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# Congregational Blank Survey and Accompanying Letter

Mark Slobin

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**Wesleyan University**

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May 23, 1986

Dear Synagogue President,

I am conducting a large-scale study of the American cantorate under the auspices of the Cantor's Assembly with a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities; the American Conference of Cantors is also co-operating in the research.

I would like to get the point of view of you, the lay leadership, on some issues. Attached is a brief questionnaire; I would greatly appreciate it if you or the person in your synagogue most involved in cantorial hiring and evaluation could complete it and return it in the self addressed envelope. A few minutes of your time could be of great help.

All information will be kept strictly confidential; your synagogue's name will not be mentioned.

Thank you for your co-operation,

*Mark Slobin*

Mark Slobin  
Professor of Music

MS:law  
enclosure

HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN CANTORATE  
Lay Leadership Questionnaire

- 1. How old is your synagogue?
- 2. How many cantors have served it? (Roughly, if not known)
- 3. How many in the last ten years?
- 4. Were there years with only a part-time cantor?  
Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ number of years (roughly) \_\_\_

5. Who evaluates candidates for a cantorial position?  
Check as many as necessary:

- \_\_\_ President
- \_\_\_ Ritual Committee
- \_\_\_ Rabbi
- \_\_\_ A special committee
- \_\_\_ Others \_\_\_\_\_

6. Does the average congregant have input in the choice?  
Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ If so, how? \_\_\_\_\_

7. Do you have a standard list of requirements for the job?  
Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ If yes, please attach it if possible

8. Does your present cantor do what you expected at hiring?  
more \_\_\_ less \_\_\_ pretty much \_\_\_

9. Do your Rabbi and cantor get along  
well \_\_\_ so-so \_\_\_ badly \_\_\_

10. Compare the rabbi and cantor's salary:

- \_\_\_ Same
- \_\_\_ Rabbi 10% - 20% higher
- \_\_\_ Rabbi 20% - 50% higher
- \_\_\_ Rabbi more than 50% higher

11. Have you ever had an assistant cantor / ba'al tefillah?  
Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ If yes, roughly how many years \_\_\_\_\_

12. What is most important about your cantor?  
Please CHECK ONLY ONE.

- Good voice  
 All purpose music organizer / teacher  
 All-around clergyman (weddings, hospital visits,  
teaching, counseling, etc.)  
 Work / standing in the Jewish / general community

Comments (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

13. What would you add to the cantor's present duties?

14. Is there a job the cantor does you would prefer NOT to be done by the cantor?

15. Who is most responsible for structuring services?

cantor  rabbi  ritual committee

16. Do you systematically check into average congregants' attitudes about the cantor?

Yes  No  If so, how? \_\_\_\_\_

17. What would you change about your synagogue's music?

18. Will you be looking for a new cantor in the next year or two?

Yes  No

19. What pieces would you ask a cantor to sing for an audition?

20. Given no constraints, budgetary or otherwise, roughly how many hours a week would the ideal cantor spend on:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bar/bat mitzvah training       | <input type="checkbox"/> Weddings, funerals     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other educational activities   | <input type="checkbox"/> Counseling             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Choir and other chorus groups  | <input type="checkbox"/> Administrative mtgs    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hospital and condolence visits | <input type="checkbox"/> Preparing for services |

21. Do you always use the placement service of the Cantors Assembly / American Conf. of Cantors?

Yes  No