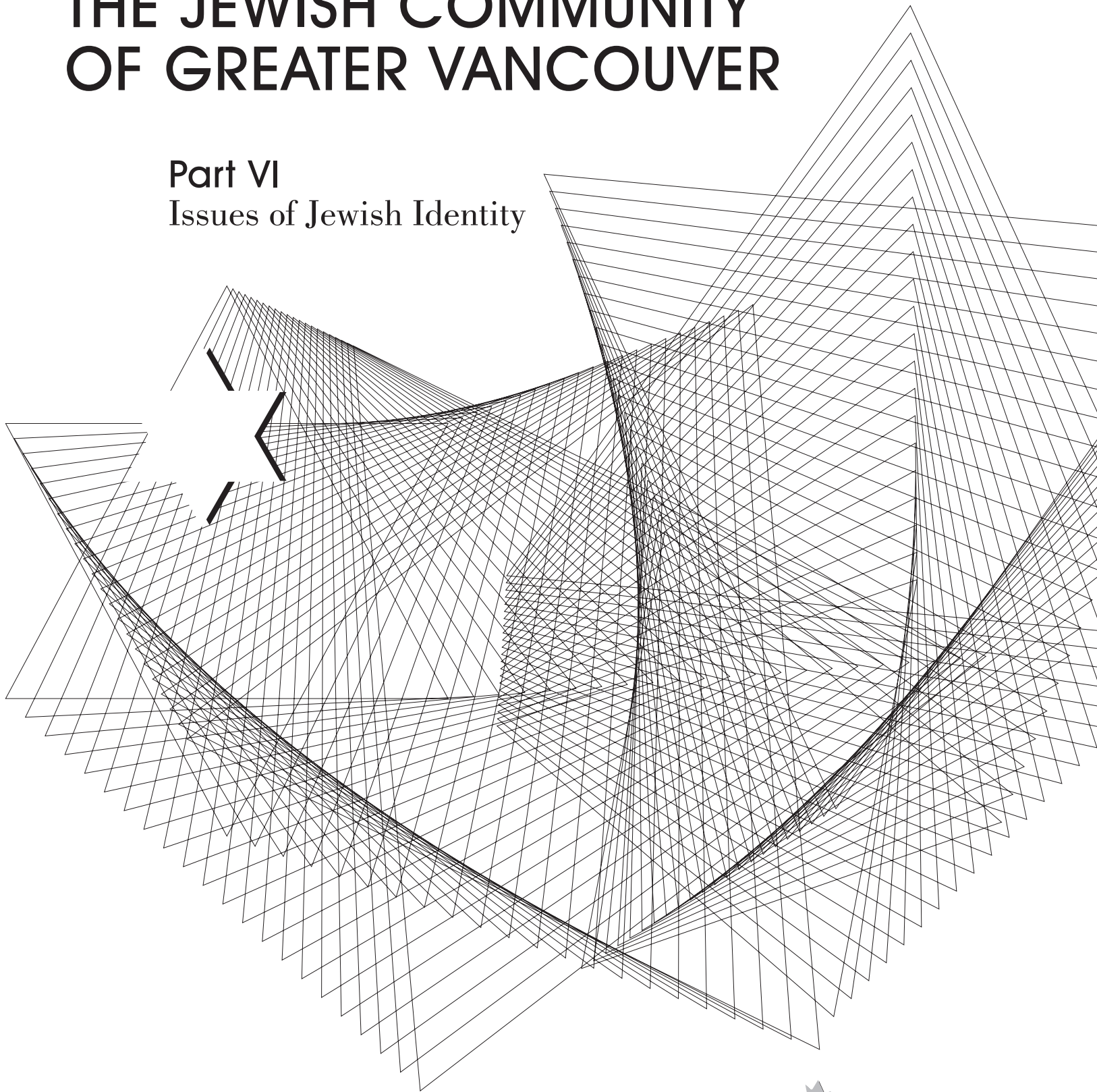


2001 Census Analysis Series **THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF GREATER VANCOUVER**

Part VI Issues of Jewish Identity



By Charles Shahar
& Jean Gerber
February 2006



JEWISH
FEDERATION
OF GREATER
VANCOUVER



UIA Federations Canada
מגבית הפדרציות היהודיות בקנדה

**2001 Census Analysis
The Jewish Community of Greater Vancouver**

**Part 6
Issues of Jewish Identity**

**By
Charles Shahar
&
Jean Gerber**

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Dr. Jonathan Berkowitz, Vancouver, BC

Dr. Jay Brodbar, Toronto, ON

Prof. Leo Davids, Toronto, ON

Mr. Colin Geitzler, Aylmer, QC

Ms. Jean Gerber, Vancouver, BC

Dr. Gustave Goldmann, Ottawa, ON

Dr. Jack Jedwab, Montreal, QC

Prof. Marty Lockshin, Toronto, ON

Mr. Greg Mason, Winnipeg, MB

Dr. Sheva Medjuck, Halifax, NS

Prof. Allan Moscovitch, Ottawa, ON

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Highlights of Results

- A majority of Jews in the Vancouver metropolitan area (13,335) consider themselves as Jewish by both religion and ethnicity. A further 3,940 respondents say they are Jewish by religion, but have another ethnic affiliation; whereas 5,320 people say they are Jews by ethnicity but have no religion. Finally, 3,480 are ethnic Jews who indicate another religion. The latter group was not included in this report's definition of Jewishness.
- Using a combination of Census responses related to religion and ethnicity to define levels of Jewish identification, it was found that there is a significantly lower proportion of Jews who are highly identified in the Vancouver metropolitan area (76.5%) than in Canada as a whole (89.1%).
- Areas with the lowest percentages of highly identified Jews include Maple Ridge / Pitt Meadows / Langley (53%), Burnaby / New Westminster (59%), and the East Side (63.6%).
- 41.3% of Jewish spouses / partners are married to non-Jews. *This figure is considered to be the intermarriage rate for Jews residing in the Vancouver Census Metropolitan Area, and includes common law and same-sex arrangements.* In absolute terms, 4,225 of 10,225 Jewish spouses / partners are intermarried.
- There are 6,340 Jews (including children) who live in intermarried arrangements, or 40.6% of all Jews living in couple arrangements in the Vancouver metropolitan area.
- There has been an increase of 27% of Jews living in intermarried households in the last decade. The number has climbed from over 5,000 to 6,340 individuals between 1991-2001. There has been a 144% increase in the number of Jews living in intermarried families in the last two decades, climbing from 2,600 to 6,340 individuals.

- The geographic area with the highest proportion of Jews living in intermarried households is Maple Ridge / Pitt Meadows / Langley (80%), followed by Delta / Ladner (71.9%), and Surrey / White Rock (69.5%).
- In cases where both spouses are less than 30 years of age, the level of intermarriage is strikingly high, at 71.1%. It is 36.2% when both spouses are at least 40 years old.
- 43.9% of Jewish children under 15 years of age (living in couple families) reside in intermarried arrangements. More than half of children under 5 years live in intermarried families (55.9%).
- The percentage of common law arrangements among intermarried households is markedly higher than among those where both spouses are Jewish (25% and 4.7%, respectively).
- Families earning between \$50K - \$99.9K have the highest intermarriage levels (62.9%). The intermarriage levels are lower in the extremes of the income distribution.
- Regarding the youngest children of intermarried couples, less than a quarter (22.9%) are identified by their parents as Jews; a much larger percentage (60.3%) are assigned no religious affiliation; and the rest (16.8%) are identified as having other religions.
- In 2001, more than a fifth (21.1%) of Jewish children residing in Greater Vancouver were registered in Jewish day schools. The figures were 33.2% for elementary schools (K-7) and 4.4% for high schools (8-12).
- When supplementary schooling was factored in, 30.7% of Jewish children (K-12) had some exposure to education with a Jewish content.

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Census Analysis Series

Issues of Jewish Identity

This report examines issues related to Jewish identity based on figures from the 2001 Census. Specifically, three subjects are addressed: self-perceptions of Jewishness as specified in the Census; the levels and characteristics of intermarriage; and the percentage of Jewish school-aged children attending Jewish day schools in the Vancouver Census Metropolitan Area (CMA).

What defines someone as a Jew? According to Halachic law, a Jew is anyone whose mother was born as such, or who has converted to Judaism. This definition is straightforward, and does not rely on issues of beliefs, values or levels of ritual observances. Being Jewish is a birth-right, which is not withdrawn even if the person converts to another religion. Whatever the nature of one's identification, whatever the self-perception, the fact of one's Jewishness is inviolable.

However, it is in the expression of one's Jewishness, in the strength of their Jewish identity, that self-perception does play a role.

The Jewish experience can relate to religious, cultural and nationalistic aspects that represent a wide spectrum of attitudes and beliefs.

According to some analysts, Judaism has remained vibrant and strong because of its ability to tolerate and embrace a wide variety of expressions. Others have contended that opening the Jewish identity to such a multitude of expressions has further frayed or fragmented the cohesion of the Jewish people. These perspectives have been at the heart of the debate on how to counteract the forces of assimilation that have threatened the cohesiveness of the Jewish people throughout the centuries.

In North America there has been increasing concern about the ability of the Jewish community to withstand the pressures of such assimilation, and these worries have implications for the future of Jewry in the Diaspora as a whole. A recent population survey in the United States, for instance, suggested that since 1996, only slightly more than half (53%) of Jewish marriages involved

two partners who were born Jewish.¹ In 2001, more than 185,000 Americans who said they were raised exclusively Jewish, indicated they practiced another religion.²

The Canadian situation is not as dramatic as the American findings, although assimilation has had some impact on the character of the community. Such effects have been tempered by a government policy, which emphasizes "multi-culturalism", a tolerance for various cultural expressions, which are woven into the fabric of Canadian life.

The effects of assimilation have also been influenced by the fact that Canadian Jews are more of an immigrant community than Americans. The Jewish communities in the United States are generally historically older than Canadian ones. Approximately 85% of American Jewish adults were born in that country.³ About 40% of adult Jews were not

born in Canada, and this may account for a stronger cultural and religious identity.

Unfortunately, the last opportunity for comparing national surveys in the United States and Canada was in 1991. Although these findings were presented 15 years ago, their implications were very suggestive.

For instance, Cohen (1991) found that Canadian Jews observed more ritual practices than American Jews.⁴ Comparisons also suggested that Canadian Jews were more close-knit, and substantially more Jewishly philanthropic than American Jews. Finally, when compared with American Jews, Canadian Jews were more in touch with Israel and Israelis, more knowledgeable about Israel, and more actively pro-Israel.⁴

Unfortunately, there were too few individuals sampled from the Jewish community of Greater Vancouver to yield reliable results from this 1991 national survey (n= 47; total n= 972). Anecdotal evidence suggests that British Columbian Jewry generally falls below the national

¹ The National Jewish Population Survey (NJPS) 2000-01: Strength, Challenge and Diversity in the American Jewish Population. United Jewish Communities, September 2003.

² Special analysis done of NJPS 2000-2001 data and personally communicated to the authors by J. Ament, Senior Project Director, Research Department, United Jewish Communities.

³ Ament, J. Jewish Immigrants in the United States. United Jewish Communities: Report Series on the National Jewish Population Survey 2000-01, October 2004.

⁴ Cohen, S. Jewish Identity in Canada: National Character, Regional Diversity, and Emerging Trends (1991).

average in terms of ritual observance and institutional affiliation.

Unlike the survey mentioned above, the Canadian Census does not allow for analyses related to Jewish attitudes and beliefs, or adherence to Jewish customs. This is an important limitation, since most factors related to Jewish identity cannot be examined using the Census. On the other hand, there are certain variables that allow for the measurement of some aspects of Jewish identity. These include the type of identification (religious or ethnic) among Jews, the level of intermarriage and its correlates, and the percentage of children attending Jewish day schools.

The following monograph will take an in-depth look at these issues, as they pertain to the Greater Vancouver Jewish community specifically.

Self-Perceptions of Jewishness

The 2001 Census asked two questions related to one's Jewishness. The first looked at the respondent's religion. The other asked about the person's ethnic origin. Whereas the religious criterion is straightforward, the question of ethnicity is more ambiguous.

Ethnicity could include implications of culture, nationality and race. It is therefore more prone to idiosyncrasies of interpretation. For instance, some respondents who identified themselves as Jewish by religion, claimed that their ethnicity was "Canadian" or "Israeli".

Respondents were allowed more than one choice for ethnicity, and a maximum of four choices. Thus, a person could say that they were ethnically Jewish and Polish. There was no way of knowing the strength of one's identification regarding a particular ethnic category; but if only one choice was made, then it could be assumed it represented the dominant identity.

Despite these ambiguities, Jewish identity, as defined by the Census, is unique, because it can be classified as both a religious and ethnic affiliation. One can also say something about the strength of Jewish identification by looking at different combinations using these two criteria. Thus, a person who said they were ethnically Jewish but had no religion, likely had a different self-perception as a Jew than one who claimed both religious and ethnic identities.

Table 1
Religious & Ethnicity Identifications
Vancouver Jewish Population

	#	%
Religion Jewish / Ethnicity Jewish	13,335	51.1
Religion Jewish / Ethnicity Not Jewish	3,940	15.1
Religion None / Ethnicity Single: Jewish	1,035	4.0
Religion None / Ethnicity Jewish & Other	4,285	16.4
Religion Other / Ethnicity Jewish	3,480	13.3
Total Having Any Jewish Identification	26,075	100.0

Table 2
Levels of Jewish Identification
Based on Religion & Ethnicity Responses
Vancouver Jewish Population

	#	%
Higher Jewish Identification	17,275	76.5
Lower Jewish Identification	5,320	23.5
Total	22,595	100.0

Given the Census parameters, a Jew in this report was defined as someone who indicated they were (a) Jewish by religion and ethnicity, (b) Jewish by religion with another ethnicity, or (c) Jewish by ethnicity with no religion. This is the Jewish Standard Definition, which was formulated in 1981 by Jim Torczyner of McGill University. It was devised because this definition was more inclusive than if religion or ethnicity were considered separately.

A category that was not included in this definition related to respondents who said they were ethnically Jewish, but claimed another religious affiliation, such as Roman Catholic or Buddhist. These people may have converted to another religion, or they may simply have had an ancestor (e.g. a grandparent) who was Jewish. In either case, it was assumed that they have a very minimal identification with Judaism, and were therefore not included as Jews.

Table 1 shows a breakdown of the Greater Vancouver's Jewish population by category of identity. The majority of Jews in the Vancouver CMA, 13,335, consider themselves as Jewish by both religion and ethnicity. They are the group most clearly

identified as Jews. A further 3,940 respondents say they are Jewish by religion, but have another ethnic identity.

It is interesting that 5,320 people say they are Jews by ethnicity but have no religion. These may be secular Jews, who don't follow religious customs, some of whom may consider themselves as atheists or agnostics. They likely identify more with Judaism on a cultural level. Together, these three categories comprise 22,595 individuals, which is the Jewish population of the Vancouver CMA according to the Jewish Standard Definition (JSD) as applied to the 2001 Census.

There are 3,480 persons in the category that was not included in the JSD (ethnic Jews indicating another religion). A further analysis reveals that 49.1% of these individuals say they are Protestant, 22.9% say Catholic, 16.3% Christian (unspecified), 4.9% Christian Orthodox, 2.3% Buddhist, and 4.5% report various other religions.

A Closer Look at Levels of Jewish Identity

In the following analyses, those that indicated they were Jewish by religion are considered

Table 3
Major Census Metropolitan Areas by Levels of Jewish Identification
(Row %)

Census Metropolitan Area	Total	Higher Jewish Identification		Lower Jewish Identification	
	#	#	%	#	%
Vancouver	22,595	17,275	76.5	5,320	23.5
Montreal	92,970	88,765	95.5	4,205	4.5
Toronto	179,095	164,510	91.9	14,585	8.1
Ottawa / Gatineau	13,445	11,325	84.2	2,120	15.8
Winnipeg	14,775	12,765	86.4	2,010	13.6
Calgary	7,945	6,530	82.2	1,415	17.8
Canada	370,520	329,995	89.1	40,525	10.9

Table 4
Age by Levels of Jewish Identification
(Row %)

Age Cohort	Total	Higher Jewish Identification		Lower Jewish Identification	
	#	#	%	#	%
0-14	3,750	2,675	71.3	1,075	28.7
15-24	2,885	1,970	68.3	915	31.7
25-44	6,450	4,780	74.1	1,670	25.9
45-64	6,530	5,330	81.6	1,200	18.4
65+	2,960	2,515	85.0	445	15.0
Total Vancouver CMA	22,575	17,270	76.5	5,305	23.5

Table 5
Levels of Jewish Identification by Geographic Areas
(Row %)

District		Total	Higher Jewish Identification		Lower Jewish Identification	
		#	#	%	#	%
Vancouver City	West End	1,355	1,000	73.8	355	26.2
	West Side	9,370	7,780	83.0	1,590	17.0
	East Side	1,595	1,015	63.6	580	36.4
Greater Richmond	Richmond City	3,425	2,985	87.2	440	12.8
	Surrey / White Rock	1,120	735	65.6	385	34.4
	Delta / Ladner	460	310	67.4	150	32.6
North Shore	West Vancouver	1,030	815	79.1	215	20.9
	North Vancouver	1,480	970	65.5	510	34.5
Burquest	Burnaby/New Westminster	1,170	690	59.0	480	41.0
	Port Coquitlam, Coquitlam, Port Moody	915	630	68.9	285	31.1
Maple Ridge / Pitt Meadows / Langley		670	355	53.0	315	47.0
Total Vancouver CMA		22,590	17,285	76.5	5,305	23.5

as having a "Higher Jewish Identification"; people who indicated that they were Jewish by ethnicity but who claimed no religion, are considered as having a "Lower Jewish Identification".

It is obviously difficult to judge the quality of identification of any person, let alone rely on the limitations of the Census criteria. But these labels are meant for comparison purposes only. Someone who said they were ethnically Jewish, but had no religion, may have a strong commitment in different ways (e.g. participation in community organizations, supporting Israel). The findings should therefore be interpreted with these caveats in mind.

As Table 2 suggests, the majority of Jews in Greater Vancouver have a higher Jewish identification (76.5%). About a quarter (23.5%) are considered as having a lower identification.

There is a significantly lower proportion of Jews who are highly identified in Greater Vancouver (76.5%) than in Canada as a whole (89.1%) (Table 3). In terms of other major Canadian Jewish communities, Montreal has 95.5% who are highly

identified, Toronto has 91.9%, Winnipeg has 86.4%, Ottawa has 84.2%, and Calgary has 82.2%. In short, the Vancouver CMA has the lowest proportion of highly identified individuals of any major Jewish community in Canada.

According to Table 4, Jewish identification is clearly related to age. The older segments seem to have higher levels of identification. In fact, 85% of seniors are highly identified. The 15-24 age group has the highest percentage of individuals with lower identification (31.7%), followed by those in the 0-14 cohort (28.7%).

It is difficult to explain the lower levels of identification among those under 25 years. They may be children and young adults who are getting little exposure to Jewish customs or traditions, and they represent an interesting challenge: how to encourage a life-long connection to the community.

Table 5 examines level of identification across geographic areas. According to this table, many Jews with lower identification live on the West Side of Vancouver. In fact, the West Side has 1,590 individuals who have a lower identification, or 30% of the

Table 6
Intermarriage Breakdowns
Base Population: Jewish Spouses / Partners

	#	%
Husband Jewish / Wife Jewish	6,000	58.7
Intermarried: Husband Jewish / Wife Non-Jewish	2,470	24.2
Intermarried: Husband Non-Jewish / Wife Jewish	1,755	17.2
(Subtotal: Intermarried)	(4,225)	(41.3)
Total Jewish Spouses / Partners	10,225	100.0

Table 7
Intermarriage Breakdowns
Base Population: Individuals Living in Couple Households

	#	%
Husband Jewish / Wife Jewish	9,070	58.1
Husband Jewish / Wife Non-Jewish	3,550	22.7
Husband Non-Jewish / Wife Jewish	2,790	17.9
(Subtotal: Living in Intermarried Households)	(6,340)	(40.6)
Husband Non-Jewish / Wife Non-Jewish	195	1.2
Total Individuals Living in Couple Households	15,605	100.0

total in this category within the Vancouver metropolitan area.

It should be noted, however, that there are also 7,780 Jews who consider themselves as highly identified on the West Side of Vancouver. This figure is larger than the numbers of highly identified in any other area within the Vancouver CMA.

Aside from the West Side, other areas with significant numbers of Jews with lower identification include the East Side (580), North Vancouver (510), and Burnaby / New Westminster (480).

In percentage terms, areas with the largest proportions of individuals with lower identification include Maple Ridge / Pitt Meadows / Langley (47%), Burnaby / New Westminster (41%), and the East Side (36.4%).

Levels of Intermarriage in the Greater Vancouver Jewish Community

The Census can be used to analyze the incidence of intermarriage in the Jewish community. Specifically, in this report intermarriage is defined as a situation where

a person who falls under the Jewish Standard Definition (JSD) marries someone who is not included under this criterion. It is then possible to cross-tabulate intermarriage with a number of other variables to profile those who have married outside their faith.

Note that individuals who converted to Judaism are considered as Jewish according to the Jewish Standard Definition. Thus, intermarriage as described in this report only examines couples where the non-Jewish spouse did not convert to Judaism. It is not possible to identify conversionary marriages using the Census information alone.

It is also important to mention that common law unions are included in the following statistics on intermarriage, as are same-sex arrangements where one of the partners is Jewish and the other is not. In this report, common law and same-sex arrangements refer to a union between “partners”, whereas individuals who are married are referred to as “spouses”.

What is the level of intermarriage among Greater Vancouver’s Jews? Table 6 examines the intermarriage rate from the perspective of spouses or partners. Since there are two

Table 8
Individuals Living in Intermarried Households
by Geographic Areas
(Row %)

District		Total	Both Spouses Jewish		Intermarried	
		#	#	%	#	%
Vancouver City	West End	495	235	47.5	260	52.5
	West Side	6,270	4,345	69.3	1,925	30.7
	East Side	745	280	37.6	465	62.4
Greater Richmond	Richmond City	2,875	2,360	82.1	515	17.9
	Surrey / White Rock	870	265	30.5	605	69.5
	Delta / Ladner	320	90	28.1	230	71.9
North Shore	West Vancouver	750	430	57.3	320	42.7
	North Vancouver	1,120	495	44.2	625	55.8
Burquest	Burnaby/New Westminster	780	245	31.4	535	68.6
	Port Coquitlam, Coquitlam, Port Moody	680	225	33.1	455	66.9
Maple Ridge / Pitt Meadows / Langley		500	100	20.0	400	80.0
Total Vancouver CMA		15,405	9,070	58.9	6,335	41.1

Jewish spouses / partners when Jews marry within the faith, such arrangements are given a count of two; whereas in intermarried families, only the Jewish spouse / partner is considered in the calculation.

According to this breakdown, 41.3% of Jewish spouses / partners are intermarried. This figure is considered the intermarriage rate for the Vancouver Census Metropolitan Area. In absolute terms, 4,225 of 10,225 Jewish spouses / partners are intermarried.

Of 4,225 spouses / partners who live in intermarried arrangements, 2,470 (58.5%) live in situations where the husband is Jewish and the wife is non-Jewish; and 1,755 (41.5%) are living in arrangements where the husband is non-Jewish and the wife is Jewish. In other words, Jewish men are more inclined to intermarry than Jewish women.

The intermarriage rate among Greater Vancouver's Jews (41.3%) is the highest of any major Jewish community in the country. The rates of intermarriage include 13.1% for Montreal, 15.6% for Toronto, 23.3% for Winnipeg, 31.8% for Ottawa, and 34.3% for Calgary. The Canadian intermarriage rate is 21.7%.

What is the total number of Jews living in intermarried families, including children? According to Table 7, there are 6,340 individuals who live in intermarried arrangements. This represents 40.6% of all individuals living in couple arrangements.

The small discrepancy between the intermarriage figures in Tables 6 and 7 (41.3% versus 40.6%) results from the fact that intermarried families typically have fewer children on average (see Table 11), and hence are underestimated when the rate is calculated based on all individuals, rather than only spouses / partners.

Also according to Table 7, 195 Jewish children are living in situations where neither parent is Jewish. They may be products of mixed marriages, where the non-Jewish partner has divorced and then married someone outside the faith while retaining custody of the children, who are nonetheless considered Jewish.

How does the 2001 level of intermarriage compare to statistics available from previous decades? Unfortunately, previous Census analyses did not examine the intermarriage rate on the basis of spouses / partners, only in

Table 9
Intermarriage Breakdowns
Age of Spouses / Partners
(Row %)

	Total	Both Spouses Jewish		Intermarried	
	#	#	%	#	%
Both Spouses < 30 Years	415	120	28.9	295	71.1
At Least One Spouse 30-39 Years	2,665	1,330	49.9	1,335	50.1
At Least One Spouse > 39 Years	7,915	4,950	62.5	2,965	37.5
Both Spouses > 39 Years	7,095	4,530	63.8	2,565	36.2

Note: The age categories described above may overlap with one another. Hence, the totals of the columns represent more than 100% of the households in question.

terms of total individuals living in intermarried families. Also, there are small discrepancies between the Jewish Standard Definition used in the present Census, compared to previous definitions of Jewishness (see Appendix 2).

Notwithstanding these caveats, in 1991 there were over 5,000 Jews living in intermarried arrangements in the Vancouver CMA, compared to 6,340 in 2001, an increase of about 27%.⁵ In 1981, the number of Jews living in intermarried arrangements was just over 2,600, an increase of 144% between 1981 and 2001.⁵ There has obviously been a significant rise in the number of Jews living in such arrangements in the last two decades.

The increase in the number of individuals living in intermarried households should be considered in the context of the overall Jewish population increase in the last two decades. Between 1981 and 2001, the Jewish population of the Vancouver CMA increased by 51.3% compared to 144% in the number of persons living in intermarried arrangements. In short, the intermarriage levels have significantly outpaced the

⁵ Torczyner, J. L. et al. Diversity, Identity and Rapid Growth: Critical Issues Facing the Greater Vancouver Jewish Community. McGill Consortium for Ethnicity & Strategic Social Planning. July, 1995.

increase in the number of Jews in the local community over the last twenty years.

Where Do Individuals Living in Intermarried Households Reside?

Table 8 looks at the geographic distribution of individuals (including children) living in different couple arrangements. The numbers of those living in intermarried arrangements are spread across the Vancouver CMA. Eight of 11 areas have at least 400 individuals who live in intermarried arrangements between them.

In 8 of 11 areas described in Table 8, at least half of the Jewish population (who live in couple arrangements) reside in intermarried households.

The West Side of Vancouver has the largest number of Jews living in intermarried households (1,925). Relatively large numbers also reside in North Vancouver (625), Surrey / White Rock (605) and Burnaby / New Westminster (535).

In relative terms, the area with the largest proportion of those living in intermarried households is Maple Ridge / Pitt Meadows / Langley. More than three-quarters (80%) of

Table 10
Individuals Living in Intermarried Households
by Age Breakdowns
(Row %)

Age Cohort	Total	Both Spouses Jewish		Intermarried	
	#	#	%	#	%
0-14	3,020	1,695	56.1	1,325	43.9
15-24	2,010	1,155	57.5	855	42.5
25-44	3,910	2,100	53.7	1,810	46.3
45-64	4,600	2,730	59.3	1,870	40.7
65+	1,860	1,385	74.5	475	25.5
Total Individuals Living in Couple Households	15,400	9,065	58.9	6,335	41.1
0-4	885	390	44.1	495	55.9

Jews residing in Maple Ridge / Pitt Meadows / Langley live in such arrangements. There are also large proportions of individuals living in intermarried arrangements in Delta / Ladner (71.9%), Surrey / White Rock (69.5%), and Burnaby / New Westminster (68.6%).

The area with the lowest proportion of Jews living in intermarried households is Richmond City, with 17.9%. The next lowest percentage of individuals living in intermarried households is found on the West Side of Vancouver (30.7%).

The Characteristics of Intermarried Households

Table 9 looks at the ages of Jewish spouses / partners living in intermarried arrangements. Note that the age categories represented in this table may overlap with one another. American studies have shown that younger adults are more inclined to intermarry than their older counterparts. This trend seems to be verified by the current Census data. In fact, the relationship between age and intermarriage is almost linear.

For instance, the intermarriage rate when both spouses are less than 30 years of age is

71.1%. It is 50.1% if at least one spouse is between 30-39 years, 37.5% if there is at least one spouse greater than 39 years, and 36.2% if both spouses are older than 39 years. It seems that the intermarriage rate for the youngest couples is significantly higher than for older ones. In fact, the intermarriage rate among younger couples is strikingly high.

Table 10 provides an interesting statistic. A significant minority (43.9%) of Jewish children under 15 years who reside with both parents live in intermarried arrangements. This represents 1,325 children.

A further examination shows that 55.9% of children less than 5 years who reside with both parents live in an intermarried arrangement. This involves 495 children.

It should be noted that the above statistics likely underestimate the number of children under 5 years residing in intermarried families, since only those identified by their parents as being Jewish are included in this count. Later data presented in this report will show that a significant percentage of younger children in intermarried families are not considered to be Jewish by their parents.

Table 11
Number of Children in Intermarried Households

Number of Children	Total		Both Spouses Jewish		Intermarried	
	#	%			#	%
None	3,490	48.3	1,320	44.1	2,170	51.4
One	1,485	20.6	610	20.4	875	20.7
Two	1,665	23.1	770	25.7	895	21.2
Three	500	6.9	265	8.8	235	5.6
Four	70	1.0	30	1.0	40	0.9
Five or more	10	0.1	0	0.0	10	0.2
Total Couples Households	7,220	100.0	2,995	100.0	4,225	100.0
Mean Number	--		1.0		0.8	

Table 12
Family Structure in Intermarried Households

Family Structure	Total		Both Spouses Jewish		Intermarried	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Married couples	6,025	83.4	2,860	95.3	3,165	75.0
Common-law couples	1,195	16.6	140	4.7	1,055	25.0
Total Couples Households	7,220	100.0	3,000	100.0	4,220	100.0

Table 11 shows the number of children living at home by various couple arrangements. When both spouses are Jewish, the mean number of children living at home is slightly higher than in intermarried situations (1.0 and 0.8 children, respectively). Although both figures appear low, the reader should note that these are not measures of fertility, because they do not take into account children living outside the home.

Further analysis reveals that whether the wife or husband intermarries makes relatively little difference in terms of the number of children living at home. The mean number of children when the husband is Jewish is 0.9, compared to 0.8 when the wife is Jewish.

Arrangements in which both spouses are Jewish have a somewhat higher percentage of households with at least three children living at home (9.8%), compared to intermarried arrangements (6.7%).

Table 12 looks at family structure by couple arrangements. The percentage of common law arrangements among intermarried households is significantly higher than among those where both spouses are Jewish (25% and 4.7%, respectively). In short, a

quarter of intermarried couples live in common law situations.

The level of common law arrangements among the intermarried (25%) is even higher than that of common law relationships for the overall Greater Vancouver and British Columbia populations respectively (11.5% and 13.1%).

Who Intermarries?

Table 13 looks at intermarriage by place of birth. Jews from the United States (57.7%) have the highest level of intermarriage. No other immigrant groups have higher intermarriage levels than Jews born in Canada (45.7%). The lowest incidence of intermarriage is found among those born in Israel (16.7%).

Interestingly, Jews from the Former Soviet Union (FSU) have an intermarriage level of 23%, which is below the average for the Jewish community as a whole (41.1%).

Regarding intermarriage by year of immigration (Table 14), recent immigrants (1990-2001) have the lowest level of intermarriage of any landed immigrant group (22.8%). The highest intermarriage rates are

Table 13
Individuals Living in Intermarried Households
by Place of Birth
(Row %)

Place of Birth	Total	Both Spouses Jewish		Intermarried	
	#	#	%	#	%
Canada	9,855	5,355	54.3	4,500	45.7
Israel	630	525	83.3	105	16.7
Eastern Europe (excl. FSU)	460	285	62.0	175	38.0
Former Soviet Union	1,085	835	77.0	250	23.0
Western Europe	1,045	625	59.8	420	40.2
North Africa / Middle East (excl. Israel)	150	120	80.0	30	20.0
United States	1,075	455	42.3	620	57.7
South America	150	105	70.0	45	30.0
Other	960	765	79.7	195	20.3
Total Individuals Living in Couple Households	15,410	9,070	58.9	6,340	41.1

Table 14
Individuals Living in Intermarried Households
by Year of Immigration
(Row %)

Year of Immigration	Total	Both Spouses Jewish		Intermarried	
	#	#	%	#	%
Non-immigrants	9,985	5,420	54.3	4,565	45.7
Before 1960	710	420	59.2	290	40.8
1960 - 1969	555	330	59.5	225	40.5
1970 - 1979	1,205	760	63.1	445	36.9
1980 - 1989	815	530	65.0	285	35.0
1990 - 2001	1,910	1,475	77.2	435	22.8
Non-permanent residents	215	130	60.5	85	39.5
Total Individuals Living in Couple Households	15,395	9,065	58.9	6,330	41.1

found among non-immigrants (45.7%), those who arrived before 1960 (40.8%), and those who arrived between 1960-1969 (40.5%).

A more detailed analysis of intermarriage levels involving year of immigration and place of birth is shown in the table below. This breakdown examines the intermarriage rate of immigrant groups arriving between 1990-2001. It is clear that large percentages of immigrant Jews arriving from Western Europe (58.3%) and the United States (51.7%) live in intermarried households.

In absolute terms, of 425 individuals who arrived between 1990-2001, and who live in intermarried households, 175 were born in the Former Soviet Union, 75 in the United States, and 70 in Western Europe. The remainder (105) originated in various other regions.

Unfortunately, regarding statistics related to intermarriage and year of immigration, it is not possible using the Census data alone to determine whether individuals had intermarried in this country, or had arrived here with their non-Jewish spouse.

Intermarriage Rates of Jewish Immigrants Arriving Between 1990-2001 by Place of Birth

	%
Israel	13.6
Eastern Europe (excl. FSU)	0.0
Former Soviet Union	22.6
Western Europe	58.3
North Africa / Middle East (excl. Israel)	0.0
United States	51.7
South America	42.9
Other	9.9
Total	22.9

Table 15 examines the relationship between level of education and intermarriage. Note that some education categories described in this table overlap with one another. The findings suggest that there is a clear relationship between education and intermarriage.

For instance, when both spouses have less than a university education, the intermarriage level is 48.7%. If at least one of the spouses has a university undergraduate degree the intermarriage rate is 40.3%. If at least one spouse has a university graduate degree the intermarriage level drops to 36.1%. Finally, the lowest rate of intermarriage is found when both spouses have university graduate degrees, such as MAs or PhDs (34.6%).

Table 15
Intermarriage Breakdowns
Education of Spouses / Partners
(Row %)

	Total	Both Spouses Jewish		Intermarried	
	#	#	%	#	%
Both Spouses Less Than Univ. Education	3,255	1,670	51.3	1,585	48.7
At Least One Spouse Univ. Undergraduate	4,140	2,470	59.7	1,670	40.3
At Least One Spouse Univ. Graduate	4,225	2,700	63.9	1,525	36.1
Both Spouses University Graduates	1,575	1,030	65.4	545	34.6

Note: The education categories described above may overlap with one another. Hence, the totals of the columns represent more than 100% of the households in question.

These results suggest that the higher the educational attainment, the lower the levels of intermarriage. This type of relationship supports findings in the United States. For instance, the National Jewish Population Survey (2000-2001) found that 34% of those with a high school education or less were intermarried, compared to 31% with a university undergraduate degree, and 27% with a university graduate degree.⁶ Cohen (1989) reports that among American men who never attended university, the intermarriage rate is over 40%; of those with an undergraduate degree, only 18% are intermarried.⁷

As Table 16A shows, the relationship between intermarriage and income status is complex. Intermarriage seems to be more prevalent among middle-income families as far as income ranges are concerned. Those families earning between \$50K - \$99.9K have the highest intermarriage levels (62.9%), followed closely by those earning \$25K - \$49.9K (62.6%).

⁶ NJPS (2000-01) Report on Jewish Life: Variations in Intermarriage. See the United Jewish Communities Web Site: <http://www.ujc.org>

⁷ Cohen, S. Alternative Families in the Jewish Community. The American Jewish Committee, Institute of Human Relations (1989).

The intermarriage levels are lower in the extremes of the income distribution. For instance, the rates are 49.4% among families earning under \$25,000 per year, and 51.3% among families earning \$150,000 or more.

As Table 16B shows, the median income of intermarried couples (\$80,635) is lower than that of arrangements where both spouses are Jewish (\$91,177).

Results from the National Jewish Population Survey in the United States (2000-2001) are compatible with the current findings. The American study found that intermarriage levels peaked in the middle of the income distribution, and were less pronounced in the extremes. For instance, 38% of households earning between \$50,000-\$99,999 were intermarried, compared to 32% of households earning less than \$25,000, and 28% of households earning more than \$150,000.⁸

The Identifications of Children in Intermarried Families

How children are being brought up in intermarried families has profound

⁸ Special analysis done of NJPS 2000-2001 data and personally communicated to the authors by J. Ament, Senior Project Director, Research Department, United Jewish Communities.

Table 16A
Intermarriage Breakdowns
Family Income
(Row %)

	Total	Both Spouses Jewish		Intermarried	
	#	#	%	#	%
Under \$25,000	425	215	50.6	210	49.4
\$25,000 - \$49,999	1,285	480	37.4	805	62.6
\$50,000 - \$99,999	2,560	950	37.1	1,610	62.9
\$100,000 - \$149,999	1,555	665	42.8	890	57.2
\$150,000 or more	1,395	680	48.7	715	51.3
Total Couples Households	7,220	2,990	41.4	4,230	58.6

Table 16B
Intermarriage Breakdowns
Median Family Income

	Median Income (\$)
Both Spouses Jewish	91,177
Intermarried	80,635

implications for the issue of Jewish continuity. Since the intermarriage level among Greater Vancouver's Jews is 41.3% there is little doubt that the community cannot afford to lose these families to the pressures of assimilation.

Table 17 is very revealing in this regard. As expected, among Jewish families, the great majority of the youngest children (92.9%) are identified by their parents as Jews, 6.5% are assigned no religious identification, and 0.6% are identified as having other religions. Note, however, that despite the fact that the great majority are identified as Jews, it is impossible to determine their level of exposure to Jewish customs and rituals. There is also no way to know from the Census how these identifications translate into actual behaviors and attitudes.

Regarding the youngest children of intermarried couples, less than a quarter (22.9%) are being brought up as Jews; a much larger percentage (60.3%) have no religious identification; and the rest (16.8%) are being brought up within other religions.

In other words, more than three-quarters (77.1%) of these children in intermarried

families are not identified as belonging to the religious orientation of the Jewish spouse. It is difficult to say whether they are having either minimal or no exposure to Judaism, but the findings are suggestive nonetheless.

Table 17 also shows that whether a Jewish man or woman intermarries is a critical factor in the identification of the youngest child. For instance, in cases where Jewish men intermarry, 17.1% of youngest children are identified as Jewish, 61.8% as having no religious identification, and 21.1% as having another religion. In short, 82.9% do not have the religious orientation of the Jewish father.

In cases where Jewish women intermarry, 31.9% are identified as Jewish, 58.1% as having no religious affiliation, and 10% as having another religion. In short, about two-thirds (68.1%) do not have the religious orientation of the mother.

Enrolment in Jewish Day Schools

A basic foundation of Jewish life is the education that children are given during their formative years. A sound Jewish education should instill the values and beliefs that form essential ingredients of one's "Jewishness". This perspective can best be promoted if the

Table 17
Religion of Youngest Child in Intermarried Households

Religion of Youngest Child	Both Spouses Jewish		Husband Jewish / Wife Non-Jewish		Husband Non-Jewish / Wife Jewish		Total Intermarried	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Jewish	1,570	92.9	215	17.1	255	31.9	470	22.9
Catholic	0	0.0	70	5.6	30	3.8	100	4.9
Protestant	10	0.6	120	9.6	35	4.4	155	7.5
Christian Orthodox	0	0.0	20	1.6	0	0.0	20	1.0
Muslim	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh	0	0.0	10	0.8	15	1.9	25	1.2
Para-religious groups	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
No religious affiliation	110	6.5	775	61.8	465	58.1	1,240	60.3
All other religions	0	0.0	45	3.6	0	0.0	45	2.2
Total Couples Households	1,690	100.0	1,255	100.0	800	100.0	2,055	100.0

child gets sufficient exposure to Jewish history and customs, in an environment that benefits from the encouragement of educators and peers.

Studies have shown that a full-time Jewish education, although not a guarantee of high levels of Jewish identification and affiliation, does greatly influence these factors. Studies in the United States and Canada have indicated that a Jewish education has a positive impact on a person's adherence to Jewish customs, their level of involvement with Jewish organizations, raising one's own children Jewishly, resisting intermarriage, and supporting Israel in a variety of ways.

About 57% of Greater Vancouver students attending Jewish day schools received some financial support between 2002-2004. The total amount of scholarship dollars given in that period was \$197,000. In absolute terms, 408 of 715 students received tuition assistance. Clearly the community recognizes the need to make Jewish education affordable and accessible for all eligible children whose parents don't have the means to afford full fees.

It is in this context that the present analysis was undertaken to determine the percentage of Jewish children enrolled in Jewish day schools. This analysis, in fact, represents a more refined estimate than previous calculations because: (a) discrete age groups of Jews (aged 0-19 years) are available from the Census data, and (b) it also relies on a definition of Jewishness which takes both the ethnicity and religion criteria into account.

Table 18A presents levels of enrolment for Jewish elementary schools, high schools and totals. The first column relates to the base population of school-aged children as reflected in the 2001 Census statistics. The second column shows total enrolment in the Jewish day school system for that school year. The percentages of Jewish children enrolled in Jewish day schools are featured in the third column.

According to Table 18A, 21.1% of Jewish children were registered in Jewish day schools in 2001. The figures were 33.2% for Jewish elementary schools (grades K-7) and 4.4% for Jewish high schools (grades 8-12).

In absolute terms, 704 children were attending Jewish elementary schools and

Table 18A
Percent Enrolled in Jewish Day Schools
(2001)

	2001 Census Base Population	Enrolled in Jewish Day Schools	Percent of Base Enrolled	Total in Non-Jewish Schools
Elementary School (K-7)	2,120	704	33.2	1,416
High School (8-12)	1,545	68	4.4	1,477
Total	3,665	772	21.1	2,893

Table 18B
Percent Having Exposure to Jewish Instruction
(Includes Supplementary School Enrolment)
(2001)

	2001 Census Base Population	Enrolled in Jewish Day Schools	Enrolled in Supplement. Schools	Total With Jewish Instruction	Percent With Jewish Instruction	Total With No Jewish Instruction
Total (K-12)	3,665	772	352	1,124	30.7	2,541

1,416 were attending non-Jewish elementary schools in 2001. Moreover, 68 were attending Jewish high schools, whereas 1,477 were attending non-Jewish high schools.

Finally, Table 18B examines the total number of children (grades K-12) who had some exposure to Jewish education in 2001. In this analysis, supplementary school registration was added to the total enrolment. According to the results, 30.7% of Jewish children had some exposure to education with a Jewish content. However, this table does not take into account children receiving Jewish instruction from private teachers, tutors, or family members.

The Challenges Ahead

The historian Daniel Boorstein liked to say that planning for the future without a sense of history is like planting cut flowers. Thus we should take a look at the recent history of the Greater Vancouver Jewish community before making any assessment of challenges that lie ahead.

One of the factors that has had a great impact on this community has been its growth spurt over the past 20 years from 1981-2001 and beyond, to 2005, the year of this analysis.

1981-1991 saw the community grow by 32%. 1991-2001, another 15%. This kind of rapid growth mimics the decades following World War II, when the institutional growth of the community hurried to keep up with the inflow of newcomers. Consider the list of institutions built between the end of the war and the 1960s: a day school, Talmud Torah; two major synagogues, Schara Tzedek and Beth Israel; the move of the Jewish Community Centre and the Louis Brier Home for the Aged into new buildings; and the development of Hillel House on UBC campus.

Since 1981 population growth and movement to the suburbs has been a hallmark of the Jewish community. New day schools have opened in Richmond and Vancouver, and since 2001 a Yeshiva High School for the Pacific Northwest has opened in Vancouver, as well as a popular outreach kollel in Kitsilano. Chabad has been a major presence for the last 30 years, and there are Chabad centres in Vancouver, Richmond, White Rock, and most recently in Downtown Vancouver.

Since the Census of 2001, a revitalized Jewish High School (King David) has seen

enrollment rise to nearly 150 students (from 68 in 2001).

Too, in 1981 the community was not a federation. The Jewish Federation of Greater Vancouver, founded in 1986, has become a powerful asset for community-wide planning.

Another sign of increasing institutional growth is the growth of associations in White Rock / Surrey and in Burnaby, the two areas where intermarriage levels are among the highest. The high rate of intermarriage reflects a trend towards assimilation; at the same time, the community institutions are growing in power and outreach potential.

Yet much remains to be done, as this report indicates. Jews have long relied on the commitment and participation of their fellow members to help shape the community they live in.

More ways must be found to create openings for those less likely to be active within a Jewish milieu. Those who were described as having a lower identification in this report need greater opportunities to participate and to identify venues where they will be welcomed. The Census figures suggest that a large group see their Jewishness not in terms

of the religious aspects of the faith, but have a more secular perspective. Are there ways of introducing them to Jewish experiences that are interesting, relevant and vital?

There are very few initiatives currently geared to reaching the marginally identified. Our organizations and programs typically cater to those who live in traditional “Jewish” neighborhoods, whereas those who reside in the geographic fringes of community life are often least considered. People who self-identify as Jews and participate through their own motivation have chosen to come to community events or partake of programs. But what about those who have chosen to stay home? How can we make Judaism and Jewish life more attractive or relevant for them?

One way to reach Jews who are not actively affiliated with community life is through radio and television media. This approach helps bridge geographic distances, but it is also a costly one. Another approach is to provide events and programs that are particularly relevant to less identified Jews. This will take creativity and investment of resources.

Federation must sensitize agencies and organizations to the issue of outreach to Jews who are uninvolved in Jewish life. It can also raise the profile of Judaism among staff and lay leaders within the Federated system: by bringing a stronger Jewish element into their work, and having them think more deeply about their Jewishness. In short, connecting community workers and leaders with their own Jewishness may help them communicate a deeper commitment and understanding to those who feel estranged or disengaged from community life.

Regarding Jewish singles, there are only scattered, infrequent initiatives and opportunities for Jewish adults to meet one another. It would seem desirable for young Jews to have many more such opportunities: perhaps in the context of the JCC, Hillel, shuls, and so on. It is evident that as young Jews enter university the chances of engagement with non-Jews are pervasive, and continues following graduation. It is therefore difficult to say whether such increased opportunities for meeting fellow Jews will have any long-term impact on their choice of partners.

Concerning Jewish education, given the evidence of the benefits of a Jewish education in terms of forming a Jewish identity, and instilling Jewish commitment and pride, the community must continue to find ways to make Jewish schools more accessible and attractive for parents who are not now considering them as alternatives, be it for reasons of affordability or perception of quality of education.

Aside from reflecting on how to bring people into the Jewish fold, efforts should also focus on those who already have some sense of Jewish identity, which may be further strengthened and enriched. As mentioned, the best way for people to have some continuity in terms of their Jewish identity relates to education. Unfortunately, much of this exposure is over by the time a person has completed the primary or high school level. Meaningful opportunities for adults to encounter Jewish ideas and values should be increased. Encouraging graduates of Jewish schools to continue with more sophisticated adult education can be a valuable means of re-enforcing Jewish continuity.

Beyond questions of conversion and who should be considered a Jew, what type of

initiatives can be taken regarding the issue of intermarriage? One approach relates to fostering accommodation: making the intermarried couple feel comfortable and accepted enough to participate in community life. This process partly relates to education: explaining Jewish customs and traditions to the non-Jewish spouse; and exposing the children of intermarried couples to Jewish values and traditions.

This approach involves giving intermarried families a “taste” of Judaism, so that they will be more inclined to choose Jewish options for their children, even if they are not necessarily inclined to raise their children Jewishly. Synagogues in particular need to begin active outreach to intermarried members, and to those who want to be included but fear rejection because of their non-Jewish spouses. Their children, too, need to be included wherever possible. At least one synagogue now encourages children of non-Jewish spouses to have a bar/bat mitzvah when the child converts – always with parental consent, of course.

There are very few entry points in the Jewish day schools for the children of intermarried couples. The majority of Jewish schools do not have policies regarding the admission of such children. Some schools will accept such children only on the condition of a proper conversion and Jewish lifestyle. Perhaps because of a lack of entry points, young intermarried Jews (who are less inclined to be highly identified as Jews to begin with) with young families will generally choose non-Jewish schools as an alternative for their children.

The organized Jewish community has few programs currently geared to intermarried couples. For instance, there are no social programs for such couples; no initiatives run in the campuses related to inter-dating; or seminars and conferences providing general information on this subject. Moreover, very few shuls have outreach programs specifically targeting intermarried couples. In short, the organized Jewish community is not taking a proactive approach regarding this issue, despite the rising numbers of intermarried persons.

Appendix 1

The Jewish Standard Definition

This report uses what is known as the “Jewish Standard Definition” to distinguish who is Jewish from the rest of the population. Jim Torczyner of McGill University and the Jewish Federation of Montreal formulated this definition in 1981, using a combination of religious and ethnic identification.

According to this criterion, a Jew is defined as anyone who specified that they were:

- Jewish by religion and ethnicity.
- Jewish by religion and having another ethnicity.
- Jewish by ethnicity with no religious identification.

Anyone who specified another religion (Catholic, Muslim, etc.) and a Jewish ethnicity were excluded in the above definition.

Using this criterion, it is not possible to say how a person behaves “Jewishly”: for instance, whether they adhere to traditions or attend synagogue on a regular basis. However, despite this limitation, the fact

that we can identify Jewish identification at all is critical for using the Census as a tool to better understand our community. The Jewish Standard Definition is meant to be as inclusive as possible, reflecting the varied expressions that comprise the richness of the Jewish experience.

It is important to note that a significant change to the “Jewish Standard Definition” was implemented in the current analysis of Census data. The category of those who had “no religion and a Jewish ethnicity” was expanded to include those with “no religious identification and a Jewish ethnicity”.

The category of “no religious identification” is broader than that of “no religion” because it includes those who consider themselves agnostics, atheists and humanists, as well as those having no religion. Since it is possible to be Jewish and have such identifications, it was felt that this change would better reflect the broad spectrum of Jewish affiliation. Data from previous Censuses have been re-analyzed to ensure compatibility with the current criterion.

Appendix 2

The Reliability of the Census

The Census is a massive and complex undertaking, and although high standards are applied throughout the process, a certain level of error still characterizes the endeavor. Such errors can arise at virtually any point in the Census process, from the preparation of materials to the collection of data and the processing of information.

There are a number of principal types of errors that impact on the Census. In coverage errors, dwellings or individuals are missed, incorrectly enumerated or counted more than once. Regarding non-response errors, responses to the Census cannot be obtained from a certain number of households and/or individuals because of extended absence or extenuating circumstances.

In response errors, the respondent misunderstands a Census question and answers incorrectly or uses the wrong response box. Processing errors occur during the coding and inputting of data.

Finally, sampling errors apply only to the long-form. Statistics based on this form are

projected from a 20% sample of households. The responses to long-form questions, when projected to represent the whole population inevitably differ from the responses that would have been obtained if these questions were asked of all households.

Statistics Canada has a number of quality control measures that ensure Census data are as reliable as possible. Representatives edit the questionnaires when they are returned, and follow up on missing information. There are also quality control measures in place during the coding and data entry stages.

Despite these controls, a number of errors and response-biases can nonetheless impact data obtained from the Jewish population. For instance, certain segments of the Jewish community may be reticent to answer Census questions fully or accurately.

Recent immigrant populations, who are suspicious of government-sponsored projects and are wary of being identified as Jewish, may avoid indicating such an affiliation, or may answer certain questions more cautiously.

Members of the Chassidic and Ultra-Orthodox communities may be more reluctant to participate fully in the Census effort, due to specific Biblical injunctions that prohibit Jews from “being counted.” It is unclear whether such restrictions have had an impact on their responses, but anecdotal evidence suggests that these communities respond adequately. For instance, the Toshi Chasidic community of Montreal, which is fairly isolated geographically from the rest of the Jewish population, has had significant representation in previous Censuses, although it is unclear as to what extent their enumeration was complete.

Finally, since both the religion and ethnicity questions are only included in the long-form of the Census, sampling error arising from projections based on a 20% sampling of households is a factor in all Census analyses related to the Jewish community.

The level of sampling error inherent in any cell of a data table can be precisely calculated. Statistics Canada provides a table that measures these errors, and they are summarized below. Obviously, for large cell values, the potential error due to sampling will be proportionally smaller than for smaller ones.

When using the table, the reader should consider the right column as reflective of the average level of error expected for a given cell size. Of course, some cells may reflect errors smaller or larger than the average. About ninety percent of errors will fall between \pm the average error specified below. Ten percent of errors are expected to fall outside this range.

Cell Value	Average Error
50 or less	15
100	20
200	30
500	45
1,000	65
2,000	90
5,000	140
10,000	200
20,000	280
50,000	450
100,000	630

Source for Appendix 2: 2001 Census Dictionary Reference Guide (pg. 275). Published by Statistics Canada, August 2002. Catalogue No. 92-378-XPE.