Changing Perspectives

- **Discourse about intermarriage**
  - Moving from a disease model focused on “prevention” and “treatment” to a focus on how to engage families in meaningful Jewish life

- **Data on Jewish engagement misinterpreted**
  - Differences between intermarried/inmarried households mask the critical role of meaningful Jewish education and experiences

- **Possible to change patterns of engagement with Jewish life**
  - Major opportunity exists to alter trajectories of the next generation
Predicting Engagement

It is not whether one’s parents are in/intermarried, but one’s experiences of

– Jewish living
– Education
– Friendship/social networks

... that determines who lives a richly Jewish life
Differences in Jewish Identity

Not Accounting for Background

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Parents Intermarried</th>
<th>Parents Inmarried</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Own Child Raised Jewish</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very emotionally attached to Israel</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any Jewish organizational ties</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually lights Shabbat candles</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very important to be Jewish</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Accounting for Background

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Parents Intermarried</th>
<th>Parents Inmarried</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Own Child Raised Jewish</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very emotionally attached to Israel</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any Jewish organizational ties</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually lights Shabbat candles</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very important to be Jewish</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CMJS/SSRI analyses of NJPS 2000-01.
Adult Identity of Children of Intermarriage

Source: CMJS/SSRI analyses of NJPS 2000-01.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Probability of being Jewish</th>
<th>Not Accounting for Background</th>
<th>Accounting for Background</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intermarried</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inmarried</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CMJS/SSRI analyses of NJPS 2000-01.
Jewish Education

Intensity of Jewish education predicts ...

- Adult ritual practice
- Membership in Jewish institutions
- Importance attributed to being Jewish
- Attachment to Israel

URJ Survey

- Engagement of active members
Attitudes Toward Torah Study

URJ Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inmarried</th>
<th>Conversionary</th>
<th>Intermarried</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very important to engage in Torah study</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always or usually engage in Torah study</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Home Ritual Experience

Being raised in a home where Shabbat candles were lit regularly predicts

– Adult observance of home ritual
– Importance of Jewish identity
– Attachment to Israel
Attitudes Toward Shabbat
URJ Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Inmarried</th>
<th>Conversionary</th>
<th>Intermarried</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very important to celebrate Shabbat</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always or usually do something to make Shabbat special</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Birthright Israel Generation

• **Understanding generation critical to the Reform Movement**
  - They represent the next generation of adults
  - Their decisions about Jewish involvement will shape congregations and American Jewry for decades

• **Participation has stimulated interest in Jewish identity and Israel**
  - Becoming normative experience
  - Changing the trajectory of involvement for 10s of thousands
2007 Birthright Israel Applicants by Denomination

Total Reform-identified participants c. 18k (of c. 46k)

- Winter 07: 38%, Summer 07: 37%
- Conservative: Winter 07: 27%, Summer 07: 26%
- Just Jewish: Winter 07: 23%, Summer 07: 24%
- Orthodox: Winter 07: 5%, Summer 07: 4%
- Sephardic: Winter 07: 3%, Summer 07: 5%
- Other: Winter 07: 4%, Summer 07: 3%

Source: BRI Registration database
Participant Households
Reform Birthright Israel Cohort 2007

- Intermarriage, 17%
- Conversionary, 17%
- Inmarriage, 66%
Family Shabbat Candle Lighting during High School
Reform Birthright Israel Cohort 2007

% Regularly

- Inmarriage: 27%
- Conversionary marriage: 42%
- Intermarriage: 25%
Average Years of Jewish Education
Reform Birthright Israel Cohort 2007

Grades K-8

Day school: 0.9
Several times a week: 2.2
Once a week: 2.2

Grades 9-12

Day school: 0.2
Several times a week: 0.9
Very Important to Be Jewish
Reform Birthright Israel Cohort 2007

Notes: Estimates with controls from ordinal logistic regression. Controls: pretrip attitude, age, travel to Israel, bar/bat mitzvah.
Importance of Raising Jewish Children
Reform Birthright Israel Cohort

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Nonparticipant</th>
<th>Participant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inmarried</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversionary</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermarried</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Connection to Israel
Reform Birthright Israel Cohort

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Inmarried</th>
<th>Conversionary</th>
<th>Intermarried</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nonparticipant</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Is the Problem Intermarriage?

- **Low levels of engagement in Jewish ritual by many Reform Jews**
  - Not simply a function of intermarriage

- **Low levels, in general, of Jewish education**
  - As well, low participation in meaningful Jewish experiences (e.g., home Judaism, summer camp)

- **Experiences such as Birthright Israel provide an opportunity to change trajectories**
  - Ten Days only a beginning: What about the “11th Day”?
What Is Taught Those Who Choose Judaism?

• CCAR Guidelines for גרים
  – Create a Jewish home
  – Observe שבת and חגים in your home and in the synagogue
  – Engage regularly in personal and communal תפילה
  – Continued הילים והרות

It’s not who stands under the *chuppah*,
but
does the *chuppah* “stand” in the lives of Jewish families
Toward Action

• Viewing intermarriage in perspective
  – Applying the same criteria to born Jews as to those who choose Judaism
  – Seeing the marriage ceremony as only one part of lifelong involvement with Judaism

• Feeling responsible for couples and families even if they are not part of your congregation
  – Making our Jewish communities welcoming and engaging to all
  – Creating *kehillot* of meaning and purpose
The Day is Short ...

- Most of the things worth doing in the world had been declared impossible before they were done.
  - Louis Brandeis

- We are not obligated to complete the task, but neither are we free to abandon it.
  - Pirke Avot 2:15