new life and love is always worth the risk. That is why remarriage is a *mitsvah*.

A divorce marks the end of an old way of life and the beginning of a new way. When a couple is married they are supposed to write a *ketubah*, in which they establish their mutual responsibilities for, and commitments to each other, and express the goals of their relationship. When a Jewish marriage is ended a *get* is written. Both the marriage contract (*ketubah*) and the divorce decree (*get*) are primarily legal documents in Orthodox tradition. But for Reform Jews the *ketubah*, and especially the *get*, can be an expression of one's faith in the future, and in one's ability to meet the challenges of life and grow with them. There is no ceremony marking the transition from being married to being single. Since the transition is frequently painful, many prefer to do it alone.

Jewish tradition stresses the importance of undergoing significant personal experiences as part of a community. The loss of a loved one is a very personal anguish, yet we require a person to say *kaddish* as part of the *minyan*. So too, in the case of a divorce, the process can be made less painful and more productive of future success, if it is done with some support from elements within the Jewish community. The Rabbinic Bet Din (court of law) traditionally tried reconciliation and counselling before rendering its legal verdict. What I am suggesting is the use of a psychological *get* by Rabbis and Jewish counsellors. This *get* is not a *Halakic* (legal) document, it is a *Midrashic* (pedagogic) one. Its purpose is to help Jews going through the legal process of divorce to realistically begin a re-evaluation of their goals and to prepare themselves for the stresses most likely to occur in their lives in the next year or two. Its purpose is also to help Jews find the spiritual strength to grow through this adversity and to overcome the feelings of failure and guilt that in this situation are so counter-productive.

The counsellor should begin by confronting these feelings and explaining the view of divorce presented above. The challenge of writing a *get* would then be offered. Before writing a *get* a person should be told to write their emotional reactions to the following statements:

During the first year after divorce the following things will probably happen: (a) married friends who may have been very supportive at the beginning will slowly drift away, not because of personal considerations, but because their interests and activities will follow different paths. (b) One will become closer to other people who are also divorced and separated. (c) If there are children, one will feel guilty about the amount of time given them, and about one's emotional state while with them. Most divorced fathers see their children and ex-wife less and less as time passes. They may try to make up for this by becoming extremely indulgent and permissive. It is much easier for everyone concerned if the

parents can come to an agreement on rules for the children. (d) A social life provides opportunity, but at the cost of anxiety and depression. The adjustment is harder for women, especially those who have been married for some time. Attitudes toward sexual behavior have changed considerably in the last decade and it takes time to make the adjustment. Going to a singles group, or asking someone to "fix" one up again can be a discouraging proposition. (e) For the first year after a divorce most people find that casual sex will be followed by feelings of low self esteem and desperation.

In subsequent discussions about the answers the person has written, fears and fantasies can be faced and realistically evaluated. Writing is important in this process because peoples' moods change rapidly during the divorce process. Seeing it on paper makes it easier to see the swings as transitory. At this point the actual writing of the *get* should begin. Each Rabbi and counsellor will follow a different pattern in helping a person write a *get*.

A Note On Family Rights, Cults, and the Law*

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Beyond the physical well-being of children, beyond the normal parental desire to have children make free but informed choices as adults, there is the anxiety of Jewish parents to maintain the Jewish family in order to ensure the continued existence of the Jewish people.

Parental efforts to retrieve children from the Unification Church and other religious cults are being hamstrung by charges that such efforts violate the children's civil rights.¹ The conflict between civil law and common law, wherein the latter proclaims the supremacy of family rights, is thus joined. This is by no means a new conflict, nor is it restricted to Jews.² Because of the elements of proselytization, conversion, and anti-Semitism involved

*The assistance of Jacqueline L. Zemel with the legal aspects of this paper is acknowledged.

¹ *Civil Liberties*, September 1977, p. 2.

² Vamberto Morais, *A Short History of Anti-Semitism* New York: 1976, pp. 106-107.

However, the goal in each case is the same; acceptance of responsibility for one's own life. Getting divorced is no *mitsvah*, but writing a *get* and making a new and better life is. I give those whom I have counselled the following guidance:

The Orthodox *get* is a simple document which terminates a marriage. It states that it is a document of freedom, a letter of release, and that no person may hinder one from now on. It also states that one has authority over one's self. In writing one's own *get*, one must accept the authority to lead his own life and affirm that no other person will hinder him. One should state both near term and long term goals; expand upon the areas where one will grow; stress one's assets and how one will develop them. One must remember that the *get* is also a religious document. There is a source of strength available to one through faith in God, so one should avail one's self of God's presence. A *get* will help one grow and God will be with one in that growth.

in the struggle, however, the discussion here will stress the impact on Jewish families.

From a Jewish historical point of view, the battle for supremacy between family rights and legal rights began with the emancipation proclamations and Napoleonic Code of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. These documents gave legally to the Jews of Europe the human rights of parental authority over minor children that had been enjoyed previously by Christians alone. Civil law thus protected the sanctity of the family. That violations of this principle occurred can be demonstrated by the Church's kidnapping of Edgardo Mortara (1858), the proselytization

of poor French-Jewish children by members of the Congregation of Notre Dame de Sion (1847-1861), and even the kidnapping of the Finaly children after World War II in France (1945-53).³ In each of these cases, as in dozens of others less well-known, anti-Semitism posed a threat to or indeed destroyed the Jewish family unit by removing the children from parental or other familial authority.

In the Mortara case, ecclesiastical law prevailed, with the boy tied permanently to the Church. This occurred, however, in the Papal States where, and at a time when, ecclesiastical law was the only law that mattered. In France, the proselytization and kidnapping of the Bluth daughters in the Mallet affair severely strained relations between the Government and the Church. The offense against the civil law (Napoleonic Code), moreover, was so blatant that the Catholic convents involved were closed by Napoleon III.

Almost a century later, civil law again won, after protracted court battles, when custody of the orphaned Finaly boys was awarded to their aunt. In this instance, leading Church figures recognized that the intransigent papal position of the late 1850's in the Mortara affair was no longer appropriate. As Perlzweig wrote, the issue here was neither solely nor fundamentally Jewish. Two principles were at stake: "the supremacy of the civil law in a democratic state as the guarantee of religious liberty, and . . . the rights of the family as one of the cornerstones of modern civilization."⁴

These same two principles are at issue today as youths are separated from their families by religious movements. There is some difference, however, from the earlier cases due to two facts: 1) the youths involved are generally not minors in the eyes of the law; and 2) many

³ Lita L. Schwartz and Natalie Isser. A note on involuntary conversion technique, *Jewish Social Studies*, in press; cf. Natalie Isser. "The Mallet Affair: Case Study of a Scandal, unpublished manuscript.

⁴ N.L. Perlzweig. "Finaly Affair; with Editorial Comment," *Christian Century*, (June 3, 1953), 70:661.

of these movements are not supported by large segments of the general population. Indeed, the more exotic of the movements—the cults—do not offer an avenue of upward mobility as do the Catholic Church or the Protestant denominations, which had been an argument for conversion in earlier periods. The conflict of principles arises from several bases: constitutional support for the free exercise of religious choice; civil rights laws; the new status of 18-year-olds as adults in the eyes of the law (with some variation by states); and the growth of those pressure groups, however much justified, that challenge the traditional power of the nuclear family unit. (Note: "the pressure groups" refer to the child advocacy and children's rights movements and to groups combatting wife abuse. The merits of their activities are not at issue here.)

A primary characteristic of the new cults is their requirement that the new members cut themselves off from their families.⁵ Indeed, they are often persuaded that their parents are instruments of evil, a strange point of view for allegedly Christian sects. For any family, but particularly for the family-oriented Jews, this requirement is perceived as tragic. In Jewish law, conversion severs legal family ties between the convert and his relatives. Whether the conversion occurs because of intermarriage or intellectual commitment or "persuasion," the individual "immediately sets up a barrier between himself and his own flesh and blood."⁶ In the case of conversion to one of the cults, with the resulting estrangement from the family, action is provoked—attempts at kidnapping one's own child, even if he is no longer a minor, in order to deprogram him. It is this action that leads to conflict with the civil law and with the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU).

⁵ Carroll Stoner and Jo Ann Parke, *All Gods Children: Salvation or Slavery?* (Radnor, Pa., 1977), p. 4.

⁶ Samuel Rosenblatt, "What Price Intermarriage?" In Abraham E. Shoulson, ed., *Marriage and Family Life: A Jewish View* New York: 1959, p. 232.

The ACLU's concern is with the free exercise of religious choice by persons who have reached the age of majority. However, what is the legal age of majority? In criminal cases, a youth is tried as an adult if aged 18 or older. The federal voting law, enacted in 1972, permits 18-year-olds to vote in national elections. The states, to avoid confusion at the polls, have almost uniformly lowered the voting age for all elections to conform to federal law. Yet there is less uniformity among the states with respect to drinking age (e.g., 18 in New York, 21 in Pennsylvania), responsibility for contracts, or emancipation from parental authority. Thus in some jurisdictions the 19- or 20-year-old might be considered an adult for some purposes and a minor for others. This situation clouds a conflict that already poses other constitutional questions. Even with respect to freedom of religious choice, however, one Supreme Court Justice stated that "where the child is mature enough to express potentially conflicting desires, it would be an invasion of the child's rights to permit such an imposition without canvassing his views."⁷ This view does not help to clarify the question of religious or civil majority.

In the ACLU policy, adopted in March 1977, it is stated that: "Modes of religious proselytizing or persuasion that do not employ physical coercion or threat of same are protected by the free exercise of religion clause of the First Amendment against action through state laws or by state officials."⁸ The ACLU apparently fails to consider that "brainwashing" or "thought reform" is a form of coercion that does affect the body, specifically the higher nervous system. "Fasting, chastening of the flesh by scourging and physical discomfort, regulation of breathing, . . . intoxicant drugs, these are only some of the many methods used to modify normal brain function for religious pur-

poses."⁹ Sensory deprivation, of sleep and/or food, weakens the individual's psychological and physical defenses. The physical debilitation of cultists of whatever age is an additional cause for parental distress, concern, and subsequent action.

There is a legitimate question as to whether individuals, legal minor or adult, in the described physical and psychological condition can exercise true freedom of religious choice. It seems inappropriate, therefore, to discuss the constitutional issue of this freedom without also considering the physical and mental health factors.

Except for a general welfare passage in the Preamble to the Constitution, there is no constitutional provision that refers to the normal concern of parents for their children, or responsibility for the children's welfare, whether or not they have attained the age of majority. In interpreting the Constitution, however, several Justices of the Supreme Court have averred that the State has an inherent interest in preserving the family, that parents have the right to determine the religious upbringing of their (minor) children, and that rights in the realm of family life are part of those rights and principles going back hundreds of years with which the State may not and should not interfere. These include the sanctity of family relationships. In a variety of cases, *Pierce v. Society of Sisters*, *Prince v. Mass.*, *Skinner v. Oklahoma*, and *Wisconsin v. Yoder*, the Supreme Court has upheld this principle.¹¹

In rulings in cases involving the kidnapping and deprogramming of cult recruits, some judges in lower courts have ruled to support traditional and fundamental family rights, and

⁹ William Sargent, *Battle for the Mind: A Physiology of Conversion and Brain-Washing*. London: 1957, p. 72.

¹⁰ Mr. Justice Douglas in *Griswold v. Connecticut*, 381 U.S. 479, 85 S.Ct. 1678, 14 L.Ed.2d 510 (1965).

¹¹ Mr. Justice White in *Griswold*.

⁷ Mr. Justice Douglas in *Wisconsin v. Yoder*, 406 U.S. 205, 92 S.Ct., 1526, 32 L.Ed.2d 15 (1972).

⁸ *Civil Liberties*, op. cit., p. 2.

others have supported the ACLU position.¹² As Mr. Justice Goldberg once stated, however, "In determining which rights are fundamental, judges are not left at large to decide cases in light of their personal and private notions."¹³ The difficulty to be faced with respect to parental kidnappings of their adult children is that the principle of traditional family relationships has been tested and upheld only in cases clearly involving minors. (The crime of kidnapping per se is not considered here.) No case relevant to the cults and parental deprogramming efforts has yet reached the Supreme Court.

In Judaism specifically, despite the social changes of recent decades that threaten the integrity of Jewish family life, the sacred obligation to "make people out of children" continues.¹⁴ This obligation is not seen as ending at age eighteen. It is viewed as the converse of the Fifth Commandment. The emphasis, moreover, is on the teaching of the Book of Proverbs: "train up a child in the way he should go and even when he is old he will not depart from it." (22:6) This optimistic maxim is in conflict with the realities of cult indoctrination of vulnerable youth, as well as with the view that grown children must be allowed to make their own mistakes, whether or not the parents can try to prevent such errors.

Half a century ago, Louis Marshall, then head of the American Jewish Committee, wrote that "when Jews rebel against interference with their most sacred right, that of religious liberty, when Jewish parents seek to protect their children, for whose moral and ethical life they feel a serious responsibility, against the intrusion and trespasses of conversionists, it is the Jews who are interfering with religious liberty, because, forsooth! they are undertaking 'to muzzle Christians' and are

interfering with free speech."¹⁵ As we look at today's problem, has the situation changed?

Beyond the physical well-being of children, beyond the normal parental desire to have children make free but informed choices as adults, there is the anxiety of Jewish parents to maintain the Jewish family in order to ensure the continued existence of the Jewish people. This anxiety, moreover, exists elsewhere. It underlies the 1977 Israeli law against missionary efforts that use enticement (money or other concrete inducements) to achieve religious conversions. Many of the cults, as well as those involved in the earlier kidnapping incidents, are correctly seen as anti-Semitic and/or anti-Jewish in their philosophy.¹⁶ They pose a dangerous challenge to the goal of Jewish survival and continuation.

The common law support of the family, as well as some interpretations of the First Amendment and civil rights laws, would appear to give the family the right to resist cultist intrusions on their religious way of life. The family is here fighting for its child's freedom of thought as a prerequisite to freedom of religious choice. Moreover, apart from the psychological damage to the cult recruit and his or her family, it is in the interest of the Jewish community to maintain the concept of the sanctity of the family by developing legal implementation of this common law principle.

Although Jewish social service agencies may not wish or be able to aid in this legal situation directly, they can be of assistance to families embroiled with the cults. Agencies can serve as referral sources to appropriate legal aid. They can also recommend family therapists to help the family in handling the crisis. In addition, they can put parents facing this problem in

¹⁵ Quoted in Marshall Sklare, "The Conversion of the Jews," *Commentary*, 1973, 56 (3): 48.

¹⁶ Dwayne Walls, "The Jesus Mania: Bigotry in the Name of the Lord," *Saturday Review* (Sept. 17, 1977), p. 17; cf. Susan Schwartz McDonald, "Jews for Jesus," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, (Dec. 19, 1976), pp. 9-10.

¹² Court frees five followers of Rev. Moon from parents. *Civil Liberties* (May) 1977, p. 5.

¹³ Mr. Justice Goldberg in *Griswold*.

¹⁴ Henry E. Kagan, "The Jewish Family." In Shoulson, op. cit., p. 83.

common in touch with each other so that the parents can form an independent mutual support group. In these ways, social service

groups can contribute meaningfully to both the family and the community in the common effort to preserve them both.

Cultural Variables in Social Work with Israeli Arabs

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A summary of an article, in Hebrew, by Samih Rizk in the bi-monthly Israeli journal, Saad, (Welfare), published by the Ministry of Social Welfare.

Mr. Rizk's article in *Saad*, (March, 1977), examines some of the cultural variables affecting the professional role of the social worker, and more specifically, the role of the social work supervisor. Rizk first presents a discussion of the cultural background of the Arab community, especially the nature of the clan and its patriarchal structure, and Arab views on authority and male-female relationships. After a brief review of some of the issues involved in social work supervision in general, he discusses six major problems that arise as a result of the incongruities between these principles and the culture of the Arabs.

1) Male-female relationships in supervision are problematic because the male supervisor is regarded in the same manner as is the village elder, with respect due him for his age and sex. The result is that the female worker will obey his words blindly, an unprofessional note in the supervisory relationship. When the supervisor is female and the worker male, there is a paradox because the female is traditionally seen as being under the protection and supervision of a man, either her father, brother, or husband. Thus, a male worker may object to a female supervisor and may totally ignore all her suggestions. Conversely, a male supervisor may be overly tolerant of a female worker whom he sees as a frail, dependent creature.

2) Hypersensitivity concerning sex raises further problems. Sex is taboo as a subject of conversation in Arab culture with the result that there is great difficulty in discussing problems of sexual development when either the supervisor or client is of the opposite sex. It is difficult to develop good relations with

opposite-sex clients, especially adolescents. Boys and girls do not mix, until marriage, so that males will regard advances by female workers as sexual in nature. Females will regard male workers as protectors, similar to their brother or father. Furthermore, male workers cannot make home visits when the husband is not at home, for the man is considered to be the family spokesman. The woman "knows nothing." In fact, the woman would be dishonored if a male worker were to enter her home when she was alone.

3) Generational tensions also are problematic. An older supervisor may have been raised in the patriarchal tradition and may feel that his word is law. The worker, trained, in modern techniques and attitudes, may feel that supervision should involve an interchange of ideas, and will thus be antagonized by the authoritarian supervisor. If the supervisor happens to be younger than the worker even greater problems can occur, because in the Arab culture, power and respect come with age, whereas in professional practice, training and experience count.

4) Security is an obvious problem in Israel. Often clients may be involved in illicit border crossings or even terrorist activities. In these cases, the authorities must be notified by the worker. However, the worker must be able to exercise his discretion when clients are involved in demonstrations against oppression or discrimination.

5) Another dilemma has to do with confidentiality. Rizk feels that a community-oriented method of treatment is preferable to individual counselling, because every act by an

individual affects his community and is known by all. Thus, if a girl has a premarital affair, the traditional response would be for the father or brother to kill her for ruining the family honor. Individual counselling would be of no avail in this case, and therefore the entire community must be involved so that understanding and finally peace can be restored.

6) Finally, foster care is discussed. The clan would feel it to be a great shame and dishonor if a child, especially a girl, were to be sent away to be raised by another family. It is

therefore necessary to explore fully all the resources within the clan, in order to enable the child to remain within its family, or at least in the clan. The strengths of the community must be utilized in order to solve a problem that is generally thought of as that of an individual and his family.

This article then, points out some of the problems facing the social worker in the traditional Arab community, and especially some of the problems that may arise in the supervisory relationship.

Jewish Community Planning: A Micro Perspective

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This article maintains that while macro-comprehensive planning studies may be a helpful endeavor, they cannot themselves stand up to the needs of community planning and it is necessary to supplement such endeavors by other planning activities which are smaller in scope and undertaken more frequently.

Introduction

The past few decades have been marked by a maturing and metamorphosis of the Federation from an organization primarily concerned with efficient fund-raising to one which is equally concerned with budget, planning, and a process leading to the rational distribution of resources to meet community needs most effectively. During the past decade, the Federation's role in planning has become even more important. Although there has been an unprecedented rise in the amount of money raised by the Jewish community, there also has been an increase in local and overseas needs, which has outstripped available resources. As a result it has become necessary for community leaders to assess priorities and to develop programs to meet needs and to review existing structures for delivering and coordinating services to the community. In an

effort to address themselves to these questions, professional staffs at Jewish Federations have been directed to engage in a variety of related planning activities and to provide meaningful data on which to base decisions.

The range of planning activities varies among communities, as does the size of the staff and the degree of importance given this function. Most large communities however accept as their responsibility:

- reviewing agency programs
- development of demographic data
- assisting in evaluating efficiency of programs
- developing priorities

This article addresses several issues concerning Jewish community planning through a review of the planning activities of the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago during

the past few years. The Chicago Federation has undertaken both a major, comprehensive, planning project and more limited planning studies of specific community areas. This article maintains that while macro-comprehensive planning studies may be a helpful endeavor, they cannot themselves stand up to the needs of community planning and it is necessary to supplement such endeavors by other planning activities which are smaller in scope and undertaken more frequently.

Chicago Jewish Community Planning Project

During the period 1972-75, the Chicago Jewish Federation engaged in a comprehensive planning effort which reviewed past and future needs; established general priorities among service areas designed to meet these needs; and suggested guidelines for allocation of resources.¹ This study was conducted and reviewed by a committee involving 100 lay leaders serving on sub-committees which reviewed demographic information, results of a questionnaire sent to 7,000 community members, dialogues between consumers, service providers and other community leaders, and an analysis of organizational structure by an outside consulting firm.

The product of this endeavor was a document which set forth twenty-two major recommendations plus ancillary recommendations and a detailed plan for implementation.

The basic orientation of the report was a macro-perspective, focusing upon needs and services for the entire metropolitan Jewish community, although it also addressed issues relating to specific subgroups within the population (e.g. the elderly, new suburban communities, young adults).

Since this report was issued, implementation of its recommendations has been monitored carefully by means of reports to the board and to the community.

In spite of the major contributions of the study and the changes that resulted, at first, it

¹ *Report of the Planning Committee, Jewish Community Planning Project for Metropolitan Chicago*, Chicago, Illinois, June, 1975.

was difficult to translate all of the recommendations into policy. Some specific problems encountered included:

Changes taking place in the demographic composition and needs of the community. In order for planning to follow need, it is necessary continually to update the information about the Jewish population. Much of the demographic data used in the report was developed from local findings of the National Jewish Population Study conducted in 1970-72. Even within the short period of time since the study was completed, there have been Jewish population shifts which have affected the need and the demand for Jewish communal services. However, it was not feasible in terms of costs and available resources to duplicate the study of the entire Jewish community so soon after the completion of the community-wide study.

Incongruities among priorities due to the multiple and diverse standards for determining priorities and for allocation of resources. There are various dimensions along which priorities and allocations may be decided, including specific types of agency services; target group; geographical area or any combination of these categories. In some cases, the results of the priority study were not always congruent. For example, one of the implications of the study was an emphasis upon making services available to suburbs with increased Jewish population; there was however, strong support also for expanding services to the elderly, many of whom live in urban areas with declining Jewish populations.

The difficulty in translating from general priorities or policies to specific decisions. For example, priorities which might be adequate for the entire metropolitan area may not always be realistic on the community level, because of the differences between the characteristics and needs of various communities. Furthermore, when the Planning Committee developed its priorities, it rejected any approach that would develop a quantitative formula to apply priorities, fearing that such an approach would eliminate the human factor in assessing needs. Consequently, priorities were expressed in broad ordinal terms (i.e. more or less than) a

procedure which allows for much interpretation.

Priorities based upon a given amount of resources and the availability of these resources may not be meaningful because of the differences in access to funds available to different programs and the changes which can occur over time in the availability, not only of communal, but of United Way and government monies.²

Community Studies

In response to some of the issues raised above and the challenge of continuing to effect a rationalized scheme for community planning, the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago followed up its Community Planning Project with a series of micro-community studies.

The micro study was viewed as a way of updating demographic information, while addressing the issues of service within the confines of a geographically defined community area. Community areas were defined so as to coincide with perceptions of residents and to permit analysis of existing demographic or other relevant information collected by public or private bodies (e.g. census bureau, municipalities, planning organizations). In many cases the symbolic definition (i.e. perceptions) did overlap with the organizational definitions, although this was less true in the city where neighborhoods are important.

During the two years since the Planning Project report was completed, Federation has conducted four community area studies. While using a similar format and approach, each has had a unique theme and focused upon the particular composition, services and problems of each communities.

For example:

One report dealt with an urban community, located on the periphery of the city, in which the Federation had a large investment and where some residents expressed

² Samuel Lerner, "Long Range Planning — Problems, Pitfalls and Alternatives" (December, 1977) *Journal of Jewish Communal Service*, Vol. LIV No. 2, pp. 155-160.

concern about a somewhat declining Jewish population and changes in the ethnic composition of the community.³

Another report dealt with an urban community, already experiencing change and having to deal with the problems of providing services to a segmented population comprised of a large number of elderly and younger, single adults with relatively few multi-generational families.⁴

An additional report focused upon a suburban area, isolated from the rest of the Jewish community which, as a result of a recent population growth, was expressing a need for more Jewish community services.⁵

The most recent study involved a series of contiguous urban communities which, traditionally, have not been regarded either as a locus of Jewish population or in need of communal services but, due to shifting of the urban Jewish population, have experienced a population influx and expressed a need for certain types of communal services.⁶

Each report has been a result of an updated demographic study of the Jewish population and of an analysis of community institutions needs and services, with recommendations regarding the specific communities and the role of Jewish communal agencies within these communities. Community opinion has been solicited both in the community demographic surveys and in a series of personal interviews with Jewish and non-Jewish community leaders, rabbis, professionals from Federation agencies familiar with the areas and residents

³ *West Rogers Park Community Study: An Analysis of Community Trends*, Planning Department, Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago, May, 1975.

⁴ *Rogers Park Jewish Community Study: An Analysis of Community Trends*, Planning Department, Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago, November, 1975.

⁵ *South Suburban Jewish Community Study: An Analysis of Community Trends*, Planning Department, Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago, June, 1976.

⁶ *Lakefront Jewish Community Study: An Analysis of Community Trends*, Planning Department Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago, September, 1977.