



INVOLVING JEWISH MEN IN JEWISH LIFE

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A Forthcoming Item of which you, as an FJMC Leader, should be aware

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Gentlemen,

Within the next few weeks an article will most probably be published in both Jewish and secular media focusing on the results of a recent study conducted by the Pew Charitable Trust in Philadelphia. The study could potentially turn the organized Jewish community on its head. I have not had the chance to obtain a copy and the information I am conveying to you is one step removed from the source. Yet the few facts I have obtained could help us broaden our understanding of our mission. **Please do not share this information with anyone else.**

One of the studies' results will claim that the actual Jewish population in the United States is substantially larger than previously thought. On one hand that's supposedly good news. On the other hand, it indicates that the percentage of Jews affiliated with a Jewish institution is less than previously considered. In other words, we as an organized community, are doing poorer than we had imagined.

Further information will reveal that a significant percentage of the population that considers themselves to be Jewish does not consider it important to be connected to Judaism. Let's just say 20%, but please don't quote me. Again this further indicates the failure of our religious streams, Federations and educational institutions.

What does this mean for us?

As members of families and part of the only grass-roots organization in our Movement these messages come at an important time. Yes, almost immediately following a Convention that highlighted alternative ways of engaging people. Yes, just prior to the High Holidays, when we are challenged to make things better. And yes, as a challenge to each of us to recognize that some things can be fixed and others cannot.

Some of the ways which traditionally connected our people remain valid but new ways are also, as they always have been, called for. As a member of a family, a club, a synagogue and as an FJMC leader the Pew study can serve to remind us, if we wish to build Jewishness we need to broaden the way we look at engaging people. We need to encourage new ideas, invite men who have never participated in our club and regional events to take a chance with us, have fun and make a difference. We need to think of ways to make long standing ritual behaviors comfortable to an increasing number of men who know so little about them. We need to model and challenge ourselves to be the best person we can be.

All of us can do it.

My best to you and yours for a meaningful High Holiday period.

Leadership Innovation Community