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THE RELIGIOUS ATTITUDES OF REFORM JEWISH YOUTH

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Digest of Thesis

The thesis is devoted to the study of the religious attitudes of Reform Jewish teenagers. Involved in the study were 1) a survey of the sociological and psychological literature dealing with adolescence and with patterns of religion in America, 2) research conducted on a sample of approximately 850 young people, and 3) an interpretation of the findings of the research.

The literature available is chiefly concerned with the adolescent and the peer group, parent-teenage relationships, and the adolescents' search for self identity. Very little material was found on the adolescent's religious attitudes. Hypotheses developed from the readings and personal experiences led to the study of the Reform Jewish adolescent concentrating on his attitudes toward his peer group, towards his parents, toward himself, toward society, and toward religion, God and the universe.

The young people studied were in attendance at regional and national camp sessions of the National Federation of Temple Youth during the summer months of 1957. The interview and the questionnaire were the instruments used to gather the data. Though the same basic areas of inquiry guided the use of both instruments, the interview achieved depth with the thirty-six teenagers personally questioned. The questionnaire, which was given to 822 teenagers, added quantitative support to the interview material. The data selected for interpretation

for this thesis was concerned with the religious attitudes of the young people, and it is presented in five categories: feelings of Jewishness, ritual, the rabbinate, religion and theology, and social concern. In addition, a small number of young people were studied in depth through profiles, and their responses in all areas were considered.

The most significant findings of the study are the following:

- 1) Reform Jewish teenagers have a deep sense of belonging to the Jewish group, and wish to be identified as Jews.

- 2) Ritual and ceremony are appealing to the young people and they desire more of it in their own homes than their parents have in theirs.

- 3) Rabbis in general are admired and potentially can be very effective as counselors and guides.

- 4) The teenagers are enthusiastically devoted to religion in general. Their theological beliefs are immature and childish,

- 5) The youth generally are accepting of American society, and show only moderate concern with social problems.

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CHAPTER I

SURVEY OF READINGS AND HYPOTHESES

A Survey of Readings on Adolescence.

In order to prepare hypotheses that might be tested in our study of the religious attitudes of Reform Jewish adolescents it was necessary to become familiar with some of the contemporary literature concerned with the teenage group. The reading centered chiefly on the values, parental relationships, idealism, theology, and attitudes toward religion of adolescents. Much of the material was used directly or indirectly in the formulation of the hypotheses which were later to be tested, and all the readings provided a background against which this study of a special group of adolescents might be made.

1. Values

A number of authors commented on the acquisition of values by the adolescent. Their commentary focused on the peer group, identification with older persons, and the effect of ceremony as important in the dynamics of changing values.

Most writers agree that the peer group stands out as the most significant factor in acceptance of values by the adolescent. Robert Havighurst writes that "the most potent single influence during adolescent years is the power of group approval."¹ Irene Josselyn agrees completely for she similarly says:

The peer group dominates the adolescent's thinking and his behavior. Deliberately to violate peer group patterns is extremely difficult for him....The carving on the escutcheon of the peer group reads: 'One just doesn't do that.'²

All of the literature places emphasis on the power of the peer group over the teenager who is one of its members. Several theories, however, are presented as to why the adolescent finds so great a need to be associated with a special group of his peers. Lawrence and Mary Frank propose that this need is in response to a desire to escape from the scrutiny of the home. At the same time the group gives the young person the security of belonging.³ Sherif and Cantril suggest that because of the lack of status of the teenager in the adult world he seeks membership in cliques which serve as a reference group for him.⁴ Josslyn, writing in more psychological terms, says that the peer group provides a means to formulate restrictions in an acceptable manner. The teenager desires restrictions and recognizes his need for them, but parents do not provide an acceptable source for those restrictions. Also, the peer group tempers the effect of the rebellion against the infantile conscience.⁵

One of the characteristics of the clique type of peer group is that the members may be selective regarding whom they wish to join the group. The Franks point out that being able to "blackball" others gives the young person the status and the security that he needs.⁶

Once the adolescent is a member of a particular peer group of either a formal or informal nature, the values of that group become his values.⁷ Because the need to be a part of that group is itself so great, the conformity to the values of the group is assured.⁸ Thus, the peer group becomes a

powerful force in inculcating values to the teenager. As various writers frequently pointed out, the values which the groups often transmit are very frequently amoral in nature, usually providing a standard for clothes, slang, food, and superficial teenage fads. Josslyn states this may involve attitudes toward "wearing a hat to town, straightening bobby socks so they are neater, wearing blue jeans that still retain their original color, being sexually promiscuous, or cheating in examinations."⁹

One article suggests the use to which this tremendous value transmitting peer group can be put to better the life of the young person. Kurt Lewin and Paul Grabbe point out that the dynamics which operate in the peer group and bring the young person under its potent influence can be utilized effectively in teaching values. In their article "Conduct, Knowledge, and Acceptance of New Values,"¹⁰ they state that when the individual accepts belongingness to a group he accepts a new system of values and beliefs. Through the creation of the "we-feeling" new values can be taught, but the teaching is done through the dynamics of the group. Where there is freedom of acceptance the individual can be led to accept new values even as he grows to accept the new group. The same dynamics will then operate as with the peer group, for becoming a member of the group will provide status and security, as the Franks pointed out, and membership leads to acceptance of the value system of the group. In Lewin and Grabbe we find a creative use of the dynamic of the peer group,

a dynamic which is recognized by all of the writers in the area of adolescence.

In addition to the peer group, values are inculcated in the individual adolescent through identification with an older, admired individual.¹¹ The young person imitates the values of the person with whom he identifies through mimicry of likes and dislikes. Values then are "caught" rather than taught.¹² Josslyn says that the young person needs people on whom he can be dependent when necessary but who will not demand dependency when he feels adequate. Because of dissatisfaction with his own image, the adolescent seeks another image he can emulate and thereby gain self acceptance.¹³ The great danger in this kind of a relationship is that the adult may find himself meeting his own neurotic needs and thereby playing with the adolescent's affections. However, at the same time if the relationship is a healthy one, the values of the older, admired person will become the values of the teenager through mimicry. These newly acquired values by the adolescent will become as important a part of his own system of ethics and morals as those values derived from the peer group. Thus the educator can make use of the dynamics of identification even as Lewin suggests can be done with the group. The selection of wise leaders with whom a healthy identification can take place is, of course, of primary importance.

Erikson says that the adolescent needs to identify

in order that he may keep himself together as the new problems of the teen years face him. The danger, he points out, is that the young person may over identify with another to the point of losing his own identity. He suggests that the person with whom the adolescent identifies may serve as a guardian of the teenager's identity.¹⁴ The adolescent may then constantly refer back to this admired person to gain his equilibrium until that point is reached when the young person can maintain himself through awareness of his own identity.

The third means by which the adolescent may acquire values is through the use of ceremony. Havighurst stresses the extreme importance of ceremony in inculcating values during the teen years. He states that dramatic ceremony is a most effective instrument for common value building.¹⁵ An indication of the truth of his observation will be illustrated in our own findings.

Josslyn explains that during the teen years there is a general increase in sensitivity which makes the young person susceptible to ceremony which is emotional in nature, as well as to various kinds of aesthetic beauty. She says:

During the entire period of adolescence, the individual is more responsive to all stimuli. The sunset, which in pre-adolescence was meaningful only as a signal to return home for dinner, now at adolescence becomes an esthetic experience. It becomes beautiful, depressing, or stimulating. Trees, which previously were of value only for climbing, now take on symbolic meanings. Music, which was a matter of rhythm or melody, is now associated with all the emotional turmoil of the individual.¹⁶

It is not surprising, therefore, that ritual and ceremony which is dramatic and which makes use of natural settings has a great emotional appeal to the teenager. Through such ceremony it is possible to instill values and to develop loyalties that might be impossible through other means. Thus ceremony takes its place along with the peer group and with the process of identification as a means for inculcating values in the adolescent.

There are, of course, other processes by which values are acquired by the individual. Havighurst suggests that satisfaction of physiological drives, reward and punishment, inculcation by authority, and reasoning are among them.¹⁷ However the three which we have emphasized are the most significant during the adolescent period. In our survey of the literature they are placed in the position of greatest importance.

2. Parental relationships

Perhaps the most crucial relationship of the teen years is that between the adolescent and his parents. As Havighurst points out an extremely significant life task at this stage is to achieve independence from parents.¹⁸ This is not achieved easily. Often the struggle for independence leads to rebellion against the parents in particular and all authority in general. Both the parents and the adolescent are placed in a situation inherent with stress and strain, and conflict of one sort or another is almost bound to result. The various writers concerned with the psychology

of adolescence discuss this parent-teenage relationship as vital and important. Our review will be chiefly concerned with Josslyn's work, which seems to capture the problem and to deal with it clearly and with great insight.

The adolescent is placed in a position of ambivalence as are his parents. The young person is told to be an adult, yet he is not told how. His parents seem to wish that he assume more of the responsibilities of adulthood and to be more independent of them. Yet when he attempts to do this, he is often reminded that he is still a child and that his parents really know what is best for him. His parents wish him to grow up without the vices that most adults have, and when he makes a mistake he is reminded of his status as a child.¹⁹

On the other hand, no matter how well-meaning the parent is, he sees his child as confused and bewildered and seeks to help him. He wants his child to assume independence yet he fears that without his direction the child will fail in his attempt to achieve maturity. Mixed with these feelings are fears that the child will not live up to the expectations of the parent and thereby bring shame upon the family. In addition, the parents want to see in the child the realization of the hopes and dreams the parents did not achieve during his own life. Thus the parent finds himself in a position of equal ambivalence with his teenage son or daughter by merely looking at the same confused situation from a different point of view.²⁰

The problem is further complicated by the fact that as the child seeks more independence and does not want to be told how to dress, eat, etc., he finds himself less able to cope with the problems of independence than he was in the immediate past because of new social and physical problems that confront him in his new stage of life. Therefore he may turn to his parents out of confusion and become very demanding about the same things regarding which he had previously refused the advice that was offered him.²¹ However, when he does this, two more things are likely to happen. Once the adolescent finds support in his parents he then feels he can abandon their aid and go out on his own again. Unfortunately this is not the only result of turning back to his parents for aid. He now sees himself as having lost the battle to become an adult and this serves as a blow to his own ego. He may resent his dependency all the more for he has lost self confidence and he then protests more vigorously than before to maintain his own self respect. Very likely he will turn on his parents and accuse them of not letting him grow up. If, however, the parents do not respond to the adolescent when he looks to them for advice he may then turn on the parents with the feeling that they expect too much of him.²² As we see the situation through Josslyn's eyes, the parent teenage relationship is filled with conflict at every turn, and the ambivalence experienced by both parties is easily understandable.

There are, of course, many other factors involved in

the adolescent's struggle for independence. Though this brief survey has left much unsaid, the inherent conflicts and the possibilities for rebellion are quite obvious. From this psychological explanation of the adolescent situation, we can readily see why rebellion has been so often characteristic of the period of adolescence and has played such an important part in the literature about this age group.

Though the psychological explanation of the phenomena seems, and probably is, quite sound, nevertheless some recent sociological studies have cast a new light upon the question of rebellion. One study in particular made in Montreal by Elkin and Westly²³ indicates that we should question whether or not adolescent rebellion does occur in all socio-economic groups. The findings of this study, which dealt with the teenage sons and daughters of a rather small group of upper middle class families, indicate that adolescent rebellion may well be a myth, at least in some socio-economic groups. They found continuity rather than discontinuity in the values of parents and children. Rebellion was hardly a factor at all, and the young people were very satisfied to accept the values and the way of life of their parents.

Perhaps the best explanation for the results of this revealing study has been offered by David Reisman in his volume, Faces in the Crowd. He suggests that for the two character types with which he is concerned, namely inner and other-directed individuals, adolescence has different meanings. The inner directed character type is

character type is one who is stabilized by inner values implanted early in life by elders; the other-directed individual finds his source of direction in his contemporaries and their values.

For the inner directed boy it is a time of stress and experimentation, of flights from home and returns to it -- of all the emotional turmoil, which is still connoted by our conventional picture of adolescence. For the other-directed boy, however, adolescence is only marginally a time of discontinuity; it is not noticeably uncomfortable or rebellious.²⁴

Reisman points out that the adjustment of the other-directed individual begins early, even in nursery school. In a sense, then, this person "never experiences adolescence and in another sense never leaves it but carries over into chronological adulthood the anxious concern for others' judgments which the adolescent of an earlier era experienced as a developmental stage."²⁵ Because of this the other-directed teenager has no past which he rebels against. Rather his childhood is blotted out and the individual lives in a contemporary plane constantly under the direction of his contemporaries. Thus, unlike the inner-directed boy, the other directed teenager does not experience discontinuity with his past, his childhood, and most particularly with his parents and their values. Instead, the patterns of his life continue as in earlier years with relative continuity.

The implications of this theory are quite significant. According to Reisman our middle class society is

becoming more and more other-directed²⁶ and therefore we can expect to find less adolescent rebellion as time goes on. The past sociological theories about adolescent rebellion may no longer apply, and we are given cause to wonder if the psychological explanation, such as presented by Josslyn, should not be supplemented with the sociological theories of Reisman. It should also be noted that Kingsley Davis suggests that discontinuity is very slight in upper class families²⁷ and there no doubt is a close connection between this theory and that of Reisman.

3. Adolescent idealism

One of the characteristics most commonly attributed to the adolescent is that of idealism. The teen years are often spoken of as the time for rebellion from the existing order and for an idealistic approach to the world. This rebellion is often considered part of the general rebellion against parents which we have already discussed. The individual at this time becomes concerned about the common man, and about the problems of the world.

Kingsley Davis offers one explanation for this idealism. He states that the older generation takes pragmatic ideals more seriously and is not concerned about the untruth which may be apparent in them. The young, however, have been given ideals by authority but have had little experience with which to test them. Therefore when they see the inconsistencies in the world they rise up in rebellion with little experience to serve as a ballast.²⁸ Davis suggests that the adolescent wants a purpose in society and

has been denied one,²⁹ and even Tillich points to the anxieties caused by meaninglessness and lack of purpose.³⁰ Havighurst indicates his acceptance of this theory and he explains the great altruism of late adolescents in terms of their search for a purpose which would give them status.³¹ For this reason, also, the adolescent enthusiastically participates in discussions concerned with moral and ethical questions.³²

Most authors seem to agree that the adolescents in our society do not have a definite status which gives them cause to search for one in altruistic activities. Other societies, Russia, for example, according to Davis, give its youth a special role, and therefore we do not find the phenomena of idealism or of adolescent rebellion.³³ Likewise in primitive societies status for the young person after puberty is more clearly defined, and there are fewer problems which result.³⁴ However, in our western middle class society, with the long years of schooling standing between physical maturity and adulthood, there is an emptiness and a void which create a feeling of meaninglessness in the teenager. The young person is annoyed with the thought that he will be the "citizen of tomorrow," and he wants to have a job to do "now." He then seeks out a purpose and a goal, a flag which he and his peers might rally around. Because he has been indoctrinated with ideals by authority, and because he may have rebellious feelings relating to his home life, he then rejects to some degree

the status quo and idealizes what the world might be.

In the literature we found very little evidence of any testing of these theories regarding idealism. Jacob, in a study of college youth and their values, discovered that students respect honesty and sincerity but that they are not inclined to censor those that do not.³⁵ Similarly he found that among these college men and women very few recognized the social implications of religion and that their beliefs in God did not seem to diminish their prejudices. Also he found that moral values do not have a very high priority of concern as opposed to "success."³⁶ Thus the only report of an actual study, which came to this author's attention, did not seem to indicate great idealism among the youth of today, despite the theories which we previously discussed.

Because the writings of the sociologists, social psychologists, and the psychoanalysts have been discussed by topics it may be of value to briefly state their general points of view concerning adolescence. The sociologist sees the teenager within the framework of the total social structure. The patterns of society in general and those of his peers and his parents in particular determine his attitudes as well as his actions. He is best understood as a conforming member of a peer group, as a growing individual facing new and specialized life tasks, and as a member of a class of other-directed Americans who accepts the values of the society in which he is seeking a place.

The social psychologist concerns himself with the ego involvements of the teenager and with his search for self identity. He sees the conflicts caused by the lack of status of the adolescent in society. He recognizes, as does the psychoanalyst, that through identification with an admired, older person the teenager is helped to find his own identity. The psychoanalyst provides insights into the ambivalence of the parent-teenage relationship and points to the anxieties which result from this relationship. He also looks upon the peer group as a means for the formulation of restrictions in an acceptable manner which can, in addition, provide the security the adolescent often rejects at home.

4. The adolescent and religion

There is very little literature available in the area of religion and the teenager. The adolescent's attitudes toward religion and his needs are discussed for the most part only in a superficial manner. Likewise, very few studies to test actual theories have been made in recent years. Two of the studies made will be reviewed in this section. On the failure to examine the problems related to the adolescent and religion, Paul Weaver writes the following:

Religion has failed to make anything like a thorough diagnosis of the nature of youth or of the nature of their needs...to translate wise and religious insights into terms that meet youth's psychological needs and temporary idiosyncrasies.³⁷

Very little has been written that would in any way fill the need expressed by Weaver. Writers have touched upon the

problem but only lightly. It is not unreasonable to expect, however, that with the popularity of religion in America today more material will be forthcoming from the ranks of sociology and psychology as well as those of religion itself.

In the opinion of the Franks, the individual can find greater meaning in religion during his adolescent years than at any other time of his life. He desires to know more about the universe and about his role in it. These and other questions of religion and philosophy "at this time of late adolescence may become vital to the young person."³⁸ Loneliness is often helped by a belief in God, and religion can be of great aid in answering the questions raised by the stresses and guilts of the teen years.³⁹

Weaver himself states that the religious needs of the teenager involve a clear outlook on life, ethical clarity and conviction, and emotional sensitivity.⁴⁰ However he realistically states that "youth are less interested and less active in organized religion than in any other major institution of our culture."⁴¹ Harold Jones attributes this lack of interest to the "adolescent revolt which leads to active repudiation of religious concepts and practices."⁴² Jacobs found in his survey that college students express a need for religion, but there seems to be no carry-over. Religion has a ghostly quality on the campus, and God's place is in church, perhaps in the home, but not in business.⁴³ The general opinion seems to be that religion is

not popular among young people despite the needs they have for it. Most authors concerned with the teen years agree that religious institutions play a relatively unimportant part in the lives of adolescents.

As a part of an extensive survey of American teenagers by social scientists at Purdue University, a sizeable amount of material was collected on religious attitudes values, and feelings. This information was evaluated in terms of sex, religion and year in school of the youth. The material itself is far too vast to report in this brief survey, but some of the conclusions of interest are presented below. These were excerpted from an extract of the book The American Teenager which appeared in the periodical, The Jewish Digest.⁴⁴

The typical teenager holds a favorable attitude toward the church and usually agrees with the religious beliefs of his parents. If there is disagreement, the teenager more likely agrees with his mother's attitudes than with his father's.

The average teenager does not think of God as a person but as an omnipotent and omniscient spirit.

He feels that faith serves better than logic in solving life's problems.

He feels that his prayers are sometimes answered.

He believes in a hereafter, and that his place therein will be determined by his conduct on earth,

He feels no one should accept faith without question.

Girls pray and attend church more often than boys.

Forty percent of the girls have been made happy by their religion as compared with 31% of the boys.

As teenagers grow older they feel an increasing need to investigate their own religious beliefs, yet seniors showed more orthodoxy in their beliefs than freshmen.

Twelve percent of the Catholics, 9% of the Protestants and 4% of the Jews attend religious services three or more times a week.

Nineteen percent of the Jews, 13% of the Protestants and 10% of the Catholics state that the more they learn about science the more they doubt their religious beliefs.

Admittedly this brief account does not do justice to the Purdue study, but the above statements do give an idea of the type of material reported by the researchers. We find little that seems to indicate disagreement with commonly accepted beliefs except the "favorable" attitude which the researchers say teenagers express toward religion. Some of the evidence is a bit contradictory and little attempt is made to explain the reactions and feelings of the young people in the light of psychology or sociology. Nevertheless, this is the only recent attempt to understand religious attitudes and beliefs of adolescents.

In 1934 Abraham Franzblau, of the Hebrew Union College conducted a study designed to deal with the following problem:

Do persons who profess certain religious beliefs differ in their responses to standardized character situations such as are included in the character tests used, from persons who do not subscribe to these beliefs.⁴⁵

In addition, Franzblau dealt with the question of whether there is any relationship between the character responses of Jewish children and their degree of familiarity with the facts of Jewish history, the frequency of their observance of Jewish ceremonials, and the strength of their Jewish attachments.⁴⁶

The total population which Franzblau surveyed included 701 children from religious schools and clubs of the Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform Jews in New York City. The average age of the children was 13 years and 2.9 months, and the sex distribution was fairly equal.⁴⁷ A brief summary of the results of the survey follows:

Chronological age, mental age, intelligence quotient, school grade, and acceleration all proved to be negatively related to acceptance of religious beliefs.

Girls tended to accept more religious beliefs than boys.

Acceptance of religious beliefs varies positively with parents' nativity, number of religious ceremonials observed in the home, and regularity of parents' attendance at worship services. It varies negatively with parents' educational or occupational status.

There is a small negative relationship between length of attendance at religious school and the number of beliefs accepted. No relationship exists between knowledge of the various subjects taught in the religious schools investigated and the number of beliefs accepted... children not wholly adjusted as Jews to their environment tended to hold a larger number of beliefs.

There is no relationship between the degree of emotional stability or temperament and the extent to which religious beliefs are accepted.

No relationship of acceptance of beliefs and superior character responses.⁴⁸

The above quoted findings comprised nearly all that proved statistically significant. The basic principle that was tested in the study, namely that the acceptance of traditional religious dogma is creative of superior character, was not supported by the evidence. Other factors such as age, intelligence, adjustment, and ceremonies in the home proved to be more directly related to the acceptance of beliefs, rather than character. These factors, it seems, were of a casual nature and no relationship between character and the acceptance of beliefs seemed to exist.

B. Readings on Religion in America

In preparation for this study, some reading was also done in the area of the sociology of religion in America. The most significant insights were gained from two books, Catholic, Protestant, and Jew, by Will Herberg, and American Judaism by Nathan Glazer. Both authors present their feelings regarding the exchanges that have taken place in the area of religion in America. Their concepts and theories proved very valuable later in our work.

Herberg looks upon the religious community in America as composed of the three great religions, Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish.⁴⁹ He even describes them as the three great branches of the "American Religion."⁵⁰ The great significance of this development in American life is that one achieves identity through belonging to one of the groups these religions represent. One achieves status as

an American through membership in one of these groups.

Herberg places great stress on this concept:

By and large, to be an American today means to be either a Protestant, a Catholic, or a Jew, because all other forms of self-identification and social location are either peripheral and obsolescent.... Not to be a Catholic, a Protestant, or a Jew today is, for increasing numbers of American people, not to be anything, not to have a name.... Unless one is either a Protestant, or a Catholic, or a Jew, one is a "nothing"; to be a "something" to have a name, one must identify oneself to oneself, and be identified by others, as belonging to one or another of the three great religious communities in which the American people are divided.⁵¹

The very essence of identification in America today is through membership in one of these three great religious groups. The immediate corollary of this is, of course, that the concept of marginality which played so great a factor in the lives of Americans two decades ago⁵¹ no longer is of significance. Membership in a religious group today does not place one in a marginal position but rather lack of membership does. Likewise, and most important for our study, membership in a religious group gives security and status in American life.

Herberg presents two basic explanations for the new status religion has achieved in our country. First, due to the other-directed character of the American population there is a great need to belong, to adjust. The religious organization provides an acceptable, and fundamental way of belonging, and meets the individual's need for conformity and sociability which is part of the character

structure of the other directed person.⁵³ Secondly, there is a less sociological explanation and one of a more existential nature. The character of Western Civilization has caused man to live with a sense of insecurity and bewilderment. With the world constantly under the threat of destruction, with each man living with the possibility of violent death, there is a natural seeking for permanence and stability in life, for meaning and security. Religion has always represented these factors to man, and still represents them in the twentieth century. Thus it is not surprising to find a turning to religious institutions for security and for the answers to basic questions of the universe.⁵⁴

One other significant point which Herberg makes is also of great value to our study. He says that basically the religion of America, whatever else it may be, is non-theological. Ethics, the good life, and social reform play a more vital role than any specific creed.⁵⁵ Thus the young are not given an approach to religion which helps them acquire a sound well thought out theology, but rather emphasis is placed on ethics and morals. Rather than God, the object of devotion of the religion of America is religion itself. This is what is meant by the statement that Americans believe in religion.⁵⁶ It is a faith in faith; belief is more important than the object of that belief. This is an underlying unity which binds the three religions together, and we shall see what effect this has on the group we studied.

There are, of course, other ideas which Herberg presents, but those discussed here seem most important for our work.

Nathan Glazer in his American Judaism arrives at conclusions similar to those of Herberg in many areas. He, too, points to the "statistical" religious revival in America. In Jewish quarters an increase in Jewish schools, Jewish books, and attendance at Jewish services are some indications of this. In general Glazer says that today American Jewry "knows less but does more."⁵⁸ To go along with the institutional strength there has been no growth of an intellectual basis for Judaism. The great change, rather, has been a sociological one of growth of institutions and of affiliation with Jewish causes.

Like Herberg, Glazer sees the growth of the synagogue and other Jewish institutions in terms of their meeting the social needs of the individual and the communal needs of the entire community. The Jew finds in the synagogue a place to belong, and the various affiliated groups such as the men's clubs and youth groups provide a social outlet for the individual. Religious services seem to be least important, and the role of the rabbi, according to Glazer, is more of an ambassador to the non-Jews than a spiritual leader to his own group. All activities flourish in the modern synagogue except the religious services.⁵⁹

Glazer stresses that faith in faith is the most important "belief" in Judaism, and here too he views the scene as does Herberg. Beyond this belief, Judaism has

little theological to offer them. As Glazer puts it:

American Jews, if they believe in anything, believe in the instrumental efficacy of religion, as do, of course, most American Catholics and Protestants. Judaism is good for the Jew. It keeps him mentally healthy and adjusted, and it keeps the Jewish people together. The conceptions that it is good in itself and that it embodies valuable and unique truths are foreign to the great majority of Jews in this country.⁶⁰

Glazer has very little regard for the "religious" aspect of today's Judaism. He says that the American Jew does not have any religious experiences to speak of, and that "strong religious feeling is looked upon with suspicion in the Jewish community and often considered a harbinger of conversion to Christianity."⁶¹ Beyond the faith in faith real religious feeling is not to be found in the American Jewish community.

The most amazing fact about the Jews in America, according to Glazer, is that they have not stopped being Jews. It is not that they continue to be defined as Jews but rather that they still want to be Jews; that they choose to be Jews. He states that the refusal of the Jew to become a non-Jew is the most real explanation of the flourishing of Jewish institutions. It is not because of what Judaism offers spiritually or intellectually that is the attraction. Rather it is just that a Jew wants to remain a Jew, to be known as a Jew, and to be affiliated with other Jews. There is a commitment on the part of the American Jew to remain a Jew. He manifests this commitment chiefly through his affiliation with Jewish organizations and his support of Jewish causes.

Most important is that he wants his children to be educated as Jews, and therefore we see a great rise in Jewish education in America. This review of Glazer's work has been brief, but we have touched upon those aspects of his thinking that seem of greatest importance to the study undertaken here.

C. Hypotheses resulting from readings

The following hypotheses developed from the readings discussed above as well as from personal observation. They were used as a basis for the testing that was to follow. Though the evidence acquired did not support all of them they did provide direction with regard to the areas which we were to study.

Adolescents acquire values through a) the peer group, b) identification with older persons, and c) participation in dramatic ceremony. The dynamics of the peer group and identification are of special value in the adolescent's search for self identity.

The parent-child relationship among middle and upper-middle class families is one of continuity rather than discontinuity of values.

The adolescent is idealistic about the world. He is concerned, even distressed by social problems.

The Jewish adolescent finds security and status in membership in the Jewish group. He is not concerned about anti-Semitism, and does not manifest traits of marginality.

The adolescent is engaged in an honest struggle to understand God and the universe.

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

A. Sample

The population used for this study was composed of young people who were in attendance at National and Regional camp sessions of the National Federation of Temple Youth during the summer of 1957. The average age of the teenagers was approximately 15½ years. The families from which they came are for the most part middle class. All geographical areas of the country were represented in fairly equal proportion. The sex distribution was likewise nearly equal. Of the 822 teenagers who responded to the questionnaire, 54% were girls and 46% boys. Of the 36 who were interviewed, 19 were girls and 17 boys.

Approximately 200 of the 822 total number of teenagers who took the questionnaire and 26 of the 36 interview respondents attended the National Leadership Institutes of the NFTY. As congregations are allowed to send only one or two young people from their youth groups to these institutes, the teenagers were distinguished for their leadership qualities. Most of them were ready to enter their senior year in high school and were expected to return home to assume leadership of their local groups. Though it is not true in every case, the greater number of these young people at the National Institutes are mature socially and very possibly above average in intelligence.

The remaining approximately 622 young people who

replied to the questionnaire and 10 of the interview respondents attended regional camps also sponsored by the NFTY. There is very little selection involved in attendance at the regional camps. Some of the teenagers at these camps were leaders, others were rank and file members. It should be noted and noted carefully, that these young people did not come to the camps solely to further their Jewish education. Rather they came for a variety of reasons ranging from a desire to meet other Jewish young people from nearby areas to merely the wish to go away with their friends to a place which had been reported as "being a lot of fun." Many came for social reasons, some because their congregations gave them a partial or complete scholarship and they had nothing better to do with their time, others because they sincerely wanted to be leaders of their groups and to learn more about Judaism. At the regional camps the greatest number do not fit into the latter category, and that must be understood. It is the definite opinion of this writer that most of the young people at the national camps and nearly all at the regional sessions are typical Reform Jewish adolescents with the same basic needs, feelings, attitudes, and desires, as their friends they left back home. In terms of their reaction to the world about them as teenagers, for the greater part they are not untypical.

A special control group composed of 59 adolescents who were members of confirmation classes in two mid-western congregations and who had not been to the camps also responded to the questionnaire. These results were not analyzed

for this thesis.

B.. The Interview

The interview schedule was the first instrument which was prepared. The interview was an attempt to gain information in depth on certain basic issues hypothesized from readings and general contacts with teenagers. The interview schedule, which is to be found in the appendix, was composed of five pages of questions used to guide the interviews, and six statements presented to the young people on 3x5 cards to which they were asked to react. The questions were grouped into five major categories, and then subdivided within each category. The outline of the areas covered follows:

- I You and the Peer Group
 - A. Popularity
 - B. Importance of the Peer Group
 - C. General climate of the Institute
- II You and Your Family
 - A. Conflict or Congeneality at home
 - B. Continuity of values
 - C. Concept of Parents
- III Your Conception of Yourself, Your Needs and Values
 - A. Inner Feelings
 - B. Concept of self as seen by others
 - C. Source of values
 - D. Feelings of Jewishness
 - E. Personal goals
- IV You and the Society in Which You Live
 - A. Social idealism and concern
 - B. The Rabbi
 - C. Religion
- V You and the Universe
 - A. Belief in God and prayer
 - B. Meaning and purpose of life
 - C. Science

The interview was administered to the 36 young people by the same person, the author. All of the questions were not asked directly, of course. They merely served as a guide to the interviewer and as a means to aid the teenager in verbalizing his feelings. The goal was to have the young person express himself as fully as possible in each area, and stress was not placed on answering specific questions and on commenting on specific items. The weakness to this system was that each respondent did not comment on exactly the same problems in every case, and therefore issues which later proved to be crucial did not always show full response. However, the freedom which the teenager had from not being besieged by "third degree type questioning" did result in intimate and revealing responses.

The interview itself lasted from one and a half to two hours. Usually it was begun in the morning and completed in the afternoon, and the break always occurred at a point of major division. The interviews were conducted out of doors in a very informal manner and in an extremely relaxed atmosphere. The good rapport which the interviewer had established with the young people before the interview aided greatly as in practically no cases was there any resistance on the part of the young people to speak freely. In addition, the interviewer had memorized the questions which helped establish the informality desired. During the first few interviews the interviewer found himself asking too many direct questions, and the responses became more intimate as

he learned to use a less direct approach. Often long pauses in conversation would occur. The dividends of this approach in securing real feelings and attitudes was very great. Many times the young people would comment that they had never spoken so openly before, and it was obvious in many cases that the interview itself had the effect of a good catharsis.

The interviewer attempted to write down as nearly verbatim as possible the responses of the teenagers. By sitting along side the young person rather than in a face to face position the writing that was necessary seemed not to be disturbing. The evening of the day in which the interview was made, or at the latest one or two days later, the material was typed in the first person. The 36 interviews can be found in the appendix to this thesis.

C. The Questionnaire

The questionnaire, which is also found in the appendix, was composed of 50 statements to which the young people were asked to check one of five reactions: "strong agreement," "agreement," "don't know," "disagreement," and "strong disagreement." In addition a second section contained three questions which required a response of a sentence or two, and third section with biographical material. These questionnaires were administered at camps in Michigan, Wisconsin, California, Texas, Pennsylvania, and Iowa. The author as well as other rabbis and youth leaders administered

the questionnaires.

The questionnaires required between twenty and thirty minutes to complete. The young people were asked to remain at their tables after a lunch on one of the last days of the camp session. In some cases boys were kept one day and girls the next only because of crowded conditions. The teenagers were asked to be silent during the administration of the questionnaires, and the response to this request was excellent. There was no collaboration on answers. In the remarks preceding passing out the questionnaires honesty and sincerity was stressed, as well as the anonymity of the answers. When a young person did not understand a statement he was instructed to check the "don't know" category. The teenagers approached the testing with a great deal of seriousness, and it is the opinion of all who administered the material that it was received and answered in a climate of quietness and freedom, and that the general conditions were optimal for relaxed and free expression.

D. Analysis of data

The material found in the interviews was utilized in two ways: it provided information for profiles of a small number of the young people, and along with the material in the questionnaires it was used to provide a general picture of various areas of attitudes and feelings to which the teenagers responded.

It was necessary to quantify the material in the interviews as much as possible to give the general picture

of the teenager that was of interest to us. This was done through several steps. After the interviews had been studied thoroughly, a scale was developed which provided specific categories into which most of the responses could be placed. The response of a particular teenager on a particular issue was interpreted to fit one of three or four responses which occurred most often. Of course, there was always the danger of losing the exact spirit of each response, but this could not be helped. Responses other than those most frequently appearing were placed in an "other" category. The responses of each teenager were then indicated on a coded mimeographed sheet containing all possible responses to each issue. These in turn were transferred to a large chart which indicated the response of each teenager to each question or problem. A photostat of this chart and a copy of the individual scale sheet are found in the appendix. The scale analysis containing the total responses from the interviews to each issue is found also in the appendix.

The questionnaires were tabulated by the Univac Division of the Remington Rand Corporation. Only Section I was tabulated; the tabulations of sections II and III were left for a future time. As a part of the mechanics of tabulation a special card was punched with the responses of each of the 822 teenagers. Correlation of these responses on significant issues likewise must be set aside for the future. A questionnaire with totals also appears in the appendix.

CHAPTER III

DATA AND INTERPRETATION

Feelings of Jewishness - Data

The statement "If it were possible for Jews to have a choice, the vast majority would choose to be reborn as Jews," found 666 teenagers responding in agreement; 34 in disagreement.

The teenagers who were interviewed were asked whether they thought there were any non-religious differences between Jews and non-Jews. Of the 30 who answered, 15 responded with comments indicating these differences were pro-Jewish in nature, 9 stated that there were no differences except as found in individuals, and 6 gave answers indicating the differences were anti-Jewish in nature.

These same young people were also asked: "Do you think Gentiles are anti-Semitic?" Twenty-two teenagers answered that there is no, or practically no, anti-Semitism today in America. Twelve said they felt there was a moderate amount. Only one young person indicated that there is a great deal of anti-Jewish feeling today.

The question was also asked: "Do you think that the anti-Semitism that does exist is the fault of the Jews?" Five of the teenagers stated that anti-Semitism is mostly the fault of the Jews. Ten felt that sometimes Jews are the cause of it; 8 said that anti-Semitism resulted from other causes independent of the Jews themselves.

A question involving attitudes toward Israel was asked to secure information regarding the feelings of

Jewishness of the teenagers. They were asked: "Would you like to visit Israel. Of 33 answering, 21 enthusiastically replied they would "love to visit Israel." Four teenagers said they would like to but with no more interest than visiting any other foreign country might evoke. Eight said they would not like to visit Israel.

The following statement appeared in the questionnaire: "The establishment of the State of Israel has made many American Jews feel more insecure about their own status as Americans." 124 teenagers agreed; 561 disagreed.

Another measuring rod in the area of feelings of Jewishness may be found in the response to the interview question: Do you think of your parents as good Jews?" Nineteen said that their parents were good Jews in all ways; 11 indicated they felt their parents were good Jews in at least some ways. Five answered that in their own opinion their parents were not good Jews.

The area of interdating and relationships with non-Jews has bearing on the general category of feelings of Jewishness. The following statements in the questionnaire focused on this problem:

"I would have no objections to going out alone on a date with a non-Jew." 594 agreed; 152 disagreed.

"I rarely go to houseparties attended jointly by Jews and non-Jews." 266 agreed; 505 disagreed.

"Most Christian adults I know would not discourage their children from dating Jews." 420 agreed; 191 disagreed.

"Dating the popular non-Jewish boy or girl would be considered an achievement by many Jewish teenagers." 265 agreed; 427 disagreed.

"I feel more at ease when I am with Jews than when I am with non-Jews." 428 agreed; 315 disagreed.

The findings of the questionnaire in this area were supplemented by those of the interview. The question, "How do you feel about interdating?" was answered by twelve of the young people interviewed. (The small response is not due to lack of interest regarding the issue but rather because the question was not posed to most of the teenagers who were interviewed.) Five of the youths said that in their opinion interdating is perfectly all right, 3 said it was not wrong to some degree, and 4 said it should be avoided altogether.

The following two questions may also shed some light on feelings of Jewishness on the part of the young people:

"People who convert to Judaism do not do so because of an actual desire to follow the Jewish faith." 82 agreed; 541 disagreed.

"It would be a good thing if Judaism were to try and win converts." 111 agreed; 641 disagreed.

Feelings of Jewishness - Interpretation

A study of the findings of the questionnaire and interview in the area of feelings of Jewishness leads us to conclude that the teenagers clearly consider themselves members of the Jewish group. They seem to feel secure in their membership and also enthusiastic about it. Most important, however, is the indication that there is no doubt in their minds that they are Jews, and remarkably no dissatisfaction with this status.

Kurt Lewin, wrote an essay in 1940 to which we previously referred, entitled "Bringing Up the Jewish Child;" it is now a part of his volume Resolving Social Conflicts. In it he writes of the problem of "marginality," and of its effect upon the Jew in America. He defines marginal individuals as "people who are neither here nor there, standing 'between' the groups."⁶² Among the outgrowths of this type of existence are psychological problems such as uncertainty, instability, and often self-hate. Lewin writes that the young American Jew growing up in the early forties found himself in a marginal position, somehow straddling a line between the minority group and the majority group. He vividly illustrates the uncertainty of belonging to the Jewish group when he presents a portion of a speech given by a college student whom he describes as "keen, beautiful, successful, and therefore on the whole in a particularly desirable position."⁶³ A portion of this illustration is given below.

You may have noticed that I am the middle speaker. It's a very appropriate place for me, I think, not because I strike a mean between them but rather because I am on the fence. I haven't quite made up my mind as to what I think or why I think it. And in that I am typical of the Jewish people.

Look at me. I'm neither here nor there. As a Jewess I don't amount to much. I come to services when I have to; I've been told that mine is a precious heritage, but I haven't the slightest idea what it is....My education has been exclusively Christian. My virtues are the Christian virtues -- at least my conceptions are. Occasionally, I discover something in me that is characteristically Jewish -- and I am surprised, almost estranged from myself. I know I'm Jewish because I've been told so, because I have Jewish friends. Aside from that it doesn't mean very much to me.

I'm always conscious that I am Jewish whether I hide it or try to impress it upon others. So what am I? According to Jews, I'm American. According to Americans, I'm Jewish. And I'm wrong, utterly wrong, in being that way.⁶⁴

Lewin looked upon this example not as unique, but typical. To him, the uncertainty of belonging to the Jewish group caused by the marginality of most American Jews could naturally lead only to confusion and doubt regarding one's Jewishness. It was this doubt that caused this girl to ask, "What am I?"

This problem of group identification does not seem to be the problem of the American Jewish teenagers that we studied. The uncertainty of the teenager nearly twenty years ago does not seem to be reflected in the responses of our young people. There is, as we shall see, a bit of sensitivity about their Jewishness in the remarks of a few, but generally this is surely not the case. Rather we find a genuine feeling of belonging, an enthusiasm for Judaism, Jews

and Jewish institutions, and little or no concern about tensions with non-Jews. With the teenagers of Lewin's generation serving as a contrast, let us examine more closely the findings of our survey that we might see the changes in attitudes that have taken place. Perhaps then the reasons for these changes will become more easily understood.

We have noted that 95% of the teenagers who answered the questionnaire agreed with the statement that "If it were possible for Jews to have a choice, the vast majority would choose to be reborn as Jews." Only 10 of the young people, out of 700 that answered, strongly disagreed with the statement, and only 34 disagreed at all. Here we find perhaps the most overwhelming evidence of a willingness to remain Jews. Certainly this willingness involves both a feeling of belonging to the Jewish group and a general satisfaction with what this membership implies. Nathan Glazer, in his American Judaism, points out that this refusal to stop being Jews is one of the most significant factors in American Jewish life today. American Jews, he says, are "ready to be Jews," and are "willing to be inducted into Jewish life."⁶⁵ The strong feeling of belonging and the "positive" attitude toward being Jewish is expressed time and again by the teenagers. As we look upon each section of questioning in this area of Jewish feelings, we shall find this same attitude with great consistency.

The number of young people who were interviewed that felt that the differences of a non-religious nature between Jews and non-Jews favored Jews, was twice as great as those who felt the differences were unfavorable or anti-Jewish in nature. The most commonly expressed positive attitude was that of the unity among Jews and the closeness of their ties was the biggest difference. Other "favorable" responses that were given included such feelings as the Jews are a higher class people, more aggressive, smarter, have a better home life, and higher moral standards, and are harder workers. It is apparent, of course, that many of these comments fit the favorable stereotypes of Jews in our society. Yet these feelings seemed to be sincerely felt by the teenagers. A girl from a small southern community expressed a typical attitude of those who believed that the differences between Jews and non-Jews were pro-Jewish. She said:

The biggest difference is the outlook on life. I think Jews will get more out of life... it is because they put more into it. He feels he has to. Most Jews are outstanding people.¹⁴

In this answer one sees no confusion in belonging to the Jewish group, but a strong feeling of identification with it. The positive nature of the stereotypes of Jews which these young people have accepted is indication of their feelings.

Six of the young people did say the differences they

saw between Jews and non-Jews were unfavorable to the Jews. It is interesting to note that all six came from the Southern part of the country, mostly from a congregation known for its "classical" Reform Jewish orientation. Their main objection to Jews was that Jews stick together too much and don't mix, the exact reversal of the most frequently given "pro-Jewish" response. One boy pleaded: "If only they would mix more; I hope I'm not thought of as a Jew."^{3*} Yet only 6 of 30 who responded to the question on differences expressed any feeling of this sort.

We found that nine of the young people said there was no real difference between Jews and non-Jews except on the individual level. They rejected the negative and positive stereotypes which the interviewer suggested, and insisted that differences were strictly a matter of the individual.

There also seemed to be some ambiguity within the answers of a few of the young people. One girl said that "the biggest differences between Jews and non-Jews is family background and home life. Jews are brought up better. We live well, we dress well."^{20*} Yet, in response to a question on anti-Semitism she declared: "It is from loud, boistrous, 'Jewy' types that always stick their big feet in....There are some 'Jewy' ones everywhere."^{26*} We can see working in some of the respondents the effect of acceptance of both the positive and negative myths. The few

*refers to interview number

individuals in which this was the case deserve, perhaps, separate consideration. The factor of significance, however, with regard to the teenagers' concept of differences between themselves and non-Jews is that these differences in their eyes are for the most part favorable to the Jews. We therefore find another real indication of their feelings of Jewishness and their identification and acceptance of the Jewish group to which they belong.

We stated previously that to the question, "Do you think Gentiles are anti-Semitic?" 22 or 63% of the young people interviewed responded that there is very little or no anti-Semitism in the United States today. Thirty-four percent or 12 teenagers said that there was some anti-Jewish feeling and only one young person said there was a great deal of anti-Semitism in America. These answers may be the most significant of all we received in the area of Jewish feeling. The general feeling that they are an accepted part of American life, as Jews, is perhaps the chief difference between the orientation of these young people and those of Lewin's generation. The implications of this change of orientation will be discussed at the close of this chapter. The two comments which follow, typical of today's Jewish teenagers, would have been anything but typical of the youth about which Lewin wrote:

My friends aren't anti-Semitic. As a matter of fact they are quite interested in Jewish holidays. 36*

From my experience Gentiles aren't anti-Semitic

I always wear my star around my neck.
The kids at school are all so wonderful,
all are very curious about Judaism. 33*

At this point we can make one fairly safe generalization. Namely, that the lack of concern of anti-Semitism on the part of the young people does indicate a feeling of security as Jews. We shall later discuss the implications of this security as related to the feelings of the youth 20 years ago.

When the teenagers were asked where the fault of anti-Semitism lies, only five said it was mostly due to the Jews themselves as compared to 18 who said the Jews had little or nothing to do with it at all. Rarely could the young people recall any experience of anti-Semitism in their own lives. A few said they had been called dirty Jews as children once or twice, but they did not attribute any responsibility for this to the Jews themselves.

A few young people did indicate some sensitivity toward their Jewishness in crediting the Jews with the fault of anti-Semitism, but they were clearly in the minority. One girl indicated resentment to a magazine article.

...made us seem Orthodox...it made us all seem millionaires. So much is put on the fact that a person is Jewish if he did something. Newspapers play it up. It is bad for us. We shouldn't see the name Jewish so often. 33*

Generally the feeling most often expressed when placing the blame on Jews for anti-Semitism refers back to the tendency of Jews to "stick-together." Two additional responses which

reflect sensitivity follow:

Jews do bring it about. If they wouldn't make such a fuss over things. They cause such a confusion. 12*

In Miami there are many loud Jews there. Gentile people don't like it. Jewish people will make remarks sometimes in front of non-Jews. Comedians like Myron Cohen and Mikey Katz make jokes about the 'goyim.' They laugh but must be hurt down inside. 31*

Despite these examples we must remember that by far the majority of young people said the blame for anti-Semitism was not the Jews, and their expressions indicated no sensitivity about their own Jewishness. They sense little or no anti-Semitism and they feel Jews are not responsible for what anti-Jewish feeling there is. All this is testimony to their feelings of security as Jews in America.

As we note the pattern develop, we find the same secure feelings of Jewishness reflected in the teenagers' responses regarding Israel. Twenty-one young people, or 62%, told the interviewer that they wanted to visit Israel very much, often using phrase "I'd love to." The following comments are typical of this group:

Israel is the goal of many people. I've never been there but I consider it my homeland. I consider America home too, but Israel is my country whether I've been there or not. 11*

I'd love to go to Israel....I think what Israel did was wonderful. It made me feel so proud. 10*

The way things have been built up there, it fascinates me. 23*

Answers such as these, which came from most of the young people reflect again a wholehearted sense of belongingness

to the Jewish group, an almost conscious casting in of one's lot with other Jews the world over. "It made me feel so proud," are words which mirror enthusiasm and identification.

We see that about 12% said that they would like to visit Israel, but no more than any new country. Their reaction indicated no particular loyalty to Israel, or even interest in it, beyond their normal interest in any other foreign country. A typical answer of this group was "I like to travel and to visit anywhere." 25*

Reactions almost as strong as those who showed enthusiasm for visiting Israel were expressed by the 24% who did not want to go. Again, it is significant to point out that 7 out of the 8 answering in this way came from the Southern part of the country. Several of these respondents felt that the establishment of the State had brought a good deal of trouble to the American Jews. One teenager interviewed about 6 months after the 1956 Sinai campaign of Israel reported that she had been worried that Israel might enter into the war to a point where it might endanger the Jew in America. 4* Several of the comments of those who definitely did not want to visit Israel are included below:

Israel has little meaning to me. I don't think it is the place for Reform Jews to go. 21*

I've been a little mad because a Jew is automatically Israel. I would like to see Jews a religion and not a race. All Israel has done was not right, 25*

I'm definitely against Zionism. But I would like to see the Jewish culture there. We

are American's First, and then Jews. American Jews do not have to be so responsible for Israel. They should be more independent. 20*

It must be observed that these answers are surely not new arguments but reflect some of the thinking of the anti-Zionists in America in the past. In one teenagers words can be found "Americans First," the title of an organization which supported his views a few decades ago. However, these opinions came from less than one quarter of the teenagers, and all but one from youth of congregations with an anti-Israel orientation. Earnest as were these negative reactions, the 62% who enthusiastically indicated desire to visit Israel reflect the pattern of positive identification with Jewish causes.

These feelings are again supported by the questionnaire in the related statement to which 82% disagreed, namely, that "the establishment of the State of Israel has made many American Jews feel more insecure about their own status as Americans." The large disagreement with this statement shows that a feeling of identification with Jews and their causes does not make one feel less an American or less secure as an American. As we shall discuss later, it is the very belonging to these causes that makes one fully identified as an American. At this point, however, it is sufficient to note that the young people do not feel insecure as Americans because they see a Jewish interest before the public eye.

In our findings we saw that well over half of the

teenagers think of their parents as good Jews in all ways and 86% hold this view of their parents as good Jews in at least some ways. Only 14% thought their parents were not good Jews. One might reason that the pride which the young people took in the Jewishness of their parents indicates their own attachment to the Jewish group. In addition those who were wholly or partly critical of the Judaism of their parents in their responses may actually be showing the same identification. Their shame of their parents' Judaism also points to their own feelings of belongingness. This point is made more clear when we see some of the comments of these teenagers.

My parents aren't good Jews. Their Judaism is all put on. I don't think they feel it in their hearts. Unless someone feels religion the way I do, you are not really a good Jew. You can't take religion for granted. 13*

There is a difference (between my folks and me) in how we look at religion. I plan to build my whole life around religion. My folks aren't too good as Jews. We used to have a Christmas tree. 14*

They are not good Jews; there should be more religion in the home. 27*

Thus in the rejection of their parents' concept of Jewishness, they affirm their own strong identification with Judaism.

Those who thought of their parents as good Jews had this same positive feeling toward Judaism. We can see this from their comments.

My parents are good Jews. They try to keep God in the house. They are charitable and help others. 9*

My parents are good Jews. My mother is very religious, though she doesn't participate in Sisterhood activities she believes deeply. My father is on the Temple Board. 17*

My parents are good Jews. They go to Temple often. 19*

We are less concerned here with the teenagers' opinion of their parents' religious lives, though we see for the most part it is favorable, but rather our attention is drawn to another very important point. No matter what view of their parents' Judaism the teenagers seem to hold, the feelings that were expressed indicate a strong positive acceptance of Jewishness on their part. This of course, is the matter under our investigation now.

We questioned the young people in both the questionnaire and the interview with regard to their feelings on inter-dating. The significance of our finding was not so much their direct response in itself but rather the attitudes which seem to underly their response. First we should point out that the problem of interdating is not a new subject to the teenagers. It is the topic of a great many of their discussions and it is a source of disagreement, sometimes severe, with their parents. It would be safe to say that all of the young people had given the issue much thought before they made any comments to the interviewer or answered any of the questions on the questionnaire. We shall see, as well, how these attitudes can shed some light upon their inner feelings of Jewishness.

Two statements on the questionnaire provided us with

a basic attitude of the young people regarding interdating in general. Seventy-eight percent answering agreed with the statement "I would have no objections to going out alone on a date with a non-Jew." Sixty-five percent disagreed that "I rarely go to house parties attended jointly by Jews and non-Jews." We see that the young people feel for the most part that interdating is all right, and almost as large a group do mingle socially with non-Jews.

We found more feelings expressed by the young people interviewed on this question. Sixty-six percent of these teenagers felt that interdating was acceptable if not over done. Here are a few typical comments from this group.

There is nothing wrong with interdating in high school. I'm against intermarriage for the many problems it adds. 34*

We need social life and I would rather go with Jewish boys but they are not always around. 12*

It's okay if you don't date just Gentile girls. 13*

Fear of intermarriage seems to be the reason the teenagers gave most against interdating. The feeling against intermarriage seemed as prevalent among those favoring interdating as those opposed to it. We noted the one comment above that "I'm against intermarriage." 34* Similarly we heard from a girl who lives in a small community "I feel more secure about the future now....I was afraid I'd fall in love with some non-Jew." 14* She stated she often dated non-Jewish boys but did not like to. Thus both groups, those supporting interdating and those opposed to it seem to be equally aware of the problems of intermarriage.

This fear of intermarriage is most significant to us. The fact that most of the young people have no objections to interdating proves nothing regarding their feeling of Jewishness in itself. However, coupled with the awareness that they worry about intermarriage does indicate they want to remain a part of the Jewish group. If they were marginal individuals it is highly likely, as Lewin points out, that they might attempt to slip away from the Jewish group entirely, and assimilate as so many American Jews attempted to do with varying degrees of success a couple of decades ago. Rather the fear of these teenagers is of losing their Jewishness! Their fear is of intermarriage, they want to remain Jews, have Jewish spouses, Jewish children, and Jewish homes. It might be assumed that if they were not secure as Jews they would most probably be far less concerned about intermarriage, and might even look to it as a goal. Also, if they were not secure they would harbor the feeling that dating a popular non Jew would be an achievement for it would give them status in their peer group. However, 62% disagreed that dating such a popular non-Jew is an accomplishment, a response we could hardly expect from teenagers who were so insecure in their own Jewishness that they needed this feeling of breaking away. In a way this last finding is remarkable. Even if the young people realized all of the problems of intermarriage one might still expect them to feel that dating the popular non-Jewish boy or girl is something to be proud of. Yet the teenagers did not accept this

position. One can only conclude that they possess a remarkable sense of security as Jews among their classmates, the majority of whom are non-Jews.

Before our review of the implications of this section, one last finding should be mentioned. Eighty-seven percent of the young people who answered the questionnaire disagreed with the statement that people who convert to Judaism do not do so because of an actual desire to follow the Jewish faith. Perhaps we can with some safety assume that they consider their Jewishness something of great intrinsic value, not just the object of conversion for convenience. If they were less secure in their position as Jews not being attractive to converts unless marriage or other circumstances motivated it. This too, serves to strengthen our conviction that our young people are secure in their belonging to the Jewish group.

The above survey and analysis of the teenagers we studied in the area of the feelings of Jewishness has left us with the rather concrete impression that their feelings of identification with the Jewish group are strong and enthusiastic. Yet we began this discussion with the remarks of Kurt Lewin who wrote of the Jewish adolescent two decades ago. We saw that this adolescent was quite insecure in his feelings of Jewishness, and questioned his very identity as a Jew. The most significant question we must ask is, of course, why the change? In twenty years the typical American Jewish teenager has become secure in

his Jewishness when he was insecure before; he accepts being a Jew and expresses little uncertainty or instability about his status. He reflects no inner conflicts in this regard. A change has occurred. Why? As this writer looks upon the question, there are several links to the chain which may contain an answer. We realize that all such attempts to answer involve speculation, but nevertheless certain patterns seem evident.

In the last 20 years the status of the Jew in America has changed. A history of anti-Semitism will tell us that two decades ago the American Jew was far less secure both economically and socially than he is today. It has been theorized that Hitler himself strengthened the Jewish position in this country, for Hitler hated the Jews and World War II saw Americans hating Hitler and his cause. The position of the Jew advanced after the War to the point that the number of colleges, industries, and organizations that discriminate openly against Jews decreases with each year. The Jew finds representation in most civic projects and charitable and religious causes that involve the total community. His status in American now is undoubtedly more secure than it has ever been before.

It is perhaps because of this turn of events in the fate of the Jew in this country that we find the situation of which Will Herberg writes when he points out that being a Jew, like being a Catholic or Protestant, is the only way of locating oneself in American society. Thus the decrease

of anti-Semitism along with a general return to religion for reasons which we mentioned in a later chapter, has caused the Jew to find a place in American life along with members of the other two faiths. Herberg makes his point very clear in this statement which we quote again:

By and large to be an American today means to be either a Protestant, a Catholic, or a Jew, because all other forms of self-identification and social location are peripheral and obsolescent.⁶⁶

This is the main point. The Jew, while he is still a member of a minority group, is no longer a marginal person in the sense that he was 20 years ago. He would be more marginal, Herberg seems to be saying, if he were not a member of the Jewish group, or one of the other two predominant faiths. As a member of one of the three religious communities in this country he has status, a defined position, and is no longer walking the thin line between a minority and majority culture.

Lewin states that the problem of the marginal man is that he is uncertain of his belongingness to a particular group. This is no longer the case. The young Jew today is certain he is a Jew. The adolescent of 20 years ago said: According to Jews, I'm American. According to Americans, I'm Jewish." Today, according to both Jews and Americans the young American Jew is a Jew! The uncertainty is a thing of the past.

Lewin stated that there was another factor which

served to increase the uncertainty. That is, the Jew was uncertain about the way he belonged to the Jewish group. This, too, is no longer the case. The Jew today, though he may be theologically immature, as we shall see, yet is bound to Judaism through affiliation to the Synagogue, a most acceptable, even required affiliation, through ritual which he increasingly accepts, and through a desire to raise Jewish children.

Let us look at Lewin's definition of the marginal Jew in America.

The marginal Jew, however, does not as a rule feel sufficiently rooted in either of these groups to be clear and confident about his views and about his personal relations to either side. He is therefore compelled to remain in a rather vague and uncertain but permanent inner conflict. He is the "eternal adolescent." He shows the same unhappiness and lack of adjustment.⁶⁷

This is no longer the definition of the young American Jew. He does not see himself as straddling a fence, but rather as a member of a fully acceptable religious group, the membership of which has given him a "name" in American society.

It is natural then, with this orientation of security and acceptance as part of the American community as a Jew, that our teenagers reflect a great feeling of Jewishness and belonging to the Jewish group. We saw that they would be reborn Jews; that the differences between Jews and non-Jews are in their eyes favorable to the Jews; that they sense little or no anti-Semitism, and what there is

is surely not the fault of the Jews; that they associate themselves with Jewish causes such as Israel; that they show pride when their parents are good Jews, shame when they are not; and that in marriage they want to perpetuate their Judaism. All this is part of their world, for they are now an integral part of American life because, not in spite of, their Judaism. They do not ask "So what am I?" They know. They are Jews.

Ritual - Data

Three statements were included in the questionnaire which touched upon the teenagers concept of ritual as compared with that of their parents.

"When I have a family of my own I shall try and observe more ceremonials than my parents do now." 433 agreed; 256 disagreed.

"When I have my own home I will take the ceremonies of Judaism more seriously than do my parents." 340 agreed; 285 disagreed.

"As an adult I will attend religious services more frequently than do my parents." 338 agreed; 196 disagreed.

The teenagers interviewed were asked if they would have more ceremonies in their homes than their parents have. Sixteen teenagers said they would have more, 17 said at least the same amount. There were no answers indicating they would have less ritual, though 3 confessed they did not know.

Of the ritual the young people have in their homes at the present, 10 said their families observe in some way most of the major holidays and have religious symbols in the home, 22 said they had Sabbath candles and a family Seder, and 4 said they had very little or no ritual at all.

The questionnaire contained the statement; "No one should observe religious ceremonies unless he sincerely and wholeheartedly believes in their value." 434 agreed and 333 disagreed.

Two other statements in the area of religious observance were placed in the questionnaire.

"You can't be religious unless you belong to a church or a temple." 83 agreed; 685 disagreed.

"Today Reform Judaism needs less stress on ceremonies and more stress on the social justice preached by the prophets." 317 agreed; 258 disagreed.

Of the 21 teenagers interviewed who were asked their feelings about the dramatic ceremonies at camp, all responded that they were extremely impressed with them.

Three statements were included in the questionnaire to check feelings regarding the ceremony of confirmation.

"The ceremony of confirmation has not made a significant difference in my feelings about Judaism." 201 agreed; 493 disagreed.

"The ceremony of confirmation touched me deeply." 501 agreed; 173 disagreed.

"The experience of the confirmation class really helped the rabbi understand me and my feelings." 374 agreed; 222 disagreed.

Twenty one of the young people interviewed express their feelings on their own confirmation. Eleven felt their experience was important and inspiring; 3 thought it nice but not very meaningful, and 6 said it meant nothing at all.

Ritual - Interpretation

We have discussed in some detail the strong sense of belonging to the Jewish group which the young people we studied reflected in their interviews and questionnaires. An attempt also has been made to understand their feelings in the light of the social and economic change of status of the Jew in America in the past two decades. This section will deal with a closely associated aspect of our study, namely the attitudes of our young people toward ritual and ceremony, some of the tangible aspects of Judaism. We shall see how their allegiance to ritual and ceremony in their homes is but another reflection of their identification with Judaism.

As we pointed out there was some diversity in the amount of ritual the young people observed in their own homes. However over 90% of those interviewed do come from homes where the Sabbath is celebrated at least with candles, often with the Kiddish, and the family Seder is a yearly, regular event. Ten young people out of 36 interviewed grew up in homes where ritual objects and some observance of nearly all of the major holidays are a part of family life.

The three statements in the questionnaires which checked the teenagers' desire for more or less ritual as compared with the ceremonies in his parents' home and his own parents' feelings toward them indicate rather clearly that the young people are not satisfied with what their parents observe. Sixty-three percent want to observe more cere-

monies than their parents do now; 55% will take the ceremonies of Judaism more seriously than their parents; and 63% will attend religious services more frequently than do their parents.

The results of these questions indicate a definite feeling on the part of the majority that the ritual observance of their parents is not enough for them. The same attitude was noticed in the results of the interviews. Almost half of the teenagers wanted more ritual and the others at least the same amount as they now have. We must not forget that 90% of the young people do come from homes with some ritual observance. No teenager expressed the wish to have less ritual than his parents.

We found that enthusiasm for ritual was expressed not only by those who said they wanted more, but also by those who were satisfied with the ritual in their home at present. Here are several comments of those who wished more ritual:

Once we didn't know it was Chanukah until it was over. Yes, I'll have more. You know you are Jewish and you should be proud of it. The child should know about Judaism. 26*

We have no ceremonies now, though we did when I was younger. I'll have some. I think tradition is an important part of everyone's life. 27*

We have candles for Chanukah and a Seder. I'd like to light the candles on Shabbos. I'd like to observe more ceremonies. I don't know why, I can't figure it out. Mother sometimes speaks Yiddish. I wish I could understand it. I think I'm missing something. 34*

The responses of those who were satisfied with the amount of ritual in their parents' homes contain the same desire for ceremonies.

We observe all the holidays and the Sabbath.
I like the symbols. 10*

We light the Friday night candles, observe Chanukah, have a Seder, and after services friends come over. We have a few more rituals than most Reform Jews....I'll have about the same amount. 17*

We have all the ceremonies. My grandfather is a Levite. It isn't possible for me to have as many traditions as he has but I'd sure like to. 22*

The only expressed feelings opposed to ritual came from those young people who had no ritual in their homes. Of the four teenagers whose parents observe no ceremonies, only two are satisfied not to have any as well. One of these commented that at present there is no tradition in his home and he doubts that he would have more. He said, however, "if my wife wants it, it will be okay." 7* The second stated: "we have no ceremonies or Jewish customs and I don't know if I'd want more. I've never missed any. I don't feel I need ceremonies." 24*

However, despite these few remarks, the vast majority of young people want more ritual and ceremony, and they speak of it as an important part of their religion. We can see to some degree how important the ritual is as a tangible evidence of Jewish affiliation from the somewhat surprising response to another statement in the questionnaire. Forty-four percent of the teenagers disagreed that "no one

should observe religious ceremonies unless he sincerely and wholeheartedly believes in their value." When one considers the view point of Reform Judaism which has served as the orientation for these young people the surprise is all the greater, for Reform accepts tradition chiefly on the basis of what is meaningful. When this large a group indicates meaning is not an essential part of the acceptance of ceremony, we must assume that ceremony plays another role besides that of making Judaism meaningful. That other role is tangible identification with the Jewish group. In a previous chapter we noted in detail not only how much the young people wish to belong to Judaism, but that their belonging provides them with security. A generation ago, more ritual would not have been desired. In fact we know only too well the efforts the young Jews of two decades ago made to hide their Jewishness, for often assimilation and self-hate were characteristics of their generation. But today the situation has changed. The desire is for identification with Judaism, not for lack of association with it. Therefore we might expect young people to cling to ceremonies which identify them as Jews whether or not these rituals have much religious meaning. As one of the girls interviewed said proudly, "I always wear my star around my neck; the kids at school are all so wonderful, all are very curious about Judaism." Ritual and ceremony are tangible, visible ways of belonging to the Jewish group, thus they meet the need of these young people for they help them to

belong.

The reaction to the statement "Today Reform Judaism needs less stress on ceremonies and more stress on the social justice preached by the prophets" indicates the same as the above. Here 45% disagreed. We would have expected far more to agree than the 55% that did. Again, examining Reform Judaism, we know that the orientation throughout the years has been "prophetic" in nature. What is more, these young people have been subjected to a variety of social justice programs and projects, not only at the camps where the study was made for the most part, but also in local youth group activities. In fact the National Federation of Temple Youth has encouraged with great success programs of a social justice nature for several years. Yet, despite all this, nearly half of the young people refuse to accept a statement which places less stress on ceremony and more on social justice. Ritual, it seems, means a great deal to these young people. It tells them they are Jews, and tells other people, too. It helps give them a secure feeling of being Jews, which they need, for in so doing they become, as we have learned from Herberg, Americans with a name and status. These young people want to feel Jewish. Ritual helps them in this regard. As we quoted before from the comments of one of the girls: I'll have more (ritual). You know you are Jewish and you should be proud of it."26 To know they are Jewish is the desire of our teenagers. Ritual and ceremonies seem to be aids in helping them find this identity.

We do not neglect the slight majority who responded in one case with agreement that one should not observe meaningless ritual and in the other that we need less stress on ritual and more on social justice. These would have been the expected answers. This significant statistic involves not those who agreed, but the surprisingly large number that disagreed. Because of the past orientation of these young people we expected quite different responses. That the responses were otherwise points to the significant matter; namely, that ritual plays a more important and different role in the lives of the teenagers than we have thought in the past.

In a related area, we did find that the young people agreed rather fully with the popular notion that one can be religious without belonging to a church or temple. Eighty-nine percent of the teenagers disagreed with the converse of this proposition. The significance of the response is difficult to evaluate for what the youth meant by "religious" might have been prayer, or it might have been identification with Judaism or with religion in general. It is obvious only that whatever they meant by "religious," does not have to be associated with temples and churches.

One of our original hypotheses was that teenagers in general are greatly affected by dramatic ceremony. This hypothesis developed chiefly through observation of the young people at the NFTY camps and noting how impressed they were, often to the point of weeping, by their participation

in some of the special "rites," conducted at the camp sessions. Among these are friendship circles including songs and prayers, and creative evening services often using candles for dramatic effects. The popularity of the havdalah service at these camps, forgotten by Reform for many decades, may be explained at least in part by the dramatic manner in which the brightly burning candle, representative of the Sabbath, is extinguished.

All of the teenagers who were asked about their reactions to these dramatic services responded with enthusiasm about their great effectiveness. Here are some of their comments:

The havdalah service was most memorable to me. 2* (10 months after her camp experience)

The late night religious services are the most impressive. They are very beautiful and awesome. 17*

I'll remember the services the longest. They bring you closer to God. 14*

One of the boys said he was thinking of being a rabbi after one of the religious services. 15*

I cried the other night at services. It was dark, the stars were out. I felt so close to God when I stared at the stars. I was almost talking to God. 33*

I think the religious services were the most important to me. 16*

There are two explanations for the profound effect of these services and ceremonies on the young people. The first involves the nature of the teenagers themselves. As discussed in Chapter I, the teen years are a time for in-

crease in sensitivity generally, with regard to nature and ceremony in particular. Ceremonies which might otherwise have some effect on any age group are heightened in effectiveness by the emotional make-up of teenagers. Also, the very nature of the services which are held in the out-of-doors, in the midst of nature, often in the view of a lake, or a sunset, can only add to the impact upon the adolescent. Thus, when the teenager is in the "mood" for the service, which is almost always the case because of the time and the setting of the services, the effect is quite remarkable.

In addition to this factor which is implicit in the nature of the teenager, there is another involved in the nature of the services themselves which make for the intense response. The services at the NFTY camps are termed "creative." By this is meant that within the loose framework of a Jewish service the young people are free to create the service as they desire it. They choose a theme which is of importance to them, and they are given freedom in its development. They pray in terms of their own experiences. They often bring into the services poems, songs, and original prayers which speak of their needs as well as of their hopes and aspirations. The effect upon them, therefore, is not due only to the use of dramatic gimmicks such as candles, nor only to the beauty of the natural settings of the services. The services are understood by the young people because they have created them. Their worship reflects their own thoughts, not those of

their parents or of past generations. We find a response dictated by the teenagers' own sensitivity to drama and nature and heightened by the relevant and meaningful themes embodied in the services.

It is important that we do not confuse the attitude of the teenagers toward Jewish ritual with their feelings about the creative dramatic services which inspire them so much at camp. It is in no way assumed that their enthusiasm for the dramatic ceremonies, even for havdalah, is motivated necessarily by the same needs which cause them to desire more ceremonies of Judaism. It may be, however, that there is some relationship. The candle, for instance, which seems to have a great emotional appeal to the teenager is an integral part of many Jewish rituals. Thus their teenage desire for the dramatic may in part explain their enthusiasm for ceremony, havdalah being the best example. Many young people bring the havdalah service, back with them and observe it at local and regional youth meetings which take place on Saturday evening. Some have even said they perform it in their homes for their little brothers and sisters. However, the teenagers' enthusiasm for ceremony in the home is chiefly motivated by their general desire to be identified with Judaism and the Jewish group.

The ceremony of confirmation, with which the young people are intimately familiar, falls into another category. It is a Jewish service, to be sure, yet it is one which involves a great deal of rehearsal and preparation which often

becomes extremely tedious. At the same time the size of confirmation classes in many congregations has made it impossible for rabbis to know their students well. Often, among members of confirmation classes, it has become "fashionable" not to enjoy the experience and to express the attitude that salvation will come only at its conclusion.

In spite of these facts, however, we found that by far the majority of teenagers did seem to enjoy their experience and indicated that it had been worthwhile. Seventy-one percent of the teenagers seemed to feel that the ceremony had made a significant difference in their feelings about Judaism, and 74% said the ceremony had touched them deeply. Thus the common thought that confirmation is not appreciated by the teenagers was rejected by nearly 3/4 of the young people. Though only 63% felt that the experience of confirmation helped their rabbi understand them does not detract from their favorable feeling toward the ceremony as a whole. It may indicate a dissatisfaction with either the classes or with the rabbi's ability to know the students well.

Over half of the teenagers interviewed felt that the confirmation experience was important and inspiring. Their expressions of approval were enthusiastic as can be seen from the following comments:

Confirmation was one of the most awe inspiring moments of my life. 32*

Confirmation meant an awful lot to me. It was a big thing. It made me able to be a part of Judaism...a wonderful experience. 14*

Confirmation settled me down. It gave me a new outlook on life and inspired me very much. 15*

Confirmation meant confirming my faith as a Jew and I felt it important. I could have learned more but I did learn a lot. My general feeling was that it was a good experience. 30*

It is significant to note that several of the teenagers looked upon the experience as more closely identifying them with Judaism. As we noticed one boy said "it made me able to be a part of Judaism."

When we examine the comments of those that felt disappointed in their confirmation, we see that it is not that the ceremony stood for nothing, but that they felt disappointed and let down because of the way it was handled.

The confirmation was just a speech handed to me that didn't mean anything. It was all wrong. We just went through the service. 26*

Confirmation to me wasn't a really moving thing. It was a ceremony. A sign that I had finished religious school. 22*

Confirmation meant very little to me, perhaps because of the course for it was just a review. It had very little to do with the Ten Commandments. 29*

The young people, then, wanted the confirmation to have meaning. They were disappointed that either the nature of the service, the conduct of the ceremony, or the size of the class prevented any really deep feeling of confirming of faith. They wanted it to say, "now you are a Jew." Their

frustration came because it did not speak to them in the intimate terms they desired.

However most of the teenagers were satisfied, and did find value and meaning in the ceremony. They had taken another step in their Jewish lives and had become more closely associated with Judaism. As we have seen this is what they seek.

We should point out that the enthusiasm for confirmation was greater among the young people who responded to the questionnaire than among those who responded to the interview. It may be that interview respondents spoke more freely of their true feelings and the questionnaire response may have been more superficial. On this issue alone did the only significant difference appear in the findings of the two research instruments.

In review of this section, we have seen that our teenagers express a very favorable attitude toward ritual and ceremony. They do so, as we have tried to indicate, not only because of the religious value of the ceremony, but rather because ritual presents tangible evidence to themselves and to others that they are Jews. It gives them a feeling of Jewishness and of belonging to the Jewish group which, as we have seen, is indeed important to them. Belief in the value of ritual is not all that matters. It helps them say, "you know you are Jewish." 26* For this reason they are unsatisfied with the amount of ritual their parents have. They want more for they want to feel Jewish.

Likewise we noted their satisfaction with confirmation when it causes them to feel more a part of Judaism. Their dissatisfaction when it fails to do this, appears to be the fault of large classes and the impersonal manner in which the service is conducted and prepared.

Also, the increased sensitivity of these young people is something which should not be overlooked. Knowledge of this can, if properly employed, make the ritual and ceremonies of Judaism which are so important to the teenagers, even more exciting and attractive.

The Rabbi - Data

The teenagers interviewed were asked: "What do you think of rabbis?" Nine young people said that rabbis are wonderful, and 13 responded in a less enthusiastic but nevertheless appreciative manner.

Three statements appeared in the questionnaire regarding the attitude of teenagers toward rabbis:

"If rabbis earned larger salaries, a good many more young men would apply for admission to the seminaries." 124 agreed; 513 disagreed.

"I would discuss personal problems with a rabbi, even though such problems might have nothing to do with Temple or with Judaism." 494 agreed; 224 disagreed.

"While non-Jews often turn to the minister of their faith for advice and counsel, Jews do not think of their rabbi as someone they would turn to in that way." 206 agreed; 532 disagreed.

The teenagers interviewed were asked whether the rabbi as a person should act or be different from other people. Twenty-one answered that the rabbi should be just like anyone else, one said he should ^{fr}restrain from certain activities, and another that he should be a model for his congregation. ✓

To the question "What do you think is the rabbi's most important job?" there were a variety of answers. Eight said the rabbi's chief function was as a counselor, 4 said a teacher, 2 a preacher, 2 a representative to non-Jews, 5 a spiritual leader, 2 a religious functionary.

The teenagers also answered the question: "What do you think is the rabbi's greatest problem?" Four said it was in knowing the members of his congregation, and 3 said that the rabbi has too many bosses. Several said the greatest problem is the disinterest of the congregants.

The statement "The rabbi should not try to influence public opinion on controversial issues like better housing or school desegregation," found 142 agreeing and 602 disagreeing.

The Rabbi - Interpretation

One aspect of this study involved an attempt to understand the attitudes of the young people toward the religious leaders of their own congregations and toward rabbis in general. For the most part the only contact which the teenagers have had has been with Reform rabbis so any conclusions are related to the Reform rabbinate. Several questions on the interview and a few in the questionnaire do shed some light on the teenagers' attitudes toward rabbis in general, toward them as people, and on their feelings regarding the most important responsibilities of the rabbi today.

To the question "What do you think of rabbis?" all the teenagers answered with feelings of genuine appreciation of rabbis, some responding without reservation and others with a slight note of criticism. Generally the feeling was quite positive as can be seen from the remarks below:

Rabbis are the most wonderful people. They are the only persons you can talk with. 14*

Rabbis are very nice. 17*

I might like to be a rabbi. If I were a rabbi I'd be closer to God. 20*

A few spoke with enthusiasm but with a little criticism:

Some rabbis are doing their job. He must be approachable. Some rabbis act as if they are chosen by God. You should respect a rabbi for his learning because that's all he's got over you. He should be a friend and a teacher, not a stopover on the way to God. 13*

I have utmost respect for any rabbi because of his knowledge. Some are nice and some aren't. 16*

It's wonderful that the rabbis can joke around rather than just be your father. They are also your friend. Rabbis are father to those that need fathers. 24*

In these comments which are quite typical, the youth speak with enthusiasm about rabbis. One important element however seems to run through each of them. The young people desire the rabbis to be their friends, to be close to them, to be able to talk to them. This is their basis for approval. Very often reference was made by the young people to the rabbis at the camp, comparing their own rabbis with them saying that they wish their rabbis could "joke around" as the rabbis at camp did. At the same time this ability to be friendly on the part of some of the rabbis does not reduce the esteem in which they are held by the young people but seems only to increase it.

A part of being close to the teenagers involves in some ways being like them. Nearly all of the young people said that as human beings the rabbis should act like anyone else. The question used to motivate their responses in this regard was: "Do you think rabbis should wear shorts at camp?" Here are some of the answers:

Rabbis are just human and they should act that way. 3*

He must work on the level of the people whom he serves. Therefore it is okay for him to wear shorts. 8*

I like rabbis in general...they are not different than we are, though. 18*

They are human as anyone else. 29*

Only one respondent indicated that rabbis hurt their dignity if they wear shorts and play baseball. It seems obvious, that the teenagers wish for the rabbi to be close to them, for in their minds he is as "human" as they are. Any attempt of a rabbi to appear different or "better" than others is wrong in the teenagers' eyes.

The seeking for a close relationship with the rabbi is also indicated in the young people's response to the issue of what is the most important job of the rabbi. The largest single answer, which came from better than a third of the respondents was "counselor!" Other tasks which were considered important were spiritual leadership and teaching. Areas where there is little or no personal contact such as preaching, and being a religious functionary and a representative to the non-Jews were the choice of only a small group. Whether they said the rabbi should be a teacher or a counselor the idea of personal contact seemed to be in the minds of most of the youth. Here are a few responses:

Personal guidance is the most important. 14*

The rabbi's task is not to lead a service but to comfort and guide. 24*

He should comfort the family and act as a counselor. 29*

A rabbi must give his people something to believe in he is a teacher of his own group. 23*

The rabbi has to teach religion to other people and to the members of his own congregation. 30*

A number of young people pronounced the chief task of the rabbi in general, spiritual terms charging him with the

duty of "bringing religion to the people." Some of the phrases used were "making the meaning of his religion come through," "promote spiritual things," "give his feeling to the people and inspire them to religion." One boy said the rabbi "should make people feel God," and he added, "and he should stay out of politics." Perhaps this is somewhat of an assimilation of the Christian concept of the ministers role, for rarely do we Jews speak of the rabbi as duty-bound to "get the message across." Nevertheless, in this regard, too, the rabbi is concerned with the people.

The spread of answers to the question about the most important job of a rabbi was very great, but the same emphasis seemed to dominate. Other young people said the rabbi's chief task was "to get along with kids," "to help people lead a good life," "to make people satisfied that they are Jews," and "to win his congregation." Though there were a variety of answers the majority fell into the categories of counseling and teaching, that is, having direct contact with the congregation. "Get along with," "help," "counsel," "teach," "inspire," were the words which appeared among the comments again and again. To be close to their rabbis, to know them, and to be inspired by them seems to be what the young people want.

Two statements on the questionnaire only add to the notion we already have regarding the close relationship which the teenagers desire between themselves and their rabbis. Sixty-eight percent agreed that they would discuss personal

problems with their rabbi whether or not they had to do with the temple or Judaism, and 72% disagreed that Jews do not think of their rabbi as someone they would turn to for advice and counsel. Overwhelmingly they look to their rabbis as counselors, they want to turn to them for advice. The young people who were personally questioned seemed to be in agreement with those who responded to the questionnaire as both placed much stress on counseling, and personal contacts.

We found a wide variety of responses to the question of the rabbi's greatest problem. Four answered that the greatest problem was the difficulty in really knowing the people. Such answers as "they should let their hair down," or "I don't think they should be put on a pedestal," were not uncommon. In these comments we can see again the concern on the part of the teenagers for being close to their rabbis.

Three teenagers answered that the rabbi's greatest problem was having too many bosses. A few were concerned with practical problems of religious school, attendance at services and getting people to come to the rabbi. One indicated concern with the tension between the three movements in Judaism as the greatest problem. Others mentioned more general problems such as "keeping the people interested in the Temple and religion," and "people not giving religion a chance."

We have seen how much the teenagers want to be close

to their rabbis, how they look to them as counselors to whom they would willingly turn. The rabbis they praise are those that the young people can relate to, the rabbis they criticize are those with whom they are unable to establish this all important relationship. To be "approachable" or to be able "to joke around," is what they wish for in their rabbis.

It is only logical that we ask why these young people seek such a close relationship with their spiritual leaders. There may be two significant reasons for this. First of all though not necessarily most important, the rabbi is a symbol of Judaism. We remember that our teenagers seek to belong to the Jewish group and to be identified with Judaism. As a representative of the Jewish religion the rabbi commands attention and an allegiance by his very role. If our young people were trying to escape from their religion and attempting not to be associated with things Jewish, even to hide their identity as Jews, they would not seek the companionship of the symbol of that from which they were escaping. Rather they seek to be identified with Judaism, and the rabbi and his friendship is a symbol of this belonging.

However, the nature of the teenager to a great extent dictates the earnestness in the rabbi-teenager relationship. In Chapter I we pointed out that the adolescent years were a time when the young person, in his process of growing up emotionally, identifies himself with older, admired persons.

The following statement from Josselyn points up this need rather clearly:

He needs people upon whom he can be dependent if he becomes frightened, but who will not demand continued dependency when he feels more assured and adequate in an independent role.⁶⁸

As he seeks to be independent the teenager needs to establish a relationship with a person by whom he will feel completely accepted and who will help him deal with the many problems and conflicts of the teen years. He needs a guardian who will offer protection and counsel and at the same time who can provide direction for his individual growth. The adolescent seeks out a person who can serve these various needs and at the same time one who possesses many of the character traits he himself wishes to develop. There can be little doubt that the young rabbis and student rabbis are the object of attachments from teenagers of both sexes. Often these relationships go beyond friendship to the point of "crushes," on the part of the young person. We have found that even with older rabbis there is a very strong attachment that develops between the young people and these men who often are several times the age of the teenager.

Certainly these same relationships between the teenager and the understanding rabbi can and do occur in the home communities. The teenager wants to seek them out because of his dependent needs in time of stress or anxiety, which surely are not infrequent to the teen years. In addition he seeks someone whom he can be like and who can help him define his own goals. This identification goes even across

sex lines, for in recent years we have found a number of teenage girls who, after an experience at a NFTY camp, express the desire to become rabbis themselves. Many times one could trace these desires back to their own admiration of a young rabbi who represents to them a goal in life.

We must, however, return to the first point we made. Because the rabbi is admired by the young people in the first place by virtue of being the representative of Judaism the identification to which we refer is possible. That the young people felt this way about their rabbis 20 years ago is to be doubted as then their feelings about ritual, or about being identified as Jews were quite different than today. But with the change of Jewish status in their eyes, the normal make-up of the teenager which leads him to identify with the older, admired person, brings about the desire for this close relationship with the rabbi both at home and in the camp situation.

There are of course dangers implicit in these relationships which we point out briefly here. If handled in the proper manner, the relationship between the rabbi and the teenager can be an extremely valuable experience. There are two dangers, however. One is that the rabbi becomes frightened by the relationship and attempts to break it off because he doesn't understand it. This, of course, can discourage a teenager who really needs adult help, from forming such relationships again. He then goes out alone to try to solve problems for which he may not be adequately equipped.

The second danger is that the rabbi finds himself using the affection for his own neurotic needs. This, unhappily, is the case too often, for we have seen rabbis even compete in a rather undignified manner for the affections of the teenagers. When the goal of the relationship becomes only that of fulfilling the personal needs of the rabbi, though the teenager may be helped at first, in the end he suffers by not being given freedom when the time for that freedom has properly arrived. The rabbi can be very valuable to the teenager, but extreme caution and good judgment must be used that the end result be a better adjusted young adult.

In our attempt to explain the findings in this area of our survey, emphasis has been placed on the desire of the young people for a close relationship with their rabbis. Both the position of the rabbi as a representative of Judaism, and his available position as an adult whom the youth can seek out in time of trouble has led the teenagers to desire a warm relationship with their spiritual leaders. If the rabbi is aware of his position and of the relationships that can develop, his usefulness as a counselor, teacher, and spiritual leader, will be greatly increased.

Religion, Theology, and View of Life - Data

A. Religion

1. Religion in general

Thirty-three of the teenagers interviewed responded to the question "Do you think religion has done anything to make the world better?" Of these, twenty-eight spoke of religion as having been of great importance to the world, three indicated that it was of some importance, and two that religion has itself engendered many of the world's problems.

Those interviewed were also questioned on their opinion of the religious revival in America. Of the 21 who responded 7 said there was a definite revival, 4 that there was only somewhat of a revival, and 10 felt that no revival existed. Thus slightly over half felt that at least some revival was occurring.

In response to questioning regarding the relationship of science and religion 23 of 24 who responded felt that science can never disprove or invalidate religion, and one must always turn to religion for answers to basic questions.

2. Judaism as a Religion

In checking the young people's feelings toward Judaism as a worthwhile religion for today, the following statement was presented to them on the questionnaire: "It is very difficult to keep up with the times and still endorse the ideas and teachings of Judaism." With this state-

ment 625 disagreed and 128 agreed, with 272 disagreeing strongly. With the statement, "We Jews are not justified in preserving Judaism unless we live up to our mission as teachers of ethical monotheism to the world," 301 disagreed and 310 agreed.

B. Theology

1. Belief in God

The area of theology was opened to those teenagers interviewed with the question: "Do you think most people believe in God?" Thirty responded directly to this question, all giving affirmative replies. Five felt that everyone believes in God. Only two others said they did not believe in God themselves. Regarding the importance of the belief in God to the young people, the questionnaire contained these statements: "Eventually science will give us the answers to the secrets of life and the universe so that people will tend to give up their belief in God. 49 agreed; 692 disagreed.

"You can make sense out of the world without having to include the idea of a power greater than man." 181 agreed; 517 disagreed.

2. Personal concept of God

Thirty-five of the teenagers interviewed responded to the question: "What is your belief about God." Categorized as accurately as possible, the answers fell into these areas: Seventeen indicated a belief in a God who was all knowing, and personal; 7 indicated belief in a God who was the guiding power of the universe; 2 said that God is our conscience;

1 said that God is man-created; 8 gave other answers.

The same young people were questioned as to when they felt close to God. Eight said a beautiful natural scene gave them the closest feeling to God; 11 said friendship circles and dramatic religious services. One boy said he thought God was above the pulpit when he went to services as a child.

The questionnaire contained the following statements relating to the concept of God maintained by the young people.

"I have rarely felt a closeness to God." 209 agreed; 557 disagreed.

"God will ultimately judge everything we do." 469 agreed; 172 disagreed.

"A human life is hardly a concern of God's." 41 agreed; 687 disagreed.

3. Concept of Prayer

The interviewees were questioned about their concept of prayer. Thirty-four answered the question "Do you think God hears and answers prayers?" In their responses, 5 stated they believed that God hears and answers all prayers, 17 said He answers only worthy prayers, and 8 felt that prayers are only for the good of man, that God doesn't hear. Four gave other answers.

Two statements on the questionnaire dealt with attitudes toward prayer:

"Young people pray with more sincerity than their

elders." 98 agreed and 438 disagreed.

"If I had to express a preference, I would say that prayers which inspire one to help make this a better and more just world are more important than those prayers in which we look to God for guidance and strength in our personal lives." 363 agreed. 288 disagreed.

C. The meaning of life

The teenagers interviewed were asked if they thought man had any purpose in living. Eight said that each man has a definite purpose preordained by God, 13 that all men have the purpose to improve the world, and two said that there is no purpose in life. Nine gave other answers.

The young people were asked for their explanation of evil. The example given them was that of a tornado that kills innocent people. Of 32 who responded to this question, 18 felt that all evil is a part of God's plan, for He knows best; 7 said evil is due to that area of nature with which God does not interfere, and 2 felt it was due entirely to man's inadequacies. Five gave other answers.

Of the 16 who responded to the interview question of reward and punishment, 5 felt evil men are punished by God, 5 that evil itself is its own punishment, and 3 that there is no punishment for the wicked. Three gave other answers.

In questioning the interviewees of their concept of the moral nature of man, 8 seemed to feel that man is basically evil, 5 that he is basically good, and 1 that his nature is determined by the will of the individual.

The young people were asked what happens after death, Eight felt that there would be some kind of a spiritual existence, 4 that we live on in memories of loved ones, 3 that death is the final end. Of the 14 other answers 12 indicated confusion and uncertainty on this concept of life after death, and they admitted that they did not know though they often thought about it. Most of these said they would like to think some kind of existence was waiting for them but couldn't honestly believe this. Two indicated a belief in reincarnation.

When asked if you have to be insane to commit suicide, 5 young people said that only men who are crazy would take their own lives, 16 said one might commit suicide if he had many problems and was depressed. One felt a man might be rational in taking his life and one other said a man might do so from temptation.

The questionnaire contained some statements in this area of meaning of life and death.

"One would have to be insane before he could commit suicide." 288 agreed; 449 disagreed.

"Teenagers rarely think about dying." 116 agreed; 593 disagreed.

"I have rarely thought about what happens to a person after he dies." 174 agreed; 618 disagreed.

Religion, Theology and View of Life - Interpretation

A. Religion

One of the theses which Will Herberg presents in his volume, Protestant, Catholic, Jew seems well substantiated by the findings of our study. Herberg as discussed in Chapter I, points out that Americans "believe in religion."⁶⁹ By this he seems to say that the object of the faith of the people of this country is religion itself. It is a kind of "faith in faith." He goes on to say:

The American believes that religion is something very important for the community; he also believes that "faith," or what we may call religiosity, is a kind of "miracle drug" that can cure all the ailments of the spirit. It is not faith in anything that is so powerful, just faith, the "magic of believing."⁷⁰

Nathan Glazer, as we also discussed in Chapter I, makes a very similar point. The response of our teenagers seems to indicate their acceptance of these attitudes toward religion. We noticed that 28 or 35 young people spoke of religion as of extreme and vital importance to the world. Their personal comments are even more revealing.

Religion gives trust to men and makes life worthwhile. 6*

If you feel you have religion it is a good feeling. 10*

While these comments are typical and in essence express the feelings of these young people, the words of one boy seem to best express the attitude of the 28 who showed much enthusiasm for religion in general. He said of religion that "it gives us something to believe in." 25*

In the quest for security of which Herberg as well as

the other social scientists of our time so often speak, the teenagers seem to have found solid foundation and stability in the institution of religion. Like the family, as Herberg points out, religion is an enduring elemental institution of mankind. "The search for meaning and security in what is basic and unchanging, rather than in the fluctuating fortunes of social or political activity, is one of the major factors in the upswing of religion among the American people today. 71* When we find a girl from the South saying, "I plan to build my whole life around religion," 14* we can see how the teenagers swept along in the surge of the American people back to the religious institution, also find a security there amid the chaos and confusion of the world in which they are seeking a place. As another girl put it:

Religion gives people something to live for and understand. It gives people a common interest and a common belief, a sense of security. For young people it gives a certain group with which to be friendly. 26*

There is little doubt that much of the high valuation of religion and the strong devotion to it on the part of our teenagers is explained in these words, "a sense of security."

However, another factor is hinted at in this last quotation. "A certain group with which to be friendly" is important to the teenager. We noted in Chapter I the strong need on the part of youth to belong, to be a part of the gang. This need to belong plays a part in the teenager's motivation to be affiliated formally with religion. Membership in the local groups of the NFTY, which has grown so much in recent

years, indicates as Herberg says "the social necessity of 'belonging' and today the contest of 'belonging' is increasingly the religious community."⁷² This does not indicate any lack of sincerity in the affiliation with religious institutions on the part of these teenagers, but rather a reflection of the "need to belong," and for a "certain group with which to be friendly."

Herberg makes one other observation in his attempt to understand the "religious revival" of our times in this country. He points to Riesman's analysis of the changing character structure of the American people as an important factor. The other-directedness of Americans, their concern for acceptance, for conformity, for belongingness, has led them, Herberg asserts, to identify with the religious community.⁷³ Our teenagers show this same other-directedness. The need to belong, to be part of the gang, or as one boy put it "most important is to be popular," 6* is the typical concern of these youth. We also saw this same other directedness in their reaction to the question "What do you think others like most about you?" Their smile, their willingness to make friends, to "joke around" rated highest. These are the characteristics of the other-directed person. Our teenagers, in their quest to be popular, have found some real security in joining up with their friends in religious organizations geared to making each member feel a part of group. Identification with religious institutions gives the sense of belonging which these teenagers demand.

The teenagers' response indicating over 95% feel that science can never disprove or invalidate religion also points to their devotion to religion. Had this study been made a decade ago, the response might have been different, but today the teenagers' overwhelming acceptance of religion, at least in its institutionalized form, seems to override any doubts science might have placed in their minds. Of course, we should fully expect the response we found, for science is no longer taught as a discipline opposed to religion. Rather the acceptance of religion in America is fashionable even for the scientist. So often we read the statements of the most noted men of science who endorse religion and faith as the hope of our times. Herberg points to the religious enthusiasm of the residents of Oak Ridge Tennessee, the community devoted to work with Atomic energy. It should also be remembered that the brand of religion with which our teenagers have come in contact has been one which has endorsed science fully and enthusiastically.⁷⁴ We even find in the Reform liturgy a prayer which reads: "O Lord, open our eyes that we may see and welcome all truth, whether shining from the annals of ancient revelations or reaching us through the seers of our own time."⁷⁵

One other observation is in place in this discussion of our teenagers enthusiasms for religion. We found that they seem to reject the idea that there is a religious revival. A few made reference to the Billy Graham type of revival, but most when asked directly about a revival said

there was none, or at best only a slight revival. Though 33% did feel there was a definite revival we may safely conclude that the teenager looks upon the upsurge in religion, which to the social scientist may seem obvious, as an expected and accepted part of his life. There is nothing unusual about it. It is there. Religion is an important part of life. These same teenagers did feel they wanted more tradition and attendance at services than their parents as we have seen, yet they do not recognize this as a revival. Perhaps it is that they are not consciously aware of their keen interest in religion.

The attitude of the teenagers toward Judaism as a religion seems to be in consonance with their general acceptance of religion. Their strong disagreement with the thought that it is difficult to keep up with the times and still endorse the teachings of Judaism shows their devotion to Judaism in particular as well as to religion in general. The 82% who expressed their disagreement seemed to be pointing to the same thing as the interviewees who felt science in no way disproves religion. Namely, they accept religion as a part of their lives. It cannot be out of harmony with "the times," for it is part of their times. They have devotion and loyalty to religion as much as they have to America, or to democracy, or to education. In their minds there is no conflict with the events of the present and their respect for the religion into which they were born. Both are accepted as a part of life.

The response to the statement "We Jews are not justified in preserving Judaism unless we live up to our mission as teachers of ethical monotheism to the world," as we have seen was near equally divided. We might consider this reaction in the light of our comments on a previous question which indicates the willingness of these young people to be reborn as Jews. As we pointed out, Nathan Glazer in his work, American Judaism, writes that "the most religious reality among American Jews" is that they "have not stopped being Jews."⁷⁶ Rather, as he says, they choose to be Jews. But he goes on to say that it is not loyalty to any set of beliefs nor to even a particular and special way of life, that motivates this loyalty to being Jews. Rather it is due partly to explainable sociological forces and partly to less easily explainable "religious" factors that maintain this strong commitment on the part of the American Jew to remain a Jew. Thus we may accept Herberg's doctrine, that the Jew needs to be a Jew in order to establish his identity in a country of Catholics, Protestants, and Jews. The devotion of these teenagers to Judaism is not to a set of ideas but to being Jews, interested in Jewish institutions and causes. Therefore we can understand how such a large number might conceive of perpetuating Judaism with little concern for what is being perpetuated. That is, Judaism can be justified in its existence without worry of its special mission, which surely is more doctrine than anything else. As we go on to examine the theology of

our teenagers, we shall see many inconsistencies which might not arise if their religious loyalty was motivated solely, or even considerably, by acceptance of a set of philosophic beliefs. Rather we conclude here, with Herberg and Glazer, that their religious loyalties can be explained in sociological terms to a great extent. Their search for identity, for security, for a feeling of belongingness is that which motivates their enthusiasm for religion in general and Judaism in particular.

B. Theology

Though our teenagers' responses to matters of religion in general seem to fit into the theses of Herberg and Glazer, in their beliefs in theology and in God in particular, our findings do not entirely agree with their theories. Herberg writes that "American religion is non-theological."⁷⁷ While it may be that the emphasis of churches and synagogues is toward the activism of which he speaks, nevertheless the strong, positive answers regarding beliefs in and even experiences of God which the youth profess need to be understood.

Thirty of 32 young people interviewed said that all or most people believe in God. While this data may not be an exact indication of their own personal beliefs it does have value as a suggestion of their own feelings. During the course of the 36 interviews only two young people stated they themselves did not believe in God. Though the others were not asked the direct question "Do you believe in God," their

comments indicated that they do. Surely the fact that these young people look upon their fellow men as believers in God indicates not only that they themselves may be believers, but that the religion to which they are devoted is more God centered than some writers seem to feel. Here are some statements, not untypical, on this issue.

Yes, many people believe in God. It is very important. 5*

Yes, most people believe in God in one form or another. Everybody believes in a Supreme Power. 11*

Most people believe there is some type of God...some force. When I see something in nature I know there must be a God. 18*

Most people believe in their own type of God, even an athiest. 20*

Definitely most people believe in God. Every-one has his own conception. 33*

Two things seem evident thus far. First, these young people consider their contemporaries and their fellow men as God-believing people. Secondly, and perhaps even more important is the indication that they are not concerned by divergency in belief. It may be, as pointed out earlier in this chapter, that belief is the key word, not God. It is possible also that these young people are theologically sophisticated enough to accept the fact that God is conceived of in many ways by different people; that to each, God manifests Himself in a different manner. Most probably it is the importance of believing, not the nature of that which is believed, that is significant to the young people. We shall

see later just how these beliefs in God are best categorized.

Further evidence of the importance of the belief in God to the teenagers may be found in two statements, previously noted, to which they responded in the questionnaire. Ninety-three percent of the young people disagreed that science will ever give us secrets of life so that people will tend to give up their belief in God. Not as overwhelming but still a significantly large 74% do not feel that the world can have meaning without the idea of a power greater than man. There can be no doubt that these teenagers consider belief in God very important to them.

However the question we must now ask is what is the concept of God of these young people. Seventeen of the young people interviewed, one less than half who commented on this point, said they believed in a God Who was all knowing and extremely personal. As they spoke of their God, these young people seemed unsure of the specific nature and attributes of the object of their belief. To be sure they were repeating no formula or catechism of faith. Their words and thoughts were far from original, of course. From the services which they had attended in the past to the movies they had seen which touched on religious themes concepts had been implanted in their minds. However, the belief which they expressed was a part of them, they sincerely upheld it. The following are some comments of those who accepted a personal God.

I believe what the Bible says about God.
He knows all. He is like our advisor.
We are like his puppets. 10*

God will help you if He thinks it's important. He is there all the time. 17*

He knows what is best. He has planned our lives out. He has planned how long you are going to live. He has planned out what will happen to you. 19*

I have a very strong belief. I cannot formulate opinions too much different than those I have been taught...they must be fairly accurate, 22*

God is the person Who decides what is right and wrong in life. He is the almighty power. His decisions are done because He know what is best through experience. 27*

He is a supernatural person showing good and kindness...something we are not capable of completely understanding. 31*

These statements seem childish, extremely naive. Surely they are such. Yet at least half of the young people spoke in these terms.

Seven teenagers thought of God as a guiding power in the Universe. A typical comment from this group came from a New Orleans boy: "I can't explain God. It's just faith in Something higher than I can explain. We must be led somewhere; the world can't wonder by itself." We also found a spread of other beliefs. Two teenagers said God is man's conscience, one, that man is God created. Six teenagers admitted confusion and seemed somewhat concerned about their inability to clearly define their belief. As one girl said:

It is important to believe for without it life would be impossible. Nothing could be explained without belief in God. I prefer to believe and not think too much about it, but I can't help thinking. It worries me to think what would happen if my belief were ever shattered. 4*

Whatever we conclude from an analysis of the God concepts of our teenagers, we must recognize that their belief is God centered, that for the most part that God is personal, all knowing. Though those who do maintain strong beliefs in a personal God seem to express childish and immature concepts, many of those who do not have strong beliefs are concerned about it. As we shall indicate later, much seems wanting in the theological education of these youth. We may be shocked at their naivete, but that they do hold these beliefs seems evident. Two questionnaire statements only support this view for we have seen strong agreement with the ideas that God will ultimately judge everything we do, and that God is concerned with human life.

Herberg gives the following as the classic expression of American faith:

I began saying in the morning two words,
'I believe' -- those two words with nothing
added.⁷⁸

If this be so, our study would indicate that our teenagers go a step further than the "American faith." Belief is important, but that belief is in God, immature and childish though the concept may be. Whether these beliefs will be shattered, as one girl feared, in later life, during the college years perhaps, we can only speculate. A follow-up study conducted five years hence might give us the answer.

Let us turn now to another aspect of the teenagers theology, yet very much related to what we have just discussed. The teenagers were asked to discuss their experiences of feeling close to God. Twenty indicated that they had such

experiences (this does not imply that 16 had never had this experience as this issue was not discussed with all of total 36 interviewed). As we have seen, nature and services in which other youth were involved seemed to be the experiences in which most of the young people felt closest to God. In each case that there was a response, the response was filled with sincerity and feeling. This writer was surprised at the expressions of some of the young people at first, though as the interviews progressed the pattern of these experiences seemed to be quite common. These expressions were not unusual:

I am awe inspired by the beautiful and sublime in nature. 23*

The kinds standing together are awe inspiring.. You feel like you are closer to God. You have a lump in your throat. 28*

These expressions can only lead us to believe that many of our young people have had religious experiences of a very personal nature.

These observations are made with reference to a theory which Glazer expresses in his American Judaism. He states that the personal religious experience which is so much a part of the American religious experience is not found among Jews. He writes:

Were William James writing his Varieties of Religious Experience today, he would have to supplement his examples with many new personal accounts, but none of them I think would be Jewish -- except perhaps for a few Jews who have been converted to Christianity....In the biographies of American Jews, and of American rabbis too... the category of spiritual experience is absent.⁷⁹

We find some disagreement with Glazer's thesis in our own findings. Most of the young people have had some kind of religious, spiritual experience. We have noted that 557 disagreed and 209 agreed with the statement that "I have rarely felt a closeness to God." Thus 72% of our teenagers have had this type of experience, in one form or another. It is, in fact, not unusual at all. Perhaps the most vivid response in this area came from a girl from a small community in the Northwest:

I've been closer to God in the last four years. I'm always talking to him. I depend on Him...God is awe inspiring. The friendship circles are so neat. It is so pretty for everyone to be around together with God....How do we know there is a God? From trees and everything. 32*

It must be stated that this girl's experience was far more "mystical" than most. Yet her response, and those of others who were more reserved, points to the fact that these young people do experience God and do have personal religious experiences.

In an earlier chapter we pointed out that the teenager is particularly impressed by nature, by dramatic ceremony, and other activities and situations which play upon the emotions. Surely the experiences at the camps where these teenagers were interviewed brought many of these feelings into focus. Yet these same camp sessions were not long enough to completely indoctrinate these young people, but rather gave opportunity for feelings which were a part of them to be expressed. Many, for example, said their feelings

of awe came over them in settings quite aside from religious ones. It is safe to conclude that our young people do find expression in personal, religious experiences which seem to be a real and vital aspect of their lives.

Another significant aspect of the theology of the young people in their concept of prayer. We noted that half of the teenagers interviewed on their feelings of whether or not God hears and answers prayers said that He answers only worthy prayers. Some of the comments of this group follow:

If He sees fit He answers prayer. 12*

God hears my prayers and answers in His own way. He wouldn't like selfish prayers. 18*

You can pray to Him and He hears you. He will answer if the prayers are justified and not selfish, if they benefit others, 21*

Yes, teenagers pray a lot....The best prayer is the prayer of praise...the Shema. I suppose He likes praise and also petition for a better world. Not the bargaining type of prayer but the sincere prayer. 31*

Most of the young people were quick to point out that the prayer which asks for personal, selfish wants is not the noblest type of prayer, nor is it the kind which pleases God. Only 5 said that God will hear and answer all prayers, but they also stated that unselfish prayers are best, and that selfish prayers are answered but not always in the manner which pleases us. Another group of 8 said that prayer achieves nothing beyond what it does for the one who is praying. God in no way is affected by such prayers.

"Prayers are stimulants," said one girl. 8* Another said "I think in prayer I state what I strive for, and become more like it myself. 16*

If we have said that the God concepts of these young people shows surprisingly little sophistication, we might say their concepts of prayer show considerably more. Practically none of the teenagers questioned indicated any satisfaction with selfish, childish praying. At one of the camp sessions where the interviews were conducted the young people created a service on meaningful praying, pointing out, as they put it, that praying "to pass exams, win games, and get dates" is not prayer in its best sense. The following is the prayer concept of a middle-western boy who, it seems, expresses what many of the youth believe:

I have been answered in prayer many times. I know that is what happened. I don't believe that God wants us to say thank you for every little thing we have. I do say thanks in prayer, but this has more of an effect on me than on God. I don't think God wants to hear He gave me a good time. Praying strengthens your beliefs...makes you realize the things that are right. I think that thanks should be given, but they are not the most essential part of prayer. Through prayer you pledge yourself to a better world. 22*

One statement in the questionnaire is related to the prayer concept. Though only 56% agreed that "prayers which inspire one to help make this a better and more just world are more important than those prayers in which we look to God for guidance and strength in our personal lives," we can see in this group too that there is some feeling away from the personal-interest prayer. However it is the feeling of

the writer that the question was not clearly stated and was probably unclear to many of the teenagers.

We also noted that the young people disagreed that they pray with more sincerity than their elders. This fits into the general pattern of acceptance of the ways and beliefs of their parents' generation.

It is our conclusion, then, that the prayer concepts of the teenagers we studied seem to have been the subject of more thinking than their God concepts. This, perhaps, explains more sophistication on their part in presenting their beliefs concerning prayer. It also should be noted that a number of the young people presented a less sophisticated concept of God than of prayer. God "is a supernatural person showing good and kindness," said one girl. She went on to remark, however, "He hears prayer but only in the human sense...He is aware of us all.... He likes petition for a better world...the sincere type of prayer." 31* Thus we find more maturity in their concepts of prayer than we did as we examined their beliefs in God.

C. View of Life

The religious beliefs or theology of these young people is not complete until we examine their view of life, death, good and evil. Of course, their concepts of God are woven into their responses in these areas, and we shall see the continuity in their expressions concerning their God concepts with those of their view of life itself.

Twenty-five per cent of the teenagers said that each

man has a definite purpose preordained by God. However, these same respondents were vague as to the exact nature of that purpose. "I was put here to be something," said one. Others said "to accomplish something," or "to bring hope to others." The largest group, 41%, said that man in general was put on earth to improve the world, to make it better. Basically their answers were the same as those of the first group except that they felt humanity as a whole rather than each specific individual man was given the job of bettering the world. We found that at least 6 young people out of the 32 who had comments on man's purpose said they were unsure just what his purpose is. They said the question bothered them, that they had tried to find the answer but were confused. One girl said she hoped to find out the answer at camp. 21* Another said hopefully, "some-day I'll know." 23* The general feeling given the interviewer was that this question seemed to bother the young people, like that of prayer, to the point that they had done some thinking about it. Many of the answers were surely reflections only of what they had heard from their rabbis and teachers. This is especially true for those who only could say "man must improve the world." Nevertheless many indicated confusion and worry that they did not have the answer. They had considered the problem before the interview; it was not a question foreign to them.

A significant response which relates very much to the teenagers concept of God was their reaction to the

problem of evil. In their answers to the problem presented of a tornado that kills innocent people, 56% said that all evil is a part of God's plan. This group seemed to accept without question that God had planned whatever evil we find in the world as a part of His all-over scheme of things.

Here are some of these comments:

God is responsible for a tornado. Maybe He was angry or something....God can cure cancer, but He wants to test us. 10*

Evil is part of God's plan. Even Hitler. I know of a woman who wouldn't let her husband fly and both were killed in a car accident. I think God does it to teach us a lesson. 12*

A tornado is nature, and nature is controlled by God. 27*

God has a reason for anything that happens. My sister at 6½ years was doing ballet, and at 7 got polio. However when I look over her life from 7 until now I know that her example is wonderful for the other cripples. She was president of the BBG chapter. God has a reason. Perhaps He scares us into the right paths. Who knows, it can happen to you, 29*

Once again we see the very personal God concept of our teenagers as it appears this time in their view of evil. Evil, to most of them, is the product of God's will. We don't have to understand the reason for the evil, the main thing is to know that God always does what is best. The orthodoxy which seems indicated in these feelings may surprise us, but it does fit into the comments already examined regarding the young people's concept of God in general. That "God has a reason," is the keynote of the thinking of 56% of those interviewed. These findings

hardly agree either with Herberg or Glazer in their opinions of the God concept of the American Jew. We find even more disagreement with Remmers and Radler who, in their volume The American Teenager state the Jewish orientation (toward God) is best described as agnostic.⁸⁰

We found that 22% of the teenagers looked upon evil as due to nature with which God does not interfere. Only a few were unable to explain evil in some satisfying way. These few seemed troubled by their inability to understand.

If a child is killed needlessly. That's what's bothering me. I don't understand. I want to learn about it. Sometimes I don't believe. 13*

A tornado that kills...that's why I think there is no God...because of all the tragedies. Like Bruce dying. Why should a good God want that? 34*

We see that there were a few young people who were bothered by the ancient problem of theodicy, but very few. We may wonder at the lack of concern and worry over this problem which has bothered man for generations. The relative ease with which the question has been set aside by the teenagers is surprising. When we examine these feelings in the light of the unsophisticated, near orthodox concepts previously discussed these views of evil do fit the pattern. It is this pattern of belief which concerns us here.

While the problem of evil seemed to cause little concern and worry, the problems related to death are obviously the subject of a great deal more question and be-

wilderment. We noticed this in the responses to two statements on the questionnaire. Eighty-four per cent of the youth disagreed with the thought that teenagers rarely think about dying, and 78% disagreed that they have rarely thought about what happens to a person after he dies. Thus we can see the concern of death and after-death, which our teenagers seem to harbour.

This same concern is indicated in the results of the questionnaire, for 42% of those who responded to the question, "What do you think happens after death?" said they were confused and as much as they would like to believe in something they couldn't. A few answered rather wishfully:

I don't know about after death, but I can't visualize nothingness. 9*

I would like to think you go on living, but I just don't know. 18*

After death...I think about it. It confuses me worse than God. I'll sit around and wait. I can't conceive of nothingness...but I can't picture reincarnation. I'm lost, but not for lack of thought. I can't find an answer. 25*

These are some of the thoughts of the many who showed confusion. Undoubtedly most of the young people who showed concern for death when they responded to the questionnaire would share these doubts. It is clear that much confusion does exist in this area.

Though the largest group of interviewees expressed these doubts, many did have answers regarding death. Four of the 29 who responded said immortality existed only in being remembered by those we leave behind. We might have ex-

pected more to express this thought since it is often expounded in Reform Jewish theology, and in every Friday evening Sabbath service. Eight of the youth believed in some kind of spiritual existence.

After death something happens to the soul. 5*

After death your spirit goes to heaven. Heaven is something everlasting that is good and pleasant. 12*

I would like to think there is some sort of spiritual life after death. 21*

These statements are typical of the eight who do believe in a spiritual existence, but one can quickly note the uncertainty imbedded even in these comments. The phrases and words "I would like to think," and "something happens," point out the bewilderment even among those who have some kind of belief of after death.

It is interesting for us to note that not one of the young people interviewed suggested any kind of physical life after death in heaven or hell. Yet such a belief would be no more orthodox than the theology which the vast majority of these youth freely accept!

We also found two of the young people accepting reincarnation, the most positive and definite of any of the beliefs expressed in life after death. One of these two teenagers was completely satisfied with this belief, and felt no need to question it further. By far she showed less concern than any other young person when discussing the area of death.

After death I believe in reincarnation.
 After one dies, they go to heaven. Everyone
 in heaven can look down upon us and hear us.
 Their souls come down in another form in
 someone else or even in an animal. I have
 believed this since I can remember. The
 thing that made me sure was the movie
 Bridie Murphy. 10*

As we have discussed the theology of the teenagers we have pointed out that in some areas their thinking and ideas are somewhat refined and sophisticated and in others extremely naive and immature. Their God concept, which is related to their concept of evil indicates a great lack of sophistication. It is difficult to explain why this seems to be the case. Perhaps there are two chief factors. First is the sociological factor which we discussed as we analyzed the young people's attitudes toward religion in general. We noticed the "need to believe," and how this conformed with the over all American pattern discussed by Herberg in which faith in faith plays the central role. Though we see that the belief of our teenagers is God directed, perhaps it is because so little emphasis is placed on what God is in the thinking of our society, that the concepts which our youth offer are so immature. American religion has been characterized as non-theological. It may be that the lack of theological doctrine in the core of the American's religious beliefs has caused this confused and immature attitude toward God on the part of the youth we have studied.

There may yet be another factor, for what have our youth learned about God? Beyond what they were taught in religious school they have learned very little. We know that

the bulk of the theological teaching in a Reform Jewish religious school never gets far beyond, if at all beyond, the Biblical version of a God who works miracles, divides seas, brings plagues, and wins battles. In the upper years, when the children are able to understand more, theology rarely is found in the curriculum. The God concept they have been formally given in the early years remains with them. Even the rabbis do little to provide a more mature concept of God from their pulpits. Therefore the concept we found was childish and immature, and perhaps we could expect no more.

Yet we noticed that in the area of prayer, the teenagers seem to have given the problem more thought, and their responses showed more understanding. Quite probably their education has been better in this area. Religious services, classroom prayers, and discussions of prayer are a more regular part of the religious school program than pure theology. Therefore we found young people who were not satisfied with prayers which they did not feel represented noble intentions. Their values were more refined in this area. Certainly their concepts here were more mature than their personal concepts of God.

In one other area, that of beliefs regarding life after death, we found a rejection on the part of the youth of naive orthodox concepts. The teenagers often said that it was not their own deaths that bothered them but rather the death of their parents. Several wondered how they could

go on living without them. Some might explain this in terms of guilt feelings resulting from desires of freedom from the domination of their parents. Another explanation might suggest their anxiety at the thought of losing their parents on whom they are so dependent. What is most important here, however, is that this concern and anxiety has lead to thought. That thought has lead to rejection of the orthodox, unsophisticated concepts of after-death, as we clearly found to be the case.

What the young people have not been faced with and confronted by, either in the general thinking of society or in the concerns of their own personal lives, they maintain immature feelings about. For those issues which have come clearly before them they have reached beyond to a more refined and better thought-out view.

Social Idealism - Data

The teenagers interviewed were asked to compare their own idealism with that of their parents. Fourteen considered themselves to be more idealistic, 9 about the same, and 5 less idealistic than their parents.

The young people were also asked if they considered themselves to be idealists. Nine said they were definitely idealistic, 18 only somewhat idealistic, and 7 said they were not idealistic at all.

The following statement was presented as a test for idealism:

"For men to do their best there must be some possibility of personal gain." 446 agreed; 295 disagreed.

Awareness of social problems is indicated by the responses to the two following statements:

"Things in America are getting along well and I am not actively dissatisfied with the job our leaders are doing." 368 agreed and 263 disagreed.

"Under our present economic system most American workingmen are able to provide their families with adequate housing, medical care and for security in their old age." 511 agreed; 211 disagreed.

The interviewer judged the respondents as to awareness of social problems. Seven seemed to have a great awareness of social problems, 25 somewhat of an awareness, and 3 were quite unaware of social problems.

Two other statements were included in the questionnaire

related to the concern of social problems of the young people.

"Teenagers often think about war and what it may mean in their own lives." 668 agreed; 103 disagreed.

"I would not penalize employers who discriminate against persons because of their religion or race although I believe discrimination in employment should be discouraged." 221 agreed; 530 disagreed.

Another related statement appeared in the questionnaire.

"The rabbi should not try to influence public opinion on controversial issues like better housing or school desegregation." 142 agreed; 602 disagreed.

The social concern of the young people interviewed, to be distinguished from their awareness of social problems, was judged as following: Thirteen teenagers seemed extremely concerned with social injustice, 24 somewhat concerned, and only 3 rather unconcerned.

Social Idealism - Interpretation

The adolescent is often termed "idealistic" by professional and lay men alike. As we discussed in Chapter I this idealism is seen as coincident with rebellion against the existing order. Three chief reasons are usually given as an explanation of this idealistic rebellion. One is that it is a manifestation of a general revolt against parents, which in turn is motivated by an attempt to escape from domination and authority. A second explanation is that the young people have been given ideals which, with little or no experience in living, cause them to soar to the sky on missions to save the world unaware of the impracticality of their ideals. A third reason often expressed is that the teenager has no status or purpose in society and thus seeks a flag to rally around. An idealistic mission provides the necessary purpose.

It is difficult to know just what relation to reality these explanations have. Perhaps all three, as discussed earlier, give us the answer. However, let us look first of all at the results of our survey and then attempt to explain our findings in the light of these ideas and others.

We should begin with the general awareness that the teenagers with whom we dealt did not exhibit any significant idealism or great rejection of the way of life of their elders. We found idealism to be sure, but it seemed to be of a rather bland type. Much of what we did find can perhaps be explained by factors other than those mentioned

above as we shall see.

When the teenagers were asked to evaluate their idealism in comparison with that of their parents half felt they were more idealistic and half the same or less idealistic. Those that consider themselves more idealistic than their parents commented in the following way:

I question some of the business practices of my parents. When I am older I'll probably see things as they do, but now I think I am more of an idealist. 3*

Young people are less realistic than their parents. Parents have gone through more experiences. 21*

I'm more idealistic. I have spoken to the effect that I think things can be done to better the world. In fact before I left (for camp) they said don't get too idealistic. My parents often say you can get into trouble by feeling this too strongly. 22*

Sometimes they will say things that rub me the wrong way, like how we would move if Negroes would come into the neighborhood. I feel this is wrong. 31*

Though nine of the teenagers said they were about as idealistic as their parents, five said they were less so. They seemed to attribute this feeling to the concern which young people have with the problems of adolescence.

I think adults are more idealistic than teenagers because the world's problems effect them more. 11*

Adults are more concerned with problems because kids are more concerned in pleasing each pther. They aren't ready to think about the world problems. My parents are idealists. 12*

Adults may be more idealistic. We teenagers worry mainly about ourselves than about more important things. 26*

However, less than 20% took this latter view that their parents were greater idealists than they were.

It is interesting to note at this point that of the 14 young people who said they were more idealistic than their parents, not one indicated they would be very different from their parents when they became adults. This does not mean that they do not conceive of themselves as more idealistic at the present time, but as one of the boys said, "when I'm older I'll probably see things as they do." One of the findings of our study with which we will not deal at length in this thesis is that our young people accept the values of their parents and for the most part want to be like them when they reach maturity. We found no rebellion, and no discontinuity so often attributed to the teenage period. Rather continuity was indicated in acceptance of parent's beliefs, attitudes toward Judaism (though the young people do want more ritual), concepts of citizenship, and even strictness in the area of child rearing. Whether this continuity is true of other socio-economic groups we do not know, but of the middle and upper middle classes which our teenagers represent, this does seem to be the case. A similar finding was made by Elkin & Westly, as discussed in Chapter I. We found no general rebellion against the parental attitudes and values, and we did not expect it in the area of idealism. The teenagers, even those who think of themselves as more idealistic than their parents, seem to realize that in time

they will come to accept their parents' views in this area. What degree of idealism they really possess we shall see as we further examine our findings. It should also be stated that the reasons given by those who feel themselves more idealistic are much the same as the reasons commonly given to explain the idealism of youth, such as: "young people are less realistic...parents have gone through more experiences." It may be therefore, that in stating their feelings that they are more idealistic, the teenagers are just repeating what they have heard about the supposed idealism of young people. This is speculation, of course. Perhaps the real test of this idealism is to be found elsewhere.

When we asked the young people whom we interviewed the more direct question, "Do you consider yourself an idealist," the results were a bit different. Only 9 of 34 consider themselves definitely idealistic, which is about 24%. Thus over 3/4 said they were either somewhat idealistic or not idealistic at all. The largest number, 18 or over 50%, said they were idealistic in only some respects. Let us look first at the comments of those considering themselves idealistic.

Yes, I'm an idealist. I don't see how there can be so much cruelty and suffering. I would like to believe things will improve though common sense tells me no great hope exists for an age of peace. It's a long way off. 9*

Yes, I would say I'm an idealist. Our worst problem is understanding each other's point of view. Understanding is all that is needed. I'm for integration. Southern kids aren't too much for segregation. They are liberal unless opinionated by parents. 35*

Yes, I'm an idealist. The greatest problem is the lack of basic honesty in human behavior. There will always be a lower class. My idealism rests on individual perfection. 25*

My parents consider me an idealist. I've said the world could be cleared overnight, so perhaps I am. The greatest problem is the lack of understanding and tolerance. 22*

We can note in their comments such phrases as "I would like to believe," "I would say I'm an idealist," or "perhaps I am." One even said "There will always be a lower class." We cannot help but wonder if these comments come from those who really reject the way of life of their parents and elders, and firmly believe the world can be made better. Actually the answers of this group differ little from those who say they are only somewhat idealistic.

Sometimes I worry about the problems of the world. I hope someday the world will all be in peace. I think someday it will. I don't know really if we can, I hope man is good enough to do it. Now more than ever people are opening their eyes to it and trying to help. 32*

Yes, I'm an idealist...a practical idealist. I am for integration but how completely is up to the individual. Some of my best friends are Negroes. I can see in a practical manner that it can't come immediately, but I want it. The worst crime is to hurt someone. 33*

I'm not purely an idealist. I tend to be idealistic but perhaps it is wishful thinking. 23*

Am I an idealist? Not really, not everything bothers me. Slums bother me. I worry about what goes on in Israel. I have always been interested in social service. If I could just help and teach. Why do poor people have to be dirty? I know a girl at school...if I could just take her to live with me I know I could help her. 10*

Though these statements are somewhat idealistic, yet there

are no expressions of complete rejection of the status quo. Rather we see a hope for peace and for equality, but little more than that. One of the young people even suggested these thoughts may be just "wishful thinking." That they indicate a real rebellion against society, or even a determined effort to make changes, is doubtful. We must notice that the feelings expressed here seem to be not too distant echoes of the liberal points of view in America which are generally accepted by most of the middle and upper middle class, educated men and women of our time. Liberalism and the call for fair play, tolerance, equality, and peace doesn't represent rebellion against the upper classes. Rather these views now are generally accepted by our society as progressive, right, and good. That which was idealism in the past is no longer idealism. In fact the liberal in America today has the task of finding new areas about which to be concerned. The thirties and the forties brought about the changes which have been the goal of the past generation's idealists. There is more to be done, for certain, but what these young people call idealism no longer is unaccepted, or new, or rebellion in any way. These young people have merely come to internalize the ideals of our society, which are as much a part of it as television, a college education, and Thanksgiving dinner. We did not hear any cries among our young people for ideals which were in any way foreign to the thinking of typical middle class America. If idealism is to be associated with rebellion, or

dissatisfaction with the prevailing mood, it would seem as if our young people do not possess it to any significant degree.

Perhaps we can gain a clearer picture of our young people and their idealism if we turn to what is less subjective material. Several tests of their awareness and concern for the problems of our society will tell us more than their evaluation of their own idealism.

Let us turn to two statements in the questionnaire which may give us further information. We noticed that 50% agreed with the statement that: "Things in America are getting along well and I am not actively dissatisfied with the job our leaders are doing," and that 71% agreed that "under our present economic system most American workingmen are able to provide their families with adequate housing, medical care and for security in their old age." The first statement was concerned with the "general situation," It is possible that the young people considered the unstable international situation and the segregation problem as the subject of the query. If the group we were studying was by nature idealistic we would have found far less agreement that "things are getting along well." However, the second statement shows even less idealism. Seventy-one percent feel that economic conditions for most working men are adequate. The response to this question indicates the lack of awareness of social problems and the acceptance of the American way of life as good and satisfying. To be sure,

these young people have been told often enough that America does provide for its poor and needy, and this attitude seems to have been accepted by them.

The teenagers' awareness of social problems would seemingly go hand in hand with their idealism. To be idealistic one must rebel against conditions and be aware of that which is evil in society. Yet the awareness of the problems seems to be rather small among our teenagers. Perhaps it is because many of the burning social issues of the last generation are no longer issues of today, and the social problems of our time are more subtle and ^{less} dramatic. It is surely more difficult to be aware of problems of segregated housing, and trends in education than unemployment, poverty and disease. We found that the young people were not aware of all of the problems that do exist but rather dwelt upon segregation as the outstanding problem of our time. In part because the young people are basically unaware of social problems they accept the way of life of the older generation without idealistic rebellion. Or perhaps the reverse is more the case.

The interviewer judged the various comments of the teenagers regarding their awareness of social problems and placed them in three divisions. Seven seemed to have a great awareness of social problems; 25, by far the largest group, somewhat of an awareness; and 3 appear quite unaware of the problems. There were certain difficulties in making this classification, but from the young people's comments some

were obviously more naive than others. Among the comments of those judged to be quite aware of social problems were the following:

Slums bother me. I worry about what goes on in Israel. I have always been interested in social service. I don't think much of him (Dave Beck). He should be thrown out.... Communism and segregation are the problems of America. 10*

Amos would think America very corrupt. Some standards have raised since his time, others have lowered. Our morals are worse. Crime reigns supreme. 11*

The worst problem is probably segregation. Slums are always a problem, but I have a feeling that if people really desire it, they wouldn't live in them. Something has to be done. I'll worry about it when I'm older. In the U.S. people get too involved in their own problems and forget greater problems. I hope I won't be like that. 16*

America's problem is her people that have a careless carefree attitude. The fact that they don't give a damn...they will destroy America. The average American isn't interested. 25*

These comments came from the young people judged to be the most aware of the problems in America. Yet there is a naivete here which is difficult to miss. "Crime reigns supreme," is surely a statement picked up from the TV. Also, the thought that people really do not have to live in slums if they do not want to can hardly be thought a sophisticated appraisal of the housing problem. Yet here, at least there is some awareness. How much it reflects real idealism and rejection of the status quo rather than merely an acceptance of what is normally spoken of as the wrongs of our land, is difficult to determine.

The largest group of young people, 72% were somewhat conversant with the problems of segregation, slums, and war, but seemed to have little insight into their causes or much awareness of the extent of the problems themselves. They had very little to say about solutions. One girl's response to a question about how the prophets would react to America was as typical as any, for she said: "Generally the prophets would approve of the conditions of America. I'm not really bothered by segregation." 9* In this group we found even more than before the echo of the same problems, crime, segregation, poverty, but there seemed to be little depth or comprehension of the issues involved. The teenagers knew what the basic problems were by name, at least, but their awareness went little beyond that.

It may be that the girl who said "I'm not really bothered by segregation," gave us a lead to one of the real answers behind the lack of awareness of social problems. The teenagers really are not bothered by segregation, and poverty. Their daily life does not take them into the poorer sections of their communities, they have little or no contact personally with the social problems of America. It is only human to ignore those problems with which we are not bothered, and to be concerned about those which do bother us. The idealists of the past generations were concerned about the problems of society because they bothered them, because they were involved

in them. With our teenagers there is no involvement in these problems. Their information is only secondary, thus their awareness of them is vague. We do not find them in an active state of rebellion because they are basically satisfied with their lives and the problems of society are not their problems, at least in as much as they do not effect them directly. To say they are not bothered by them is indeed a lucid way of putting it.

In analyzing the interviews we did find some distinction between awareness of social problems and concern for them. While a general awareness of the social problems of America was lacking in most of the young people they did indicate concern for those problems of which they were aware. This was particularly the case in the response to the statement: "Teenagers often think about war and what it may mean in their own lives." Eighty-seven percent of the teenagers agreed with this statement, perhaps because it was phrased so personally. Surely the everyday talk of possible global destruction combined with the impending draft of many of the young men involved in the survey is partly responsible for the strong reaction to this statement. A less personal question was asked also to determine concern for social problems. Seventy-one percent of the youth disagreed with the statement "I would not penalize employers who discriminate against personnel because of their religion or race although I believe discrimination in employment should be discouraged." Here we can see rather significant

concern for a problem which surely more than any other has been placed before the teenagers time and time again. Segregation and prejudice was the problem most mentioned by the young people and this same concern is manifested in the response to this question. However, though the concern seems great, the rather large number of 221 who agree that they would not penalize employers who discriminate is larger than we might expect from a group of "idealistic" youth. The question was less personal than that about war, perhaps therefore the reaction evoked was not as strong. Also, it should be noted that the question itself is not particularly a good one, as the second part may have confused some of the young people. However, on both statements we find reactions indicating considerable social concern, at least, about problems with which the young people are conversant. The greatest concern, and this is significant, is with the one problem that does bother the young people, that of war.

In our study of the idealism of today's Reform Jewish youth, we found no overwhelming rejection of the way of life or structure of our society. We did find some expressions of idealism, particularly in certain areas with which the young people were familiar, but in general there was no mood to make great changes or to revolt against the existing order.

As we examined the results of our survey, three reasons seemed to offer explanations for this lack of idealism

and the general satisfaction, or moderate dissatisfaction, with society. The first is that the young people are not rebelling against or rejecting the world of their parents. In nearly all areas the values of their parents are their values, or will be, and the teenagers showed general satisfaction with their parents and their manner of living. Rebellion, which is a part of idealism, is missing from the basic relationship of parents and children. Acceptance and internalization of parental ideals and values presents no basis for a general dissatisfaction with society as a whole.

Secondly, the idealism which was expressed by the young people, that is, the unhappiness with segregation, with war, and with slums is an idealism which is an accepted part of our society. To be idealistic and hope for desegregation and equality does not involve rebellion or rejection of the American way of life. Such an idealism is very much a part of our way of life, and accepted by vast numbers of people. It is the liberal point of view. At one time to speak out for the poor, for the unemployed might have taken courage. At one time it might have been considered dissatisfaction with America and branded by all kinds of "leftish" names. Today, however, the educated men of the nation are idealists in this sense. Who does not speak or write for equality, economic security, and peace? What idealism the teenagers do express is merely a repetition of the values of the society into which they grew, which is quite the contrary of a rejection of that society. There is no

breaking away or rebellion. Their very ideals are a sign of acceptance of the American way of life.

The third, and perhaps most important reason, for the bland brand of idealism which the young people expressed is reflected in the statement "I'm not bothered." Those problems in our society which do exist are not a part of the lives of the young people we studied. Their knowledge of poverty, of bad housing, even of segregation in the schools, is for the most part not first hand. Most of them live in neighborhoods far removed from the poorer sections of their community. Even the schools they attend, if desegregated, usually are attended by only a small number of Negroes. The awareness and concern of social problems is surely limited by the lack of contact with them -- by not being bothered by them.

CHAPTER IV

PROFILES

The Composite Teenager as Seen Through the Questionnaire

The teenagers answering the questionnaires given at the camps numbered 822, 378 boys and 437 girls. They came from all parts of the country. The model ^aage is 16. ✓

The teenager is undecided as to whether he gets along better with his father or with his mother, though most felt they argued more with their mothers. The teenager feels he does not want his parents to be more strict with him. His parents often make him lose his temper.

When he has a family of his own he will try and observe more ceremonials than his parents do. He thinks that as an adult he will attend religious services more frequently than his parents.

He also feels, often strongly, that he will take the ceremonies of Judaism more seriously in his own home than his parents do in theirs. Despite this difference he seems convinced that in the long run his ideals and goals are not different from those his parents live by.

The teenager seems very secure in his Jewishness and in his membership in the Jewish group. He does not feel that the establishment of the State of Israel has made many American Jews feel more insecure about their own status as Americans. He says he feels more at ease with Jews than with non-Jews. He would have no objection to going out alone on a date with a non-Jew. He often goes to house parties

attended jointly by Jews and non-Jews. The teenager does not feel that dating the popular non-Jewish boy or girl would be considered an achievement. He thinks Christian adults do not discourage their children from dating Jews.

The teenager does not feel it would be a good thing if Judaism were to try and win converts. Yet he disagrees with the thought that people who convert to Judaism do not do so because of an actual desire to follow the Jewish faith.

He sees no relationship between non-Jews becoming Reform and a decrease in anti-Semitism. He very strongly feels that if it were possible for Jews to have a choice, the vast majority would choose to be reborn Jews.

The teenager is not actively dissatisfied with America and the job its leaders are doing. He feels that under the present economic system most American workingmen are able to provide their families with adequate housing, medical care and for security in their old age. He thinks one should penalize employers who discriminate against persons because of their religion or race. He is realistic to the point of thinking that for men to do their best there must be some possibility of personal gain. He often thinks about war and what it may mean in his own life.

The teenager was definitely not more content with himself six years ago than he is now. He often thinks about dying.

Our teenager would discuss personal problems with a

rabbi, even though such problems might have nothing to do with Temple or with Judaism. He thinks that the rabbi should try to influence public opinion on controversial issues like better housing or school desegregation. He disagrees that if rabbis earned larger salaries a good many more young men would apply for admission to the seminaries. He thinks the experience of the confirmation class really helped the rabbi understand him and his feelings. He also feels that the ceremony of confirmation has made a significant difference in his feelings about Judaism. He feels strongly that the ceremony of confirmation touched him deeply.

The teenager strongly disagrees that one can't be religious unless he belongs to a church or temple. He does not think he would find Judaism any more meaningful or inspiring if it had one supremely important and central personality such as Buddha. He definitely feels it is possible to keep up with the times and still endorse the ideas and teachings of Judaism. He feels that no one should observe religious ceremonies unless he sincerely and wholeheartedly believes in their value. Many teenagers however, disagree with this.

The teenager has a definite belief in God. He has often felt a closeness to God. He feels one cannot make sense out of the world without having to include the idea of a power greater than man. He does not think that eventually science will give us the answers to the secrets of life and the universe so that people will tend to give up their

belief in God. Some teenagers felt the existence of God is a matter of speculation and that the real question is how you live. Many others disagreed. He feels that a human life is very much a concern of God's. He thinks that God will ultimately judge everything we do.

In regard to prayer the teenager is unsure whether prayers which inspire one to help make this a better world are more important than those prayers in which we look to God for guidance and strength in our personal lives. He does not feel his peers pray with more sincerity than their elders.

The teenager often thinks about what happens to a person after he dies, and strongly disagrees that teenagers rarely think about dying. He does not feel one would have to be insane before he could commit suicide.

As to the experience at the conclaves and institutes he feels strongly that they really change one's basic attitudes towards Judaism or God.

The Composite Teenager as Seen Through the Interview

The teenager comes, for the greater part, from communities of 200,000 population and more. He lives all over the country, north, east, south, west and mid-west. He is a little over sixteen years of age. His parents belong only to the Reform congregation of his community though they may have been raised in traditional homes. His father owns his own store or manages or directs a large business, though he may be a lawyer or doctor. The grandparents come from Eastern Europe. There is a moderate amount of ritual in the home: the candles are kindled on most Friday evenings, there is always a family Seder, though sometimes it is not taken too seriously, and often Chanukah presents are given to the children.

The teenager is very conscious of his peers and spends most of his waking hours with them. He will go along with what they want to do as long as they don't do anything he considers to be wrong. He says that a teenager needs many friends, and he only wants to be alone occasionally. The popular person, he thinks, is one who is easy to talk to, friendly, and not afraid of people. He doesn't like conceited people, and he says: "Be yourself." Dates at camp are all right but not really important. He thinks the kids at camp are like all other kids regarding religion, or at best somewhat more serious than the average Jewish teenager.

The teenager is very satisfied with his parents. His

mother understands him best, but he feels both are very sympathetic to his problems. He respects their authority and he would defy his parents only if he thought they were very wrong.

The teenager definitely likes to vacation with his parents, though the opportunity to do so isn't frequent. He feels that sometimes his parents treat him as a child, but there is a reasonable amount of freedom at home. He will be as strict with his own children as his parents were with him. He will not have less ritual in his home than his parents have, he will have either as much or more. He often seeks his parents' help and advice. In terms of his total personality and basic beliefs and attitudes he will differ from his parents in some ways though for the most part will be the same. He considers himself to be more idealistic than his parents, though not overwhelmingly so. In his opinion his parents are good Jews in all ways. They are also good Americans, and they are very sure of themselves as persons.

He says he is happy with life, as happy as he could conceive of a person being. However he sometimes lacks self confidence. He thinks of himself as popular and considers his best characteristic his smile, friendliness, and ability to joke around with others. As to personal attractiveness he considers himself at least average or better than average. He is rather certain he has the ability to succeed. As to other teenagers he says they are most definitely not carefree, but have many serious problems which bother them. He is some-

times depressed when things seem to go wrong, especially when he has arguments with his friends. He is afraid that people won't like him, which is very important to him though he is more secure with others than he was a few years ago. Nature always inspires him, as do the dramatic services and ceremonies at camp, especially when held outside at night. He admires the young rabbis at camp and thinks they are easy to talk to. One older rabbi, Dr. Abraham Cronbach, inspired him greatly and caused him to think about questions which never bothered him before.

He has had no personal encounter with anti-Semitism and he thinks there is practically none today. He feels Jews sometimes bring on themselves, though often it is due to the stereotypes of ignorant people. He would love to visit Israel. He feels there are some definite differences between Jews and non-Jews besides religion, and these differences for the most part are pro-Jewish in nature. He is particularly impressed with the close unity among Jews, though sometimes this "sticking together" causes anti-Semitism.

He is fairly certain about the occupation he wants to have when an adult. He wants security and happiness and he hopes to help make the world a little bit better.

The teenager considers himself somewhat of an idealist. He is at least somewhat concerned with the social problems of America, usually more so than he at first realizes, and he has some awareness of what these problems are. He thinks murder is the worst crime a man can possibly commit.

Most rabbis range from "okay" to "wonderful" in his opinion. As people, rabbis are just like anyone else, and at camp there is certainly nothing wrong with their wearing shorts. The most important job of a rabbi is as a counselor, and he has the special job of bringing religion and God to his people. One of the rabbis greatest problems among many is in really getting to know his congregation.

The world owes much to religion, in the opinion of the teenager. He does not feel, however, that there is a real religious revival at the present time. He is undecided whether Reform should have more ritual or maintain the same amount. His opinion toward confirmation falls into extreme categories. He feels either that it was an important and inspiring experience, or that it had absolutely no meaning at all.

The teenager says that most people believe in God. He feels that God is all knowing, and that He hears and answers only worthy, unselfish prayers. A friendship circle at night or a beautiful scene makes him feel close to God. He thinks that all evil, such as a tornado that kills innocent people is part of God's plan.

The teenager thinks that all men have the purpose to improve the world, and may feel that each man has a special purpose preordained by God. He believes that no one would commit suicide unless they were very depressed with many serious problems facing them. The teenager thinks about life after death but is confused about it. He does not think that

death is the end, nor does he believe in a physical life in heaven or hell. It is something in between, a kind of spiritual existence.

Science and religion do not contradict each other. Our teenager feels man needs both, that no matter how far science may go, religion and the belief in God is basic.

Profile of Joan

Joan is a 16 year old girl from a medium sized southern city. Her grandparents and parents were born in the United States. Her father owns several toy stores.

Joan represents one of the young people best adjusted to nearly all aspects of her environment, both at home and at camp. She is typical in many respects of the majority of teenagers studied. Joan is very attractive and very popular. Though she comes from a small southern community she is not typical of the teenagers from that area of the country in her Jewish attitudes.

In her relationships with her peers and in her attitudes toward them and toward herself Joan appears to be somewhat inner-directed, to use Reisman's terminology. While she is concerned about her relationships with others her orientation is also directed toward finding herself and in being the sort of person she wants to be. This can be seen in her consideration of what it takes to be popular:

To get along with kids you should be yourself
Don't try to put on anything. You should pitch
in and do your best. The unpopular kids are so
because they are unwilling to work or co-operate.
Popular kids know how to co-operate.

One of the characteristics of the inner-directed person is to be interested in achievements and results. Joan is far less concerned with being able to smile, and to be able to speak to someone with confidence than with getting things done. Of course Joan is popular and she knows this, therefore her concern about being popular is naturally less. However she did not suggest that one should try to be "likeable" by

being responsive to others. She showed more concern with people working together and co-operating with one another.

All of the young people who were interviewed were asked if they liked to be alone. Most of them said they did not like to be alone except on rare and special occasions. This becomes part of the general picture we have of the teenager who is very much concerned with belonging and with what others think of him. Here, too, Joan's answer was different.

I like to be alone at night after a service or an inspiring program. I like to think. It's not wrong to be alone. We have a need to gather our thoughts.

Her attitude toward isolation shows that she does not have the need of most young people to be in a group all of the time. Rather she is satisfied to be alone. This is unusual. We can safely interpret her feelings in this regard as another indication of her security as a person and among her peers. By not always needing the companionship of others she displays another inner directed quality and one which is not to be found in most teenagers.

Joan does not underestimate the importance of friends. She says they help one form one's personality. She does not, however, have a constant need to be with them. Perhaps it is because she knows she has friends that she thereby is secure. Her adjustment with her peers is a remarkable one for she has established a good relationship with her friends and yet maintains a respect for her own personality,

Joan's comments about her parents involve basically neither criticism nor praise, but rather an objective evaluation. She was one of very few young people who said she thought her parents might have been more strict with her. Joan recognized that her parents do not completely understand her and readily admitted some arguments of a trivial nature, yet at the same time she would have been willing had they been more strict with her.

I sometimes wish they would be more strict.
They might have stopped me from going steady.
I almost wished they had as I missed so much from it.

Surely it takes understanding for a young person to be so constructively critical of her parents and to admit they might have been justified in limiting her freedom more.

Joan also was able to see the inherent problems in the parent-child relationship for she said "no parents really understand." Yet she certainly exhibited only the greatest respect for parents. She admonished other teenagers who don't respect their own parents and said that they don't attempt to understand them enough. She said "they don't realize parents know what is the best." There is certainly a maturity about Joan's relationship with her parents that was not present with most of the teenagers. Her attitude seemed to be a combination of understanding, criticism, and respect. She indicated her security as a young person and her respect for values other than those of her peers for she was able to criticize her contemporaries for their lack of appreciation of parents.

Joan, now is a happy girl.

I wasn't as happy four years ago. I feel more secure about the future now....I don't see how I could be much happier than now.

Her happiness, however, does not seem to be based on her popularity with others but rather on the satisfaction of her own growth and development. She says:

The most pleasant mood is when I'm writing poetry and stories. I like to write about nature and people. Nature is very awe-inspiring to me.

Thus she does not need people continually around her to be happy. Many of the teenagers expressed their happiness in terms only of popularity, of having many friends, and of being accepted by others. Joan does not respond in this manner at all. In fact her greatest dissatisfaction does not come, as it did with nearly all of the teenagers, in rejection by others or in not being liked. Rather, as she puts it:

I get angry at myself if I go along with the crowd and do something I don't believe in. I become angry at others when they don't make any effort to try to understand you,

To be untrue to herself is wrong in her eyes. Joan places her own loyalty to values above the popularity valued so highly by most of her friends. Yet, with this lack of concern for conformity there is great self-confidence. She said most teenagers do not lack self confidence. In saying this she was more accurate in describing herself than in describing her peers. We should note that her desire not to conform differs in motivation from that of Sue, for Sue said she does not like to conform in order to excuse herself from being accepted by

others. Joan has no need to take this approach. Her self confidence and lack of need to conform is genuine. This is a part of her inner-directedness, of her stability which she derives from within, not from without.

Joan is very secure in her feelings of Jewishness. In fact, she seeks a feeling of belongingness to the Jewish group even more than she already possesses. One of her greatest worries, she confided, in recent years had been that she would fall in love with a non-Jew. She showed distress that there is only one other Jewish girl her age in her community. Joan is not satisfied with the Judaism of her parents; it is not enough for her. She stated that in her opinion her folks "are not too good as Jews." About the ceremonies in her home she has the following to say:

We light the Sabbath candles sometimes and we have a Seder. That's all. We used to have a Christmas tree. I'll have more in my own home. I've gotten a lot more religion and I think Judaism means a great deal to me.

To be more Jewish and more closely associated with her religion is her desire. She even said "I plan to build my whole life around religion." We must point out that her feeling of belonging to the Jewish group and desire for more evidences of this belonging is most untypical of young people coming from southern communities. While the majority of teenagers did express a desire for more ritual than their parents keep, those coming from the South did not.

The various questions which might have indicated some oversensitivity regarding her Jewishness only pointed out Joan's

enthusiastic devotion to Judaism. She is aware of little or no anti-Semitism. We found that those young people who were most aware of anti-Jewish feeling expressed the greatest sensitivity about being Jewish. She desires to visit the State of Israel and believes its existence has not endangered the position of the Jew in this country. Of the difference between Jews and non-Jews in general she has this to say:

The biggest difference is the outlook on life. I think Jews will get more out of life. It is because they put more into it. He feels he has to. Most Jews are outstanding people.

This great display of ethnocentrism bespeaks her feelings of Jewishness which seem a major part of her life. Perhaps it is a devotion to the values of her religion that in part stabilize her and cause her to be inner rather than other directed. At least this may be part of the explanation. Joan seems to feel nearly everything about Judaism is wonderful, Rabbis and confirmation were spoken of in glowing terms. She explains her enthusiasm for confirmation in this way.

Confirmation meant an awful lot to me. It was a big thing. It made me able to be a part of Judaism...a wonderful experience.

The words "a part of Judaism" are most significant here, for that is what Joan wants to feel most, a part of her religion. Joan's desire to be closely associated with Judaism is not due to any need for security which it provides in place of security from other aspects of her life. We may be doing Judaism an injustice by not stating that Joan is mature enough

to find certain values intrinsic in Judaism which seem important to her. It is surely possible to lay too much stress on Judaism merely as fulfillment of a status need. Joan sees religion in another light, as a motivating power of mankind. Her high regard for religion is expressed in the following manner:

Religion has helped a lot in trying to promote world peace. People have higher morals because of religion. Countries that have religion are higher class. Nothing could ever do away with the need for religion. Young people, as time goes on, will have more religion than adults. It is equal now. They are beginning to feel the need for religion. It gives youth inspiration. It makes you want to do the right thing.

Her somewhat idealistic conception of religion contains a real quality of earnestness. As she spoke to the interviewer this sincerity for what she was saying made itself quite plain. Her adjustment to religion and her concern for its values is another characteristic of her generally mature approach to the factors of her life. One senses no compulsion to belong to Judaism for any reasons other than those she gave. There is no turning to religion for security or for friends. Rather as a self accepting person, and this may well be the best term for Joan, she finds values in her religion which she feels will make her life more meaningful.

The theology which Joan expressed reflects her maturity as do the other aspects of the interview. We did not find either total doubt or blind acceptance. In her words there seemed to be the indication of real thinking combined with a basic faith. The best way to illustrate this

is again to quote her:

Yes, most people believe in God. I don't know how anyone could be an atheist. How could they ever have a reason for doing anything. God is in everything that is good and beautiful. When you pray to God you don't always feel God will help you but you give yourself strength. Therefore you feel God. I really don't know if God hears prayer. Most of your prayers are answered because you answer them yourself.

This, of course, does not represent a mature, completely thought out theology. It does, however, go far beyond what most of the teenagers had to say about God. It indicates the recognition of problems and at the same time an attempted solution of those problems. Regarding God hearing prayer she said with honesty, "I don't know." Yet she did not reject all, nor does she accept completely and blindly. There seems to be a maturity in her questioning. The same is found in her attitude toward evil, "we can't be sure why," she said, though she did say "I feel God has a reason for everything."

In summary, Joan is one of the most mature and best adjusted young people we interviewed. She understands her parents, admires them as citizens and persons, and criticizes them as Jews. Yet she respects and appreciates them and her relationship seems to be a healthy one. She is popular with her peers, in fact, extremely so. Being popular however is not a motivating factor with her. It is important but not primary. Rather she is concerned with her own values and her ability to live up to them. She is not oriented basically to securing the approval of others but rather to self approval, and in this regard she may be characterized as an inner-

directed person.

The happiness of these basic relationships with her parents and her friends may be the greatest factor effecting her mature approach to religion. She is not over-sensitive about her religion but rather seeks to be more Jewish. Reasons other than a need for security and status, play an important role. Generally a stable, mature girl, Joan's attitudes and ideas seem to speak clearly in forecast of a woman who, barring unusual events and circumstances, should be able to adjust to life and its demands upon her.

Profile of Sue

Sue is a 16 year old junior in high school from a large eastern metropolitan area. Her parents were born in this country and her grandparents came from Eastern Europe. Her father, an architect, owns his own firm.

Sue is a pleasant faced, fairly attractive, and well developed girl. The interview with her took place only five days after the camp session began, and it was obvious that she was not to assume a position of great popularity among her peers. She seemed rather intense, trying very hard to please the interviewer. She said she was flattered at having been chosen for the interview. After the first few minutes she relaxed and spoke with little proding, occasionally indicating great feeling on certain points which were brought up. It was obvious throughout the interview that she was enjoying it and that it was providing her with a real catharsis. At one point she commented "I'm glad to get them off my chest." The morning after the interview she told the interviewer "I've never thought so much as last night."

In terms of her peer group Sue did not exhibit much self confidence. She obviously was envious of the more popular girls and boys, particularly in their ability to get along with others. When speaking of the other teenagers she said:

They seem to know what's going on. They act older. I admire the way they take part in discussions. I find it hard to talk in front of others the way they do. They feel at ease in such a short time.

She admitted that she had not adjusted with the success she had desired.

I've been alone a few times. I haven't felt completely adjusted.

Her insecurity as a member of the group showed itself when she spoke about social life. She said that the coupling off which takes place at camp is bad and she complained that there was too much emphasis on social life. It should be mentioned that at the session which Sue attended, a small group of girls did complain to the director on the fourth or fifth day that too much time was given to social dancing in the evenings. Rather they felt, cultural programs should take up the entire evening program. Sue, though not one of the more vocal in this complaint, was reflecting this view in the interview. She tried to eliminate herself from the problem by saying that she did have a boy friend, but expressed concern for the others:

The kids who aren't with anyone feel left out.
They feel conspicuous and it spoils their time.
It's that way for me at home; here I've been
with someone.

Sue also excused herself, from the lack of popularity which she experienced with the comments that she did not like to conform.

I don't like to conform. Some people have to conform for they feel left out. A person should do what they want to at times.

This may indicate a reaction formation at not being accepted completely by the group, thereby excusing herself on the grounds that individual expression is important. She stated

that to get along with others you should be yourself. She explained that acting like a big shot is what some people do to gain self-confidence. There can be no doubt that Sue is concerned with her status in the group and wishes she were more popular. Though she implied that the big shots are not popular, it may be that she feels inferior to them. Her feeling seems to be that she isn't quite up to par with the group as a whole.

Sue made a significant comment seemingly unrelated to the topic she was discussing at the time. This comment may lead us to one of the chief sources of Sue's problems. She said, "Kids feel terrible if they don't get any mail." Surely it leads us to consider her home and her relationship with her parents for with the exception of letters from friends, letters from parents are the chief mail which the teenagers received at camp.

From Sue's first reaction to questions about her home life we might conclude that it is a very happy one.

Her first words were those of general satisfaction with her relationship with her parents:

My parents don't treat me like a child. When they do it is usually my fault. I feel I am given a lot of responsibilities. If I want to go to New York on a date they set a time. In this way they are strict, but I like it. They should be this way or I would think they wouldn't care.

Sue's first two statements, that her parent's don't treat her as a child and that often when they do it is her own fault, are not typical. Most of the young people were not so willing to

accept blame for occasional conflicts with their parents, which they readily admitted. But Sue began by defending her parents, not criticizing them. However this seeming perfect relationship soon appeared only to be the cover for real conflict between herself and her mother, a conflict far more intense than we found it in the other young people.

I don't get along with my mother. My father is quiet. I'm like him, but I find more and more I'm doing things like mother. Everything I don't like in mother I find in myself....With my mother I always argue what I should wear.... I'm embarrassed when my mother talks about me at family affairs in my presence.

Sue was so intense as she spoke that she expressed her relief at having finished. She said that she was more like her father than her mother, but she realized that she sees him much less as he leaves early and comes home late and therefore opportunity for conflict with her mother is far greater. The interviewer could not help but be impressed with the amount of anxiety the relationship with her mother had stirred up in Sue. It is quite possible that the general tenseness and anxiety in her relationship with her peers is a product of her conflicts at home.

Sue also said that she was unable to talk to her parents, and this seemed to add to her distress.

I don't think I can talk to my parents. I can't talk to them about boys. I don't think they understand me. It is not that they are outmoded, it's that I can't talk to them as friends because they are my parents.

We found for the most part that the girls in particular did say they could find understanding to some degree from their

parents, especially from their mothers. The relationship in Sue's home, however, seemed to be too unsatisfactory for any kind of understanding talks.

In her final comment about her parents, Sue said "I don't think you should respect parents unless they give you something to respect." This statement, quite unsolicited, certainly indicates again the depth of the anxiety Sue feels over her relationship to her parents. The problem has a source less on the surface than the specific complaint about her mother nagging, or her difficulty in talking to her parents about boys. These two complaints were not untypical, and even if they were, they do not indicate any severe conflict. However, her comments that what she dislikes in her mother she finds in herself and that her parents give her nothing to respect are most unusual, untypical and intense ways of stating parent-teenage difficulties. Undoubtedly the conflicts which do exist are rooted deeply in the relationship, and very well may color her attitudes toward her peers and other aspects of her life.

Of all the young people interviewed, Sue was the only one who said she was not as happy now as four years ago. Her reason was that when she was twelve the family moved from Newark. She would move back if she could, she said. However, her next comment tells no more, for using the same word "back" she said, "I'd give anything to go back when I was young." Thus her desire to move back to Newark probably indicates her desire for the days when she was younger. Her

desire to return to these younger days seems to be due to the problems she faces now, which she herself recognized. "I'd like to do kids' things like riding on a merry-go-round." As she spoke she was quick to realize how unusual this comment was so she added "my friends think I'm ridiculous." Yet, she does desire to escape from the present and the problems which seem to press upon her.

Sue again expressed her insecurity at not being accepted. She said, "I'm unhappy when I know I'm not wanted." She projected her own fears of not being a part of the group when she said "I'm bothered when I see other kids around here standing alone." Likewise being a part of the group is her greatest desire. "It's pleasant when I'm dancing or kidding around, or when I'm talking with someone about NFTY." These activities, which represent acceptance by others are what Sue desires most.

Sue said she became angry at herself when she says something to someone that hurts them. She went on to say:

I become depressed over little things. Someone will say something and then it builds up.

Here again we see how she is concerned lest her relationship with others cause them to dislike her. She admits that she is clumsy in meeting people and that she has trouble being herself.

I try to make people feel I like them. I try to be friendly with everyone.

In reality she is perhaps saying how important it is for people to like her and to be friendly with her. Yet she some-

how seems unable to achieve the optimum relationship with her peers, as with her parents, and this bothers her most of all. These anxieties over her relationships surely are indicated when she emphatically states:

Teenagers are definitely not carefree. They are definitely concerned.

Sue is not a carefree teenager. She is definitely concerned about her personal relationships with her peers and with her parents. Because these relationships leave so much to be desired, she is not a happy girl. Perhaps it is with some uncertainty yet needed hope that she says: "Institute is going to change me."

Sue is not as secure as a Jew as most of the young people to whom we spoke. She is concerned about anti-Semitism and feels that most non-Jews are anti-Semitic. She says:

Yes, many non-Jews are anti-Semitic. Jews are very conscious of it. I don't think Jews bring it on themselves. It's personal, and stereotypes make it seem like all Jews have certain characteristics.

We can assume Sue is conscious of anti-Semitism as she says that Jews in general are. However, there was nothing in her remarks that would lead us to believe that she has accepted any of the anti-Jewish stereotypes as we found in a few of the young people. We also found with most of the teenagers that a strong desire to go to Israel for a visit, and a general interest in that country went hand in hand with a secure feeling regarding Jewishness. Sue said concerning Israel:

No, I wouldn't like to visit Israel. It has little meaning to me. I don't think of Israel as a place for Reform Jews to go.

We cannot assume too much from these brief remarks except that there is some sensitivity regarding her complete association with Judaism in her attitude toward Israel. At least this is so if our assumption is correct that a positive attitude toward Israel goes along with a secure feeling of belongingness to the Jewish group. Our findings would tend to support this proposition.

In terms of ritual Sue says the following:

At home we light the candles, have wine for Sabbath and celebrate Chanukah and the Seder. We have a mezuzeh. When I'm married I'll Certainly not have less ceremonies, probably the same, maybe more. It depends on my husband. Our temple is radically Reform. I like a little more tradition but most teenagers want less. When I'm married, I know I'll be Reform.

Here we do not find sensitivity regarding too much Jewishness as we did in some, though not most, of the teenagers. She even feels that the classical Reform approach of her temple is not enough. It is quite possible that in saying this she was trying to please the interviewer, a student-rabbi. However, in her own home her family keeps more tradition than the families of most of the young people. Whatever sensitivity we found concerning Israel and anti-Semitism, it did not seem to be apparent in her remarks regarding ritual. Her attitude toward rabbis too, is a positive one. She feels they are doing an important job, and like most of the teenagers, said they can give guidance to young people.

Sue is somewhat sensitive about her Judaism. She does not exhibit the enthusiasm for being Jewish and the pride of some of the teenagers, but her feelings regarding her religion do not seem to be the source of any of her conflicts. Most probably, as we shall summarize later, the other conflicts in her life may well reflect themselves in her feelings of Jewishness.

Sue is not a great social idealist, but she does seem to be aware of many of the problems of our generation. She says that at times she is an idealist and that generally young people are less realistic than elders as they have had less experience. Slums and segregation seem to bother her the most and in this she is typical of the teenagers we studied. She is concerned about conditions in these areas, but, as we pointed out in Chapter III, these issues have been made apparent through every mass media. Concern for them is a part of Sue's general acceptance of the society in which she lives. However, she condemns America a little more harshly than do most of her peers.

We can't do anything in this generation. The prophets would think this generation is horrible. They would think it pretty bad.

There is a note of rebellion in her attitude, slightly more of one than we found in most of the young People. Perhaps it is an indication of the rebellious, unhappy relationship she finds with her parents. She stated that she has tried to help with social problems through community projects in the youth group. She thinks the best solution is educa-

tion. There is, however, little of the unusual here. In general she does see the problems of our society with perhaps more feeling and intensity than most of the young people.

Sue's attitude toward religion in general is very positive and typical. She says "it has given people something they can turn to." For young people, she said, religion "gives...something to guide themselves by, such as the Ten Commandments." Like most of the teenagers, these comments showed very little thought and indicate only that religion is something "nice" and that Sue's experiences with religion have been happy ones. This is very typical and to be expected, as we discussed in Chapters I and III.

The theology and view of life which Sue expressed are also extremely typical and could almost be taken for the general attitude of most of the young people studied. Her feeling toward God is as naive and immature as she probably received in religious school ten years before. Little occasion to question or rethink her concepts has left them quite in tact.

God is something above everyone else, a higher spirit. You can pray to Him and He hears you. He will answer if the prayers are justified and not selfish, if they benefit others.

Even the problem of a tornado that kills innocent people did not seem to sway her security in her beliefs. She fit it into her general concept of an all powerful God, and her answer was perhaps even a little less sophisticated than most of the answers received, though typical of many, nevertheless.

A tornado that kills is part of God's plan.
God does things for the best of everyone. Why
did six million die, that's quite a question.
There must be some reason for it. That way
it brought Jews together and gave them a spirit.
Now I think it was worth it.

We found that to this problem of evil most of the young people expressed at least some doubt, but Sue seemed to feel that she had taken care of the issue. Her answer might have been questioned further and it is possible she would have admitted its weakness. However, this was her belief and she stated it with assurance. The very fact that she was able to integrate the solution of the problem, as childish as it seems now, into her general set of ideas indicates how deeply she does believe in the all powerful, all knowing Deity. Likewise, it indicates she is satisfied with this belief and completely accepts it.

Sue did indicate a little doubt regarding life after death. She said "I would like to think there is some sort of spiritual life," but she was sure only that "your spirit stays with your family in memories." In this belief, too, she differed little with her peers.

In some ways, then, Sue is quite typical of her peers, and might be used as a prototype of them. Her concepts of theology, and her view toward religion in general are those of the majority of our young people. Even her feelings of Jewishness are not unusual, though she may exhibit a little more sensitivity than most of the teenagers. However, in her personal relationships, both her parents and with her peers, Sue showed conflict and anxiety. Most probably

her greatest problem is with her parents, and her mother in particular, for whom she holds little or no respect. Undoubtedly the unhappiness of this basic relationship reflects itself in her insecurity with her friends and causes her to try too hard, perhaps, to achieve their friendship. Likewise, she seeks the approval of her superiors in order that she might compensate for the approval which she does not find at home or from her peers.

We may also assume that the need for the total, all powerful God concept may stem from the disapproval of her parents. Perhaps her acceptance of this childish concept, even to a greater degree than most of the young people, is a projection of her needs for a "parent," in whom she can find complete support in time of need. Surely she does not receive this from her mother whom she intensely dislikes or from her father whom she never sees. Yet she wishfully hopes that her parents were ideal, as her first reaction to questions about them indicated that the relationship left nothing to be desired.

Profile of Gail

Gail is 17 years old and a senior in high school in a medium sized southern community. Her parents and grandparents were born in the United States. Her mother now operates a vending business. The father is deceased.

Gail is in the throes of teenage anxiety in many areas of her life. To some situations she has adjusted well and to others she has not. There are many contradictions in her attitudes and feelings. At certain points in the interview she indicated stability and security and at other times one could only assume she was a child filled with doubts and confusion. Judged against the group we studied as a whole she is less mature than average. Physically she is slender, rather plain looking, and she wears glasses. Yet she has a manner of joking and acting silly at times which adds to her acceptance by the group.

Gail's conception of popularity is completely other-directed. She values highly appearances and "smoothness" as she called it.

Popularity comes from a smoothness...a look of sophistication. You have to be "in" with the right people....You should meet a lot of people and be friendly to everyone.

Trying to be smooth and sophisticated is one of the chief motivating forces working within her. This is her opinion of what makes a person popular, and popularity is what she needs. When asked what people like about her she answered: "I guess people like my personality...just being crazy and carefree." It seemed as if one might insult her most by intimating she was anything like serious.

The need to be with others and to be liked by them seems more apparent in Gail than in most of the teenagers. She rebelled at the thought of loneliness with the comment:

I'm never really alone. I can be by myself without being alone. I like to be alone when in a bad mood or depressed. No, teenagers don't like to be alone. They like to run around with one or two kids, to mess around and keep it light.

"To keep it light," might well be her slogan for that is the appearance she desires most to give. Perhaps her own physical appearance causes her to feel she will be labeled as a "book worm," or solitary type of person. Gail certainly does and says everything possible to prevent this type of label from being attached to her. When asked if she thought most of the teenagers at the camp were serious minded young people she answered that only those that were on the religious committee were. She, of course, was not a member of that committee.

Despite all this Gail complained that there was too much social life at camp. She even offered the understanding insight that "you run around with a boy you don't like so people think you are popular." As concerned as Gail is with being socially acceptable she nevertheless felt a little left out during the few minutes in which the teenagers couple off in the evening. Most probably if she herself had found a satisfactory "date" she would have enthusiastically approved the dating at camp that did take place. However, had she found a completely acceptable social life she might have been less concerned with attempting to give the impression

that she was smooth, sophisticated, and very sociable herself. Nevertheless, she is most anxious to be accepted by others and to be popular. It is her opinion that smoothness will lead to that goal.

Gail's relationship with her mother (her father died four months before the interview) also presents somewhat of a complex of contradictions. She says that she is not treated like a child, and added these unusual comments.

My mother respects me a great deal, too much.
She lets me make all decisions....I don't
wish her to be more strict....She has too much
confidence in me. She overestimates me. ✓

Perhaps Gail seeks more authority in her relationship with her mother and in this way lacks the normal discipline of a father. Though her father died only recently, he had been seriously ill for 6 years and her mother has run the business since that time. Thus she has been without her father-daughter relationship for over 1/3 of her life, especially during all of her teen years. Had her father been well all these years she might have been more stable in her relations with her peers. Gail did add one other comment which reflects the unnatural relationship with her mother:

I'm very unemotional. I don't like to kiss
my mother or my rich uncle. I don't confide
in them.

We can see a resentment of her mother which is buried deep enough in Gail that she did not verbalize it during the interview, as Sue did in hers. What effect this resentment has on Gail's general attitude we do not know. In the re-

lationship with her mother, we find the contradictions of Gail feeling that her mother respects her too much and at the same time the hint of what may be a deeply buried hate for her mother. Yet, on the surface, her comments about her mother are most favorable for she says of her "she is very smart...she doesn't lean on anyone." It is, perhaps, the self reliance of her mother that bothers Gail who may well need the discipline of a father and the feminine tenderness and understanding of a mother, neither of which she finds in her single parent. This lack of a normal relationship may intensify the normal adolescent ambivalence of desiring both authority and freedom and add further to the conflict she finds in her peer group relationship.

Gail's feelings of Jewishness reflect conflict and confusion as well as do so many other aspects of her life. She feels that at home Judaism has been ignored. As she put it, "we have a mezuzah and a menorah on a shelf." Gail seemed to be critical of this lack of observance and she added:

We don't light the candles on Sabbath. I would like to start doing it. We have a family Seder with all the aunts and cousins. Once we didn't know it was Chanukah until it was over. Yes, I'll have more. You know you are Jewish and you should be proud of it.

Surely these statements indicate a positive feeling toward being Jewish and even a desire to be more clearly associated with her religion. Yet in the light of some comments Gail made later in the interview we cannot help but wonder whether or not she was admonishing herself when she said one should be

proud of one's Judaism. Gail's feelings about anti-Semitism reflected what may be an uneasiness about being Jewish. With real feeling she blamed some anti-Jewish feeling on the Jews themselves, particularly those whom she described as loud and "Jewy."

Sometimes Jews bring it on. It comes from loud, boistrous, "Jewy" types that always stick their big feet in. People think of all of us like that, the typical Jew. There are some Jewy ones everywhere.

Here then is another apparent contradiction in feeling, for Gail first says we should be proud of our Judaism, and then she speaks with real feeling of the loud "Jewy" type of Jew. She showed no desire to go to Israel which may indicate sensitivity toward being Jewish, yet she said that Jews have a better family and home life. "We live well, we dress well." This latter comment seems to indicate that she is proud to be Jewish.

Perhaps Gail's ambivalence of feeling comes into the open in the area of her feelings of Jewishness. At one time she seeks Judaism for security, and even expresses pride in her Jewishness. Later in the interview she seems insecure about being Jewish. This is somewhat the pattern of her feelings toward her home life, for she proudly compliments her mother on her own personal abilities yet underneath there seems buried a dislike for her. It may be that Gail's words on behalf of being Jewish are her own attempt to hide her feelings from herself in which she wishes to reject her past life, particularly her home life. Being

more Jewish will give her status especially in a Jewish camp and when speaking to the interviewer who is a student rabbi. But beneath may be a desire to reject that which she associates with her mother and her home, namely her religion and her identification with it.

When Gail was asked about her own hopes for the future she made it rather clear that she does reject her home life and that which is a part of it.

I want to go to school for social life.
To go out and to be popular. Then I'd
like to fall in love. I want to get out
of my city and go someplace and be popular.

In addition to the recurrent theme of desiring to be popular, which we saw before as an important problem to Gail, also it becomes apparent that she does want to leave her home which seems to be the root of much of her unhappiness. Because religion is naturally so closely connected with the home her rejection of Judaism may well be tied in with her feelings toward her community and the home life in general. Even her desire to fall in love is in a sense an indication of her wish to change her way of life, for love, of course, implies marriage and leaving home,

In her discussions of social idealism Gail spoke with a great deal of honesty. She readily admitted that she was not an idealist, and that her worries were limited to her friends, her home, but not the world situation. She even felt that adults may be more idealistic than teenagers for the latter group worries more about themselves than about "more important things." Her honesty was also evident

in her words about desegregation.

I don't know how much I'm for desegregation. It would be okay if all Negroes were a higher class. If they weren't slobs, common, poorly dressed it would be okay.

Though her feelings here expressed are probably liberal for a southerner, most significant is that in this area at least she made no attempt to cover up or to impress the interviewer. The artificiality which seems to color most of her life, even the conflicts we noticed before somehow do not seem so evident here. Her discussion of her feelings regarding the Negroes were spoken in sincerity without anxiety.

Gail is appreciative of religion for two reasons. First because "it gives people something to live for and understand." For young people she said, "it gives a certain group with which to be friendly." Which of these reasons plays the greatest role in Gail's life is not too hard to deduce. She may find intrinsic values in religion but her chief loyalty is for the security of a social group. Her comments we noticed before indicate this need so clearly that there can be little doubt that she wants to find her social needs met, in part, through her religious affiliation.

Confirmation certainly meant little to Gail. Her description of her experience in the confirmation class is as vehement a condemnation as spoken by any of the young people we talked to.

Confirmation means nothing, just going to religious school and having to put up with fanatics. The books were stupid. The whole thing didn't interest me...only when the rabbi taught us on Monday afternoons it was okay. The confirmation service was just a speech handed to me. That didn't mean anything. It was all wrong. We just went through the service.

This attitude, though not expressed so strongly, was felt by many of the young people with whom we spoke. Our concern however, is not with the merits of her remarks but rather with Gail's attitude as it reflects on her general make-up. Gail's feelings about confirmation might not have been so strong had she not gone into the experience with the confusions and anxieties we have already seen that shroud her home life. Anyone desiring as much as she to break away from home surely would project these same feelings of ambivalence upon a ceremony so closely associated with "growing up" and with family as confirmation. It is not surprising that Gail does reject the ceremony more strongly than it may have merited any more than we should be surprised to notice her ambivalence in feelings toward Judaism, both rejecting and accepting at the same time. We do not know enough about Gail's home life during the years of her father's invalidism to draw conclusions with too much certainty, but that there is a connection we can surmise.

When talking about God, Gail didn't seem concerned. There was no devotion to a childish concept and no total rejection of the God idea, either of which we might have found without surprise. Rather Gail was quite nonchalant

during this portion of the interview. Often she said "I don't know," but with the same carelessness as if she had been saying "I don't care."

I don't know about myself. I know that there probably is a God. I don't know how to pray and I don't see any reason to pray. God hears? I don't know. When I pray I don't think I pray right. It's not asking for favors but it's asking him to look out for people and me. I'm not sure. You can't be sure if he answers prayers. Maybe he does and maybe he doesn't.

How this attitude fits into Gail's total picture is hard to say. At least we are sure that she does not think religion is important because it gives her a God to believe in. Religion is important because it gives her friends. Perhaps her words do speak of rejection even as she has rejected so much connected with her home and her religion. For her to say she doesn't know about God and prayer is quite different from the vast majority of young people who still accept the Religious School's concept of God. In saying this perhaps she has rejected quite a bit.

Gail is a girl filled with anxiety and ambivalence. The source of many of her problems, though she may not realize it, seems to be in her relationship with her mother. The confusions and doubts that stem from her father's invalidism and death seem to have been responsible for her feelings of insecurity with her peers and for her great need for popularity. Likewise, these same anxieties have caused her to reject much that is associated with her home, particularly certain aspects of her religion, though in this regard she shows ambivalence as well. Her own expressed hope

for the future is to leave her home community and to go somewhere else, "to be popular and to fall in love." Her wishes betray her unhappiness and the unsatisfactory adjustment she seems to have made to many areas of her life during the adolescent years.

Profile of Tom

Tom is 17½ years old and a freshman at a large eastern university. His home is in a large mid-western city. His father is a doctor. His parents were both confirmed in a Reform congregation.

Tom was one of three boys who were chosen student leaders of the camp session he attended. He was chosen not by the young people but appointed by the camp director on the basis of the leadership he had shown as a regional president of NFTY. In his attitudes and feelings he is quite different from the average young person at the camp. Three themes may be seen in our profile of Tom: inner direction, self dissatisfaction, and rebellion. It is not possible to say when one ends and the others begin, but in Tom's total personality we find all three.

Intelligence and a willingness to work are Tom's criteria for popularity. Here we see the first hint that Tom is an inner directed person. Also, he states that he likes to be alone though he knows that most teenagers don't. He sees that he is different from the other teenagers, yet this in itself does not seem to disturb him. Tom is not extremely concerned with his relationships with others. That he rarely dates, at home or at camp, is of little or no concern to him. He says that he is not too interested in girls and therefore doesn't worry much about being popular with them.

Tom admits that he is unhappy, and he says he thinks most teenagers are, too. Tom's unhappiness comes not from

unpopularity but rather from a deep dissatisfaction with himself. In speaking of his father's successes he says:

Nothing can satisfy me. Nothing ever satisfies.
Why I can't be better than the next person bothers
me....I can't ever be good enough to suit me.
They (my parents) seem to be satisfied but I
can't be.

Tom feels that his greatest limitation is his intelligence. He thinks people expect more of him than he can produce and this bothers him.

Tom's life seems to have been a lonely one thus far.

At high school I had no friends. My class didn't share my opinions. I disagreed with the way the student council was handled. It was a wretched class. There were no good leaders. Those that were good weren't recognized.

Tom did not say that he did not like being with people. However some of his happiest moments were alone. Tom is an amateur pilot and is allowed to fly alone. He finds a great deal of satisfaction in this and says:

I'm happiest when flying or here. In flying
I'm at peace with the world. At conclaves
I'm with kids who think like me....I would be
happiest....this may sound funny...to be chair-
man of an institute in a permanent society.

Thus Tom's happiness is not exclusively found in moments of solitude. He finds a great satisfaction in his role of leadership of other teenagers. In such a situation he does not find the aspects of life which seem to trouble him so much at home.)

In high school, for example we noted that Tom had few friends and little happiness. Yet his expressions did not indicate he was not accepted by the young people. Rather he

just could not abide their values and actions, and thus it seems he separated himself from them. His disgust for the values of his peers in high school is but a reflection of his general disdain for values in America in general as we shall see.

We must point out, however, that Tom is not completely void of any status need. He greatly enjoys being a leader in the camp situation. His comment that the good leaders were not recognized may indicate that he felt personally that his own leadership abilities had been overlooked. Yet his recrimination seems to be directed toward himself. His self dissatisfactions appeared often during the course of the interview. Likewise does his rebellion against the world about him.

Tom's relationship with his parents presents somewhat of an anomaly. His respect for them is very great. His praise is long and loud. Yet underneath it there is dissatisfaction which though verbally is directed toward himself may well be part of a rebellion against his parents. The following remarks will indicate these feelings.

I feel critical of everyone, most of all myself. I have ridiculously high goals. Dad is a doctor. He is very satisfied and has reason to be, but nothing can satisfy me....

In the way I interpret Judaism my folks are the best possible Jews. What they do is meaningful. They live a wonderful family life. The neighbors recognize it although they are hated or loved by the neighbors. They have fought politically for our suburb. All admit it is a wonderful family. Neighbors bring their problems.

The fact that Tom began the discussion of his parents with the

remark "I feel critical of everyone" may be the clue to Tom's feeling of dissatisfaction with his parents, though his conscious expressions indicate anything but that. Though he continually praises his family, the relationship of the children, and the leadership his father has taken in the community, he keeps referring to his dissatisfaction with himself. It may be that Tom is dissatisfied with his parents and because he thinks it is so wrong to state this or to consciously recognize it, he focuses the dissatisfaction on himself.

Tom openly shows his dissatisfaction for the world about him when he speaks of America in general and the social problems of the country in particular. Only then does he forget about himself and turn his disdain to others. Here we can see real rebellion more clearly than in any of the other young people we interviewed. His remarks do not merely indicate a comprehension of the social problems of America or a moderate concern for them, as we found to be the case with the other teenagers. Here we see intense rebellion and the idealism that is born of it.

The greatest problem is the lack of basic honesty in human behavior. There will always be a lower class. My idealism rests on individual perfection. Treason is the worst crime. If there would be capital punishment, which I am not altogether against, it should be for treason. This is on my conception of America. After all your country has done for you it's like mass murder.

These remarks indicate an unusual type of rebellion, against

the status quo to be sure, but aimed particularly at those that do not respect the authority of the land. Tom seems to have great respect for authority. Perhaps through a reaction formation he does not consciously criticize his parents. In addition, Tom has the peculiar habit of addressing people older than he with the term "sir." He does this with consistency, even though he may be requested not to do so and to use first names. One might think he was educated in a military school because of his insistence on this form of address.

It is the people that don't seem to care that bother Tom the most, and he condemns them with vigor.

America's problem is her people that have a careless carefree attitude. The fact that they don't give a damn. They will destroy America. The average American isn't interested.

These comments were far from typical of the young people. Tom does not criticize the leaders of the country. He turns his dissatisfaction on the people who don't care. America is the goal, the end. America is deserving of respect. The rebellion we find is directed against the people and their attitudes. Tom does not express the attitudes of the typical liberal in America today. Rather he almost expresses the opposite. He even states "I can't place faith in the individual." Tom seems to have rejected his fellow men.

Though Tom says he is for desegregation he betrays himself with the remark "I'd like to believe that if you didn't want to marry a Negro you wouldn't have to." Certainly the other young people would share his feeling, but Tom

alone expressed it. "I love the songs of brotherhood," he said, yet one wonders how liberal his attitudes really are. Tom's respect for authority and for rank and his horror at the thought of treason seem to point to an authoritarian type of personality.

In the area of feelings about Judaism, Tom, in at least some respects, is not untypical. He wants more ceremony though his family keeps the holidays and lights the Sabbath candles. Tom says that he occasionally performs a havdalah service at home for his younger brothers and sisters. Of the Jewish religion he has the following to say:

Jewish ideals and ethics are higher.
Jews have a finer home life. The Jewish
religion is more scholarly...it is more
vital and more alive.

His devotion to Judaism is to its ideals even more than to its ceremonies. The authoritarian aspect of his personality seems to express itself when Tom spoke about anti-Semitism.

Most people aren't anti-Semitic. A number are very ignorant. If Jews follow tradition some will hate us. I'd rather observe what is right and be hated by the ignorant.

This last remark shows that Tom is not concerned with anti-Semitism. He is not primarily concerned with what others think of his beliefs as a Jew even as he is not as an individual. As long as he is true to his own ideals he has done what is most important. Here again we can see how Tom differs from the attitudes of the other teenagers, for they were much more concerned about what others thought of their being Jewish. In Tom's case this does not seem to be true.

That he is inner-directed, even tradition centered is quite apparent.

In Tom's view of rabbis we find the same pattern of respect for authority.

The rabbi's job is to maintain exemplary conduct. He must be a model for the rest of his congregation.

This comment represents almost the antithesis of what most of the young people said about rabbis, for the view most commonly held was that rabbis should act just like other people for "they are human too." However Tom's comment betrays his authoritarian leanings, for to him the rabbi is a symbol of respect. At the time that this profile is being written, which is several months after the interview was made, Tom himself is now very seriously considering the rabbinate.

Tom's theology shows questioning and doubt rather than acceptance of dogma. His concept of God and of life is probably more mature than most of the young people. He states that the philosophy that he knows confuses him, and he cannot accept a personal God. He has not given up the struggle and seems to be very much concerned with finding himself in this regard. He rejects the ideas that God rewards every good deed and that God is aware of the thoughts of man. Of his belief he says "I'm lost but not for lack of thought. I can't find an answer."

We find Tom different from the other young people in many respects. He prefers to be alone often yet is very

happy as a recognized leader of the group. He respects his parents on the surface yet may harbor strong feelings of rebellion against them. He is upset with the values of many of his peers and with the people of America. His reason for the latter seems to be their lack of respect for the authority of the land. Tom himself respects authority and expects the same of others. At the same time he seeks, though perhaps he is not aware of doing so, a position of authority. He sees the rabbi as a symbol of what is proper and he leans toward the rabbinate as a profession. As a result of all this Tom is unhappy. He says that his unhappiness is due to dissatisfaction with himself, though the true reasons may be hidden far below the surface. Our hint that his feelings may not really all be clearly expressed on the surface appeared in his discussion of his family where he seemed unwilling to admit rebellion which may deeply penetrate his relationship with his parents. His comment on what he would do with his life had he only 6 months to live best shows his inner feelings of dissatisfaction for he said "I'd do a lot of reading and thinking...and a lot of regretting."

Profile of Judy

Judy is a 16 year old girl from a medium sized community in the Northwest. Her father, who was born in Russia, manages and partly owns a ladies apparel store. Judy is a junior in high school.

In our study of the Reform Jewish teenagers we found that in many areas the young people seemed to be quite unsophisticated and extremely naive. Most particularly we found this to be true in the area of their theological beliefs. Our interview with Judy found her to be the epitome of the young people with regard to their naivete and lack of sophistication. To Judy almost everything is good and wonderful. Her responses on many occasions were quite childish and we noted that she faced most problems, if she could see the problems at all, with very little thought. Her beliefs seemed rarely to have been subjected to thinking or doubt. Nearly everything was accepted by her on face value. If it was "supposed" to be good, it was so in her eyes.

Judy is a fairly attractive girl, slight, with reddish hair. She was not the object of attention by the boys at the camp, but she was accepted by the girls and seemed to have a close relationship with one or two of them in particular. Her general awareness of problems was quite below that of her fellow campers, though in terms of intelligence she appeared to be their equal.. She is a quiet, very soft spoken girl with a far away look in her eyes. She gives one the impression that she is at times in a dream

world, and the interviewer faced the problem of whether or not he should attempt to shatter it in any way.

The first awareness of Judy's unrealistic approach to her world came when she discussed popularity.

The kids here seem to be leaders. A good personality leads to popularity. You have to be sincere and friendly. No one here is unpopular. I never knew any really unpopular kids.

There can be no doubt that Judy believed what she was saying. The interview, however, took place well along in the camp session, and it had become quite obvious not only that all of the teenagers were not leaders (some were real trouble makers and were recognized as such by most of the young people) but there were a number of rather unpopular people as well. Yet Judy seemed unaware of this.

Likewise Judy's appraisal of her parents and of her relationship with them might have been spoken by a child 5 years younger than she. She seemed unaware of any real problems at home and unwilling to be critical at all.

My folks don't treat me like a child too often. I always turn to my mother in trouble. She understands me better. My father is kept very busy. When mother is off on a buying trip I get close to daddy....I don't feel critical. They are just about perfect. I don't think I would go against their will.... They are good Jews and good Americans.... They are very loyal and true.

Judy could see no difference between herself and her parents and quite obviously wanted to be just like them. Though a few of the teenagers were very satisfied and even uncritical of their parents they always expressed what seemed to be some

understanding of the problems inherent in the parent-teenage relationship. Judy passed over them as though they did not exist. Her family, like almost everything else in her life, was good and wonderful.

Judy did recognize that teenagers do have some problems. She admitted that she was troubled a bit by lack of self confidence. However, her general feeling about teenagers is that they are carefree and not worried at all, a view infrequently expressed. Of teenagers she said "they are a happy group of people."

In her Jewishness Judy appears to be very secure. Her parents keep a number of ceremonies, and she is happy that they do, though she said she might keep even more. She feels there is little or no anti-Semitism and appeared surprised that the question was even asked. Of Jews in general she has only the best to say.

The biggest difference is that Jewish people want to do more. They have a lot of ambition. None of them are lazy.

Here too we find an amazingly unsophisticated point of view. It is true that we found that most of the teenagers felt Jews were superior in one way or another but none of their comments had the naive flavor of Judy's. From her comments it would seem as if Jews could do no wrong, and just like nearly everything else, they are perfect.

Judy is an idealist but her idealism is not related to rebellion against conditions. She seems to feel that someday everything will be all right. Slums and prejudice

are the only problems she seemed aware of, but she showed little concern for either except to say that they are bad. She was completely unaware of any other social problems. Her comments seem to reveal lack of sophistication in this area, too.

Any crime is a bad crime. I know I'd hate to do anything ever that I felt would hurt God. That takes in the Ten Commandments. Sometimes I worry about the problems of the world. I hope some day the world will all be in peace. I think some day it will. I don't know really if we can. I hope man is good enough to do it. Now more than ever, people are opening their eyes to it and trying to help.

Judy has accepted completely the value of religion and ethics but on a most superficial level. What she has been taught she accepts. Whatever opposes the prescribed law is bad. How she might react to a real problem of contradictory values was not tested, though she most probably would be unable to cope with it at all. Her views of the social problems of America go little beyond the pleasant thought that keeping the Ten Commandments is good and "any crime is a bad crime."

Likewise her view of religion is equally naive. It, too, is all good, and she was completely unable to see the problems in religion as many of the teenagers were able to do.

Religion has taught people to love each other. It has given the world something to go on. To young people it should be part of their life. Everyone has to have religion. We need something to live by or we wouldn't know right from wrong. Confirmation was one of the most awe inspiring moments of my life.

To be sure, most of the young people would agree with Judy in nearly all of what she says. That is not the point. It is her manner of expression and the lack of depth to her attitudes that seem most unusual. The teenagers we studied agreed that religion has done good, that it gives people something upon which they may rely. At the same time they might say that religion has caused strife, too, or that it has failed to communicate with the masses of people. Judy is unable to see these problems, they do not bother her at all. Religion, people, teenagers, and the world are all goodness and light. Her views are simple and she readily accepts what is told to her as being right.

Judy expresses a feeling of close relationship with God. She refers to Him constantly in a most personal way. These references bespeak a kind of religious fervor which was unique with Judy among the young people with whom we spoke. She spoke of God in the following manner:

I like to feel close to God. My prayers help me in this.

I've been closer to God in the last four years. Four years ago I just said my prayers. Now I feel close. I'm always talking to Him. I depend on Him.

I used to be afraid of death but not now. I think it's because I'm closer to God now.

The friendship circles are so neat. It is so pretty for everyone to be around together with God.

I know I'd hate to do anything ever that I felt would hurt God.

Yes we can pray to God. His hands are over everyone all the time.

It is indeed unusual to find such a God concept in one of our teenagers. It is particularly surprising because such a concept is rarely taught in a religious school, and surely not above the primary grades. We do not know what influenced Judy in establishing this belief. It does remind us a bit of some of the Christian concepts made popular by radio sermons and the like. But to speak of God in such a personal manner is foreign to the Jewish orientation received by today's youth. The very expressions themselves reflect the extreme lack of sophistication of Judy's belief. Some of the young people said they feel close to God at times especially during a service or when witnessing an awe inspiring scene of nature. Phrases, however, such as "I'm always talking to Him," and "I'd hate to do anything that I felt would hurt God" were never spoken by these youth. Judy alone expressed this kind of intimate relationship with God. In all probability it is very much related with her general naivete about the world at large and her willing acceptance of what she considers to be right. Yet her adherence to this childish God idea is unusual and most untypical.

Judy expressed herself on prayer as well.

Yes we can pray to God. His hands are over everyone all the time. We can definitely pray. He hears. He answers some. We should give prayers of thanks to Him. Prayers we don't memorize but what we are really thinking. Some people rattle off a prayer, but that's not a prayer in God's eyes. True prayer is one that comes from the heart.

Here we can see how highly Judy values sincerity in belief. Just to repeat prayers to her is not praying. They must come from the heart. The problem that concerns her is not so much whether or not the prayer is answered, but rather that the prayer itself be sincere.

At one point in the interview Judy was questioned regarding a belief which she stated. When she said that a tornado that kills innocent people is a part of God's plan, she was asked why a good God would do such a thing. Her answer showed some doubt, and it seemed obvious that she had never seriously considered the problem before. She could only say "I don't know," though at first she tried to explain by saying that God must have some reason for everything He did. We found in other cases too that Judy did not rigidly argue the traditional point of view despite the personal feeling she had concerning God. She expressed doubt another time.

Whenever I think what is God or questions
like that I feel there aren't any answers.
It's all so mysterious. Some things you
just can't answer.

Thus, contrary to what we might think, doubt does not shatter Judy's belief, at least at this stage. Perhaps it is because her belief is so strong that it can withstand questions of this nature. We must say, then, that in her theology no matter how remarkably unsophisticated her beliefs seem, nevertheless she does seem to comprehend problems when they are suggested to her without losing a grip on her beliefs.

Judy may have clung to her extremely naive position

in so many areas for any number of reasons. It may be that she has been over protected as a child, or it is possible that she has come under the influence of some person that has fostered the attitudes which she holds. Whatever the reason may be, she did not respond to most of the questions and problems in a usual manner, but seemed to epitomize all that is naive and immature in the young people though to a much greater degree than we found in any one other teenager. To her nearly everything is good except that which we commonly accept as evil, such as crime, prejudice, and poverty. She believes in a very personal God and expresses her beliefs in a most unusual, intimate manner. She is not afraid to doubt, but remains secure in her beliefs.

It is of course presumptuous to say she is wrong, for the dream world in which she lives may well contain more "truth" than the realism which most of us experience. But unsophisticated and untouched by the cynism, humanism, and pessimism of our time Judy's ideas are pure and simple at least, if not naive and immature. How she reacts to life and its problems in later years is a question we wish we could answer.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

A Summary.

When the thesis was first projected, the scope of the study was to be very broad. It was our hope that we might touch upon the totality of the religious needs and attitudes of Reform Jewish teenagers. In addition to their feelings relating to Judaism in particular, our study attempted to gain information regarding their peer groups, their attitudes toward their parents, and their concepts of themselves. The hypotheses which conclude Chapter I indicate the scope of the study. With this rather large area of inquiry in mind, the interview schedule and the questionnaire were prepared and administered. The material resulting from these instruments covers all of these areas.

The material was then brought together under basic headings, quantified, and analyzed. Because it soon became apparent that it would be impossible to cover all the areas adequately, certain sections of basic concern were given the greatest attention. Chiefly these included feelings of Jewishness, attitudes toward Jewish ceremony and toward the rabbinate, theological and religious views, and concern for social idealism. Even these areas, on the basis of the material at hand, were not completely covered because correlations were not made. A large number of research possibilities will have to be dealt with at a later time. This brief summary is concerned with those sub-

jects studied in depth.

We learned that our young people have a strong feeling of belonging to the Jewish group, and we hypothesized correctly on this point. To them nearly everything associated with Judaism is good. They want to be a part of Jewish causes and Jewish organizations. They see advantages in being Jewish. They are unconcerned with anti-Semitism, and are convinced that it does not exist to a significant degree.

Their sense of belonging to the Jewish group provides a strong contrast with the Jewish adolescent of two decades ago. Then the marginal position of the young Jew caused him to ask whether he was an American or a Jew. The situation of today is entirely different, however. The young person finds security in being a Jew, for his identification as a Jew helps identify him as an American. The inner conflicts of marginality of 20 years ago have ceased for Judaism has assumed a status today of being one of the three great religions of America. The question of identity, which was the basis of the problem before, now is clearly answered.

Our study found, as those who write of Judaism in America have suggested, that the young Jew wants to maintain his Judaism and to associate himself with Jewish causes. The more secure he feels as a Jew, the more secure he is as an American. He has no interest in leaving the Jewish group.

We also learned that the teenagers are enthusiastic

about ritual and desire more of it for their own homes. We believe this is not primarily because of the meaning of the ritual itself, but rather because it adds to the youths' feeling of Jewish identity. We also noted that the increased sensitivity of the adolescent period makes certain dramatic type ceremonies especially attractive to the young people.

The teenagers indicated a great respect for their rabbis. They said they wanted a close relationship with them and seemed most willing to go to them as advisors and counselors. As we pointed out, two reasons are apparent. First, to the young people seeking a closer identification with their religion, the rabbi is a symbol of Judaism. They therefore seek companionship with the rabbi who represents that with which they want to be more closely identified. Second, the adolescent, in his struggle for independence from his parents often seeks an older, admired person with whom he can identify. This person helps the teenager find his own self identity by serving as a model. The adolescent mimics many of the habits and values of the older friend. The young rabbi in particular serves as such a model. The desire for the close relationship we noticed between rabbis and teenagers can thus be partly explained by this factor in the psychology of adolescence. However, the dynamic of identification would not be significant here if the rabbi, as the representative of Judaism, did not hold a place of high prestige in the minds of the young people.

The attitude of the young people toward religion in general was found to be enthusiastic. Their feelings can be best explained by the recognition of three important factors. First, the general status of religion in the life of America today is very high. Second, in the search for security and meaning in a world filled with seeming chaos, religion is an institution to which the young people can naturally turn. Third, belonging to religious institutions meets their need to belong to a group and aids them in their identification with Judaism. Their expectations of religion and of its effect upon the world is very great, and their willingness to be a part of a religious movement is indeed overwhelming. They think of Judaism as a religion that can be of great meaning to them in their personal lives.

The theology of the young people is characterized by simplicity and lack of sophistication. Their concept of God is deeply personal, and they believe God hears prayers and answers those that are worthy. The evil in the world is part of God's plan and they seem to have rarely if at all questioned the maturity of their concepts. Their theology is God centered, no matter how naive and immature it may be. Their responses in general show little questioning and little thinking. Generally naivete is the tone of most of their ideas. Their concept of prayer, however, and the realization that some prayers are more worthy than others at least

showed some maturity in this area. More maturity is also shown in their thoughts of life after death for they seem to have considered this problem somewhat realistically as well. However we found less searching on the part of the teenagers than we had originally hypothesized.

The American way of life places greater stress on belief itself than on what one should believe. Therefore the young people have not been subjected to systematized theology as a part of American culture. Their only source for this has been their own religious schools, and these have provided very little in the way of a mature theological approach. It is not surprising, therefore, that we find lack of thought, and of earnest questioning of belief on the part of our teenagers. Only in the area of prayer, where some attempt at mature education has been made, and with regard to concepts of death, where natural anxieties have stimulated thinking, is there any indication of mature approach. The basic God concept which the child received in his earliest years remains, and little opportunity has been provided for growth in this area.

In the area of social idealism the teenagers exhibited no overwhelming rejection of the way of life of the preceding generation. There was an awareness of certain social problems to be sure, but even this awareness seemed to be on a superficial level and far less than we assumed in our hypotheses. Likewise the depth of their concern was

not great. We found no great mood to make changes. General satisfaction with most of American life, and slight dissatisfaction with certain accepted problems characterized the social thinking of these young people.

Three explanations help us understand these findings. First, the young people are not rebelling against their parents and often this teenage-parent rebellion is that which brings about a more general rejection of society. The satisfaction with the values of their parents is carried over to the teenagers' general view of society. Second, those issues which do disturb the young people, chiefly segregation and poverty, and the awareness of the latter was not very great, are commonly accepted problems by everyone. All Americans are against discrimination, and for the teenagers to be against it, too, does not necessarily indicate any idealism on their part. Third, the young people find little in their life-situation with which to be disturbed. Even segregation does not effect them personally. They are not directly "bothered" by the problems of society. If their attitudes could be called idealistic at all it is of a bland type and greatly modified by general acceptance of their parents' values, by the values of society, and by relative freedom from direct contact with basic issues.

B Implications

1. Religious Education

From the feelings and attitudes of the Reform Jewish teenagers we found some significant implications for Jewish education.

One area which seems to have been greatly neglected by Jewish education is that of basic Jewish beliefs. We noted how naive and immature are the God concepts and related beliefs of our young people. Our movement has incorporated a rationalistic approach to religion. It is most important that our religious schools revise their curriculums and teach theology to the children at each level. As it seems now, only in the primary grades and sometimes during the confirmation and pre-confirmation years is there any attention given to these problems. The child is given a concept he can understand when he is very young. However, as he grows no attempt is made to help him grow in understanding of his theological beliefs. In other subjects, needless to say, this vacuum does not exist. Hebrew, history, holidays, and customs are all taught throughout the years the child spends in religious school and they are graded by the child's ability to learn and to conceptualize. In too few religious schools now, however, is there any attempt to teach the child how he might develop a mature God concept. We must realize that as the child grows his ability to question and to think grows too.

If, in the elementary as well as the primary departments of religious schools, would present the child with the opportunity to discuss and to question theology which they can understand, when they reach the teen years their concepts should be far more mature and ultimately more helpful in their adult lives. The need for a well integrated

program for teaching theology in our religious schools is very great. The task must be approached with caution. The material must not consist of a condensation of Rabbinic theology but rather must be a real attempt to relate God and the universe to the daily life of the child in each stage of his development.

In addition, there is another area where we should turn our attention to aid our young people in achieving a more mature approach to theology. Since, as we discovered, the values and attitudes of parents are accepted so readily by the teenagers it might be of great profit to bring the problem to the attention of the parents. Perhaps the educator might conduct sessions for parents on the basic issue of what kind of theology should be transmitted to the child during his development. Of course the attitudes of the parents will probably be found as immature in many cases as those of their children and an important area for further parent education lies open. The role of parents in transmitting theological beliefs as well as other attitudes must not be underestimated, and we must turn to them as well as to the religious school for solutions to the problem.

One of the chief cornerstones of Reform Judaism has always been its teaching of social justice. The lack of awareness and real feeling for social problems which we found among the teenagers reminds us that we have almost completely neglected this area in religious education. The

experience at the NFTY camps indicates that the young people are very responsive to learning about social problems, even though their present awareness of them may be very slight. Therefore a course in contemporary social problems in the older grades would help fill the gap. The more subtle problems of civil liberties which seem to go completely unnoticed should also be taught in the upper grades. In addition to teaching the children about these problems, the educator will be illustrating how Judaism can be applied to the contemporary scene.

The interest of the young people in ceremony and ritual also is a challenge to the educator. The success of the creative services in the NFTY program can be transferred to the religious school. The two elements which make these programs successful, that they are written by the young people in terms of their own experience and that they employ dramatic ceremony do not make them less applicable to a religious school. While it is true that the appeal of outdoor setting is lost, nevertheless the effectiveness of creative worship with older grades has been proven in some religious schools.

We also noted how anxious the young people are to increase the amount of ceremony in their own lives. Both the rabbi and the educator must now begin to think of developing special roles in ceremony for children. Though Chanukah, Purim, and Passover do lend themselves to involvement of the children, the Sabbath, for example, could

be made far more meaningful if special ceremonies for the child were developed. This is an area which requires much further exploration,

Our study also indicated the willingness of the young people to identify with Judaism. The educator should capitalize on this and eliminate many of the negative approaches of the past. Teaching of the threat of anti-Semitism and how to meet it is no longer as applicable in a society where, for the most part, the Jew is readily accepted. With less emphasis on anti-Semitism, stress should be placed on the role of the Jew in America as an individual and as a group. In terms of social responsibility what it means to be a Jew is far more significant now than the social problem of being a Jew. If Judaism is one of the three major religions in America what are its responsibilities? Likewise, we should educate our children to understand the differences between Judaism and Christianity through teaching comparative religion, stressing not how much alike we are, but rather the meaningful differences. The social status of the Jew changed as it is, should impel us to revise our thinking in this area. The old problems are not valid as they once may have been. The Jew, now secure as an American and no longer a marginal man, can look upon his role in America in a new light. No longer must he be afraid to emphasize differences, and our children should be taught them. Apologetics and defence must be replaced by a clearer understanding of Jewish ideas and values, concepts and beliefs, in our religious school curriculums.

From the NFTY experience with teaching in the camps, the educators should take note of a new methodology. The teaching of values through the group as pointed out in Chapter I, was proposed by Kurt Lewin and Paul Grabbe. It has been done successfully by the NFTY at their national and regional leadership institutes. These institutes in utilizing the abilities of the young people, have found it possible to teach values through involvement. That is, a young person may become involved in a program on some aspect of social justice, and before the program has ended the values have been "caught" by the young person or at least reinforced in him. The immense success of these institutes and camps in inculcating values should be noted by educators who direct religious schools. It would seem that through group involvement in a variety of programs and projects both in and out of the school, younger children, too, can be effectively educated to accept certain values and attitudes. The actual spelling out of such programs is a task for the future.

2. Rabbis

In general the young people seem to be fond of rabbis. They are not always satisfied with their relationship with their own, however, for what they want most is not always fulfilled. The teenager, more than anything else, wants to be able to talk to his rabbi. He seeks a close relationship with his spiritual leader. It would seem that rabbis do not always realize this, and their own young people find it hard to communicate with them. Opportunities which are available are not always used. The teenager expects the rabbi

to make an effort to breach the gap between them, and once this is done the young person is willing to follow through. He indicated his willingness to go to his rabbi for counsel if he felt that communication was possible.

The confirmation class and ceremony provide what seems to be the best opportunity for this relationship to develop. Yet many of the young people complained of the impersonal quality of the total experience and that no effort was made on the part of the rabbi to understand his teenage members. The size of confirmation classes is of course a difficult obstacle to overcome. However, even with large groups, if the rabbi would make an attempt to know the teenagers he would find his efforts rewarded in mutual affection. Taking his confirmation class to a camp for a weekend is certainly one effective means, and meeting at least once during the year with each member is another. We have discovered that potentially the rabbi can be an important influence in the lives of his teenagers. He is admired by them, and they will quickly identify in many ways if given the chance. Needless to say, the transfer of values in this relationship of identification can be one of the most effective means of teaching living Judaism. The implications, therefore, of the close relationship which the teenager wants with his rabbi, must not be overlooked by the spiritual leaders of our congregations.

3. The National Federation of Temple Youth

Though this study was not made to test the effective-

ness of the NFTY programs, most particularly their camp institutes, nevertheless we found their programs to be very effective. There can be no doubt that the young people who attend the camps find an experience of living Judaism which has many lasting effects. The possibilities of Judaism coming alive in terms of learning, worship, and social action are apparent to all who participate. The values which are "caught" through the dynamics of the institutes will not soon be forgotten. If anything, the results of the study, from the testimony of the young people themselves, indicate the fine contribution the NFTY has made not only to the lives of the young people but also to the Reform Jewish movement.

Two suggestions are implied in our findings. First, the study program should be geared more toward helping the young people find a mature faith and aiding them as they begin to question the childish beliefs they have held for so long. The curriculum of the camps might well be devoted to the various theological questions that must be answered, or at least thought about, by all mature people. Through the dynamics of group discussion, a technique profoundly effective, honest questioning can be brought about in the minds of the youth in a healthy and fruitful manner.

Second, the program of the local youth groups should attempt more and more to utilize many of the group projects found so successful at the camp institutes. Through doing things together, through working as a unit toward a special

goal or cause, the same acquisition of values through group dynamics can take place at home as it does in the camps. Likewise, the youth group, too, should make an attempt to make closer the relationship between the rabbi and the young people by inviting him to participate in many activities, not necessarily in a role of speaker or leader.

4. Further Research

The nature of this study might best be described as exploratory. We found no other material on the religious attitudes of Reform Jewish teenagers. We have noted new trends in thinking of the young people, and lack of concern in significant areas which require attention.

For a complete study, a great number of important co-relationships must be studied. Time prevented the completion of this task. The relationship between peer group adjustment and feelings of Jewishness, of parental continuity and theological beliefs, of personal security and social concern among many, many others hold information of value to the educator and the social scientist alike. The information for some of these relationships has already been acquired and has only to be studied. For others, new studies will have to be made. Also, in order conclusively to establish the truth of the trends we have seen, studies with control groups should be conducted.

FOOTNOTES

1. Robert J. Havighurst, Human Development and Education, p. 112.
2. Irene M. Josselyn, The Adolescent and His World, p. 39.
3. Lawrence and Mary K. Frank, Your Adolescent at Home and in School, p. 102.
4. Muzafer Sherif and Hadley Cantril, The Psychology of Ego-Involvements, p. 223.
5. Josselyn, op. cit., p. 74.
6. Frank, op. cit., pp. 100-1.
7. Josselyn, op. cit., p. 74.
8. Frank, op. cit., p. 65.
9. Josselyn, op. cit., p. 39.
10. Kurt Lewin and Paul Grabbe, "Conduct, Knowledge, and Acceptance of New Values," Journal of Social Issues, 1:3, p. 63.
11. Havighurst, op. cit., p. 156.
12. Loc. cit.
13. Josselyn, op. cit., p. 78.
14. Erik Erikson, Childhood and Society, pp. 228-9.
15. Havighurst, op. cit., p. 156.
16. Josselyn, op. cit., p. 25.
17. Havighurst, op. cit., pp. 149-50.
18. Ibid., p. 123
19. Josselyn, op. cit., pp. 27-28.
20. Ibid., pp. 28-9.
21. Ibid., p. 38.
22. Ibid., pp. 50-1.
23. Frederick Elkin and William Westley, "The Myth of Adolescent Culture," American Sociological Review, 2:6, p. 682.

24. David Reisman, Faces in the Crowd, p. 528.
25. Loc. cit.
26. David Reisman, The Lonely Crowd, p. 19.
27. Kingsly Davis, "The Sociology of Parent-Youth Conflict,"
American Sociological Review, 5:535.
28. Ibid., pp. 526-7.
29. Kingsly Davis, "The Adolescent and the Social Structure,"
Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences, 236:14.
30. Paul Tillich, The Courage to Be, p. 46.
31. Havighurst, op. cit., pp. 143-4.
32. Ibid., p. 153.
33. Kingsly Davis, "The Adolescent..." p. 15.
34. Sherif and Cantril, op. cit., p. 202.
35. Philip E. Jacob, Changing Values in College, p. 4.
36. Ibid., p. 21.
37. Paul Weaver, "Youth and Religion," Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences, 236:157.
38. Frank and Frank, op. cit., pp. 126-7.
39. Ibid., p. 127.
40. Weaver, op. cit., pp. 154-5.
41. Ibid., p. 156.
42. Harold E. Jones, Development in Adolescence, p. 108.
43. Jacobs, op. cit., p. 4.
44. H. H. Remmers and D. H. Radler, "Our Teenagers,"
The Jewish Digest, 3:3, 46-8.
45. Abraham N. Franzblau, Religious Belief and Character Among Jewish Adolescents, p. 9.
46. Loc. cit.
47. Ibid., p. 11.

48. Ibid., pp. 68-9.
49. Will Herberg, Catholic-Protestant-Jew, p. 72.
50. Ibid., p. 52.
51. Ibid., pp. 53-4.
52. Lewin, op. cit., p. 179.
53. Herberg, op. cit., p. 72.
54. Ibid., pp. 73-7.
55. Ibid., pp. 96-7.
56. Ibid., p. 98.
57. Ibid., p. 282.
58. Nathan Glazer, American Judaism, p. 113.
59. Ibid., pp. 124-5.
60. Ibid., p. 130.
61. Ibid., p. 132.
62. Lewin, op. cit., p. 179.
63. Ibid., p. 178.
64. Ibid., pp. 178-9.
65. Glazer, op. cit., p. 140.
66. Herberg, op. cit., p. 54.
67. Lewin, op. cit., pp. 181-2.
68. Josselyn, op. cit., p. 77.
69. Herberg, op. cit., p. 98.
70. Ibid., p. 103.
71. Ibid., p. 75.
72. Ibid., p. 54.
73. Ibid., p. 73.

74. Ibid., p. 75.
75. Union Prayer Book, I, p. 34.
76. Glazer, op. cit., p. 139.
77. Herberg, op. cit. p. 96.
78. Ibid., p. 282.
79. Glazer, op. cit., pp. 132-3.
80. Remmers and Radler, op. cit., p. 48.
81. Elkin and Westly, op. cit., p. 682.

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