



EMANUEL CONGREGATION

Brotherhood

An affiliate of the North American Federation of Temple Brotherhoods

News From the Brotherhood

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This month, after some short news notes, we are presenting some reflections on how gender differences can, and should be viewed as an opportunity for men and women to work in partnership at Emanuel for the benefit of all.

Here is the news, starting with a note of profound sadness. The Emanuel Brotherhood has suffered a great loss with the passing of one of our most prominent members, Burton Kahn. Burton was a long time Brotherhood member whose contributions were nothing short of profound. He served as President on four different occasions and as an officer, including treasurer, even more times than that. To his wife, Brenda, and his family, we offer our sincere condolences and support. Burton will be missed.

The other news is that we are happy to report that the Emanuel Hoedown was a swinging success. Everyone who attended had a good time. We learned that line dancing was even possible for those of us with two left feet and even for those without partners. You should have seen Barry, Dave, and Seth holding hands as a spoke on the wheel and making fancy turns under bridges, a sight to behold. As a bonus, we had plentiful and delicious appetizers by Mark Waarner and Brian Lisk.

The reflections we are presenting are inspired by the Round-Table discussion in November. As of this writing, it had not taken place, but the subject of the discussion, "Reinvigorating the Partnership in Temple Leadership", is one that is very significant to our movement at this time. These reflections will be presented in two parts. This month's comments are introductory. Next month, we will reflect on the actual event.

In Malcolm Gladwell's book, *The Tipping Point*, he cites work done by University of Virginia psychologist Daniel Wegner on a concept he calls "transactive memory". Different people are better than others at remembering different things and when a group has spent extensive time together, the individuals learn to rely on those good at remembering things they tend to forget. They remind them when they need to know. This happens on a subconscious level. The group remembers better as a group than any individual can alone.

When there is any permanent separation, this results in the loss of each individual being able to count on access to a wide range of memory stored in their partners and the loss of the ability to discuss experiences with them. It is a loss of transactive memory and since this is something that is only felt on a subconscious level, the loss feels more like losing a part of one's own mind.

It is the unique experiences and instincts of both men and women, that are important to developing the transactive memory of them together, that makes leadership of both as a team so much richer than either could be alone.

The Round-Table discussion brought together two nationally recognized authorities concerning gender traits and how they could represent opportunities for improving temple life, religiously and socially. They were Dr. Sherry Blumberg, who is on the editorial board for the book, *The Torah: A Women's Commentary* and Doug Barden, the Executive Director of the MRJ and the author of the book, *Fighting The Flight of Men, A Modern Day Crisis for the Reform Movement*.

More next month.

David Fleischman and Barry Glaser, Brotherhood Co-Presidents