Congregational Blank Survey and Accompanying Letter

Mark Slobin

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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
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:
   — Bar/bat mitzvah training ___ Weddings, funerals
   — Other educational activities ___ Counseling
   — Choir and other chorus groups ___ Administrative mtgs
   — Hospital and condolence visits ___ Preparing for services

21. Do you always use the placement service of the Cantors Assembly / American Conf. of Cantors?
   Yes ___ No ___