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St. Louis Reform Congregations"

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INTERFAITH MARRIAGE
AND NEO-TRADITIONALISM
IN
ST. LOUIS REFORM CONGREGATIONS

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for Ordination
Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion
Cincinnati, 1976

Referee: Prof. Norman Mirsky

For Beatrice Mackler Friedman

my mother

ואל תטש תורת אמן

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To the Rabbis of St. Louis Missouri for their insight
and helpfulness;

To the staff of the Behavioral Science Laboratory of
the University of Cincinnati without whose
patience and cooperation much of this study
would not have been possible;

To Rabbi Harold Hahn for his help with the pilot
study;

And especially to Dr. Norman Mirsky for his trust
and guidance.

DIGEST

Three questions concerning the St. Louis Reform Jewish community are asked in this thesis. First, what attitudes do Reform temple members hold toward interfaith marriage? Second, to what extent do these congregants actually observe certain traditional Jewish rites? Third, is there an identifiable relationship between attitudes toward traditional Jewish rituals and points of view toward interfaith marriage?

To answer these questions, a questionnaire was mailed to a sample of St. Louis Reform congregants. Results were tabulated by hand and extensive cross tabulation of selected data was done by computer analysis. Follow-up interviews were conducted with selected respondents.

The fact that most Reform pulpit rabbis in St. Louis will officiate at a marriage between a Jew and a non-Jew is not an indication that their congregants favor such marriages. Most believe that interfaith marriage contributes to assimilation and desire that their children marry other Jews. However, almost two-thirds of our respondents support their rabbis' actions in performing interfaith weddings. Those whom we interviewed personally tended to believe that a rabbi should 1) attempt to reduce the social and familial stigma attached to religiously exogamous marriage; 2) strive to establish or maintain the Jewish identity of the interfaith couple. They do not believe that he can accomplish either of these goals if he refuses to officiate.

Has this non-halachic position on rabbinical officiation at intermarriages discouraged St. Louis congregants from observing various

rituals associated with traditional Judaism? Our data indicates that the answer is no. Most St. Louis Reform Jews whom we surveyed see themselves as moderately or very observant of Jewish tradition. About three-fourths of them maintain positive attitudes toward such traditional Jewish practices as wearing a tallis or yarmulkah, cantorial music, and yahrtzeit observance. A majority attend services at least eight times annually. Seven out of 10 light candles on Shabbat at least occasionally and a substantial number would like to be more traditional than they are. Positive attitudes toward and actual practice of Jewish rituals are widespread among St. Louis Reform congregants.

Our respondents believe that those who are more traditional are more opposed to interfaith marriage. This did not, however seem to be the case. St. Louis Reform Jews whom we questioned, almost without exception, were not favorable toward intermarriage. This attitude prevailed regardless of a person's traditional behavior or attitudes. Respondents who were less traditional were just as likely to oppose interfaith marriage as were their more traditional fellow congregants.

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I. INTRODUCTION

More than 40 million people have immigrated to the United States in the last century and a half. With them has come the cultural baggage of hundreds of different circumstances. Once in America, most of these people clung to others of similar origin to form a myriad of cultural enclaves. Somehow, this country must have seemed much less foreign through the windowpanes of a more familiar milieu.

However much these immigrants tried to retain their traditional ways of life through their various institutions, they, nevertheless, labored, learned, and socialized in the world outside. Conflict between the two worlds was inevitable. Understandably, the immigrant's darkest fear was that his children would abandon the mores and folkways of their parents, embracing the culture of the outside world. To prevent this loss of the young, these ethnic communities took an interest in "updating" their traditional institutions to more closely resemble those of the general American environment. The community itself, therefore, facilitated the modification of traditional culture.

The original culture of these immigrant groups often prepared its members for some particular kind of economic endeavor. A special skill served as a kind of port-of-entry into the economic system of the larger community and was often expanded and exploited by members of the group. A great majority of the Jews, for example, who migrated to the United States during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries found employment in the "needle trades." Soon the manufacture of wearing apparel came to be regarded as a "Jewish industry."¹

As a result, the early immigrant often became involved in some special category of skilled labor, retail trade, or skilled profession. With time, however, members of these enclaves sought status beyond the bounds of their ethnic professions and communities. Children of immigrants began to see Americans of various ethnic origins as people to be reckoned with, competed with, and befriended. As a result of this association with their new found peers, they were even more open to the culture of greater America. Such change was further facilitated by the fact that traditional community institutions themselves adapted to the new milieu, thereby sanctioning the values of the larger culture.

Were this trend to continue, one might reasonably expect the amalgamation of most if not all ethnicity into a composite American national identity. It was just this trend in American society which led Frederick Jackson Turner, a young historian from Wisconsin, to present a paper to the American Historical Association in 1893, entitled, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History."² In it Turner endorsed what has become famous as the "Melting Pot" theory of assimilation. Turner's thesis was, essentially, that the experiences created by the western frontier, its challenges and environment, acted as a solvent for the separatist tendencies of many national groups. It was the special nature of the Midwest, according to this thesis, to encourage cultural mixing.

It is not merely that the section was growing rapidly and was made up of various stock with many different cultures . . . what is more significant is that these elements did not remain as separate strata underneath an established ruling order, as was the case particularly in New England. All were accepted as intermingling components of a forming society, plastic and absorptive.³

For Turner, not only was America a melting pot, but the very

melting process was carried on most efficiently on the Midwestern frontier. What is more, going west often meant leaving behind the ethnic enclave of one's parents and the support offered by that community for traditional values. Even today, the Eastern seaboard cities of the United States bear visible testimony to our nation's poly-ethnic origin, while the Midwestern cities show a relative dearth of that very ethnicity.

Though the "Melting Pot" theory of assimilation has been subject to much criticism⁴ in the last twenty-five years, Turner might easily have predicted the highly acculturated character of the present day St. Louis Jewish community. Certainly we would expect such a large Midwestern metropolis to give evidence of the melting pot effect. The Reform segment of that community has traditionally dominated the Conservative and Orthodox groups.

Jews have historically become members of Reform congregations for economic as well as religious or philosophical reasons. At the turn of the century it was the Reform temple to which the wealthy, established German Jews belonged. Orthodox shules were reserved largely for the Eastern European working class. The Conservative movement itself was inaugurated, to some extent, to give the lower and middle class working Jew a form of Judaism more in keeping with American culture without admitting him to the elitist Reform temple. To join a Reform temple has been a mark of social status and, therefore, the aspiration of many within the Jewish community. The rich went to temple while the not-so-wealthy attended synagogue. The temple itself became as much a status institution as a religious one. Whatever the nature of Reform Judaism as a religious system, Reform Jews have traditionally been more

acculturated than their more traditional brethren. The Jews who affiliated with Reform temples were of as high or higher socio-economic class than their non-Jewish neighbors. Through contact with these neighbors, their lives transcended ethnic boundaries.

The Reform Movement in St. Louis is certainly as strong or stronger than in other American communities. While St. Louis's central location certainly was a factor, it was no surprise that the anti-halachic Association for a Progressive Reform Judaism chose that city in which to hold its first organizational meeting in 1974. In St. Louis, the 5273 affiliated Reform families make up 55% of the entire synagogue affiliated Jewish community.⁵ Most affiliated Jews in the United States do not belong to Reform temples but to Conservative synagogues. While Reform Jews remain highest in socio-economic level, the Conservative movement claims four hundred thousand more followers nationally.⁶ Yet, members of Reform temples far outnumber those of either the Conservative or Orthodox movements in St. Louis. Furthermore, St. Louis claims seven Reform temples and fourteen Reform rabbis actively engaged in Jewish activities. As a primary Midwestern stronghold of liberal Judaism, St. Louis is not among the strongest of candidates for traditional movement within its Reform institutions. Yet, a greater interest in things traditional had made substantial inroads even in St. Louis.

Theodore Lenn's study of Reform Judaism in America⁷ indicated that only 41% of Reform rabbis would officiate at a marriage between a Jew and a non-Jew who had not converted prior to the marriage ritual. Yet, in St. Louis, membership in any of the seven Reform congregations brings access to at least one rabbi who will perform an interfaith mar-

riage. Of the thirteen rabbis presently retained by Reform temples in St. Louis,⁸ eleven of them will officiate at such marriages. One of the two remaining pulpit rabbis only requires that the non-Jewish partner be in the process of conversion at the time of the ceremony. The other has been in St. Louis less than one year at this writing. It is also noteworthy that one rabbi, who consistently refused to perform interfaith marriages at his previous congregation in another strongly Reform, Midwestern community, agreed to do so under certain conditions at his temple in St. Louis.

The numerical dominance of Reform Judaism in St. Louis and the willingness on the part of St. Louis Reform rabbis to perform interfaith marriage might easily lead one to expect a Reform community in which traditional ceremonies, whether synagogue or home oriented, are infrequent. Why would Reform Jews, far from the tradition supporting enclaves of their immigrant ancestors, retain such religious behavior while striving for status within this Midwestern, American community? It comes as some surprise, therefore, to find a regeneration of interest in traditional ceremony within St. Louis Reform congregations. Yet, where only a decade ago the cantor was seen as an exclusively Conservative and Orthodox functionary and the yarmulkah and tallis seemed to serve as the very banners of Orthodoxy itself, we find two of the largest temples in St. Louis with professional cantors and at least three rabbis who regularly don a tallis on Friday night. This anomaly led the researcher to question the depth of the apparent neo-traditional trend within St. Louis congregational life. Could a community accept many of the values and ceremonies of Jewish tradition while lending official sanction to marriages proscribed by that very tradition?

II. METHODOLOGY

Three areas for study were determined in order to answer this question: 1) To inquire concerning the attitudes of St. Louis Reform congregants toward interfaith marriage; 2) To investigate the extent to which these congregants actually practice certain key traditional rituals and observances; 3) To determine whether an identifiable relationship exists between congregants' viewpoints toward traditional observance and various aspects of interfaith marriage. To this end a questionnaire was devised and sent to a sample of Reform congregants in St. Louis.

Development of the questionnaire began with a pilot study of Rockdale Temple in Cincinnati, Ohio. With the cooperation of Rabbi Harold Hahn and Dr. Norman Mirsky, a preliminary questionnaire was designed (see Appendix II) to test questions for clarity and to inquire concerning those Jewish practices which were considered traditional by a group of Midwestern Reform Jews outside of St. Louis. The sample chosen consisted of every tenth name from an official list of Rockdale Temple members. Questionnaires were mailed to 84 different households with two questionnaires enclosed for married couples. While a cover letter explained that both husband and wife were asked to respond, only in two instances were questionnaires from both spouses received. Eight mailings were returned as not deliverable, leaving a domain of 76 congregants who were actually contacted. From these Rockdale families, 39 people or 51% of the total sample completed the

questionnaire. Results of this pilot study are reported in Appendix II. Before the St. Louis questionnaire was composed, various rabbis and congregants in the St. Louis area were consulted for suggestions and guidance in drawing up the instrument.

Questionnaires were mailed to a sample of 557 congregants chosen (every tenth name) from the rosters of the seven St. Louis Reform congregations current in mid-October of 1975. Each congregant received one questionnaire, a cover letter (copies of these may be found in Appendix I), and a self-addressed, stamped return envelope. In the case of married couples, mailings were alternately addressed to the husband or wife. Fifty-one envelopes were returned as not deliverable, leaving a domain of 515 congregants contacted. Of these 292 or 57% returned their questionnaires. This amounts to slightly less than 6% of the total affiliated Reform community.

Results were tabulated by hand and extensive cross-tabulation of selected responses was done by computer analysis using the "Statistical Package for the Social Sciences." This study owes much to the help and cooperation offered by the Behavioral Science Laboratory of the University of Cincinnati. Finally, follow-up interviews were conducted with 25 congregants selected at random from a list of respondents who indicated that they would be willing to be interviewed. This list included 100 respondents or 31% of those who returned our questionnaire.

III. THE SAMPLE: WHO ARE THEY?

This study is not an effort to provide an infallible description of the entire St. Louis Reform community. Rather, we attempt herein to delineate the nature and attitudes of a relatively large segment of that community. Our actual returns came from over 5% of all households affiliated with St. Louis Reform congregations and provides an insightful picture of their feelings about Jewish tradition and interfaith marriage.

1. Gender

Male congregants were somewhat more likely to respond than were female. Fifty-five per cent of our sample came from men while only 44% came from women. Forty-eight per cent of our original mailing was addressed to women.

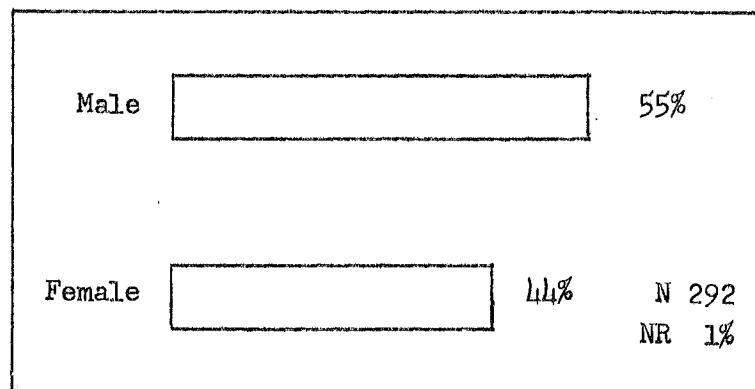


Figure 1.
Sample by Gender

2. Age

Sixty-five per cent of our sample came from people between the ages of 31 and 60. The 1973 National Jewish Population Study reported that 62% of the American Jewish community over the age of 25 came from that age bracket.⁹ The three per cent difference, though not significant, came primarily from those between the ages of 31 and 40. Since we were sampling only those affiliated with congregations, this difference might have been anticipated. Jews in their thirties are most likely to have religious school age children.

Age		N:289
25-30	6%	
31-40	21%	
41-50	23%	
51-60	21%	
61-70	19%	
71 up	9%	

Table 1

Sample by Age

The very old (71 and over) seem to represent a smaller portion of our affiliated sample than of Jews nationally. While Massarik and Chenkin¹⁰ reported 12% from this age group, they represent only 9% of our sample. In addition, only 6% of our responses came from those between 25 and 30 years old. NJPS reports that this age group makes up 10% of those Jews in America over 25 years old. Should we anticipate a reluctance on the part of the very young and very old to

join congregations? This reluctance is not conclusive from our figures, though such a trend is indicated.

3. Synagogue Membership

During an informal discussion, one St. Louis congregant commented that "temple hopping" was widespread practice in St. Louis. She explained that congregants, dissatisfied with their present temple, rabbi, religious school, or dues structure would readily drop their memberships and "shop" for a more amiable situation. Competition between Reform temples for members is intense in St. Louis. The temple with the longest membership list is, not coincidentally, also the one with the lowest dues rate. This mobility among congregants has proliferated in the last five years through the establishment of two new congregations, expanding the number of temples from 5 to 7.

Our sample seemed to bear out this mobility. Forty-one per cent of St. Louis respondents reported that they had been members of their present temple for less than thirteen years and more than half of these for less than five years. We do not know how many of these members are new residents in the St. Louis area. St. Louis county, however, is not a growing area.¹¹

Sixty-one per cent of our respondents were previously members of other temples or synagogues. Chances are very good that a respondent belonged to a Reform temple prior to affiliation with his present Reform congregation. Sixty-two per cent of those who reported previous membership in another temple or synagogue indicated that it was Reform. Twenty-four per cent had been members of Conservative synagogues. Fourteen per cent came from Orthodox congregations. Figure 3 tells

us that 39% of the entire sample had previously belonged to another Reform temple. This would seem to confirm the perception of St. Louis Reform Jews as "temple hoppers."

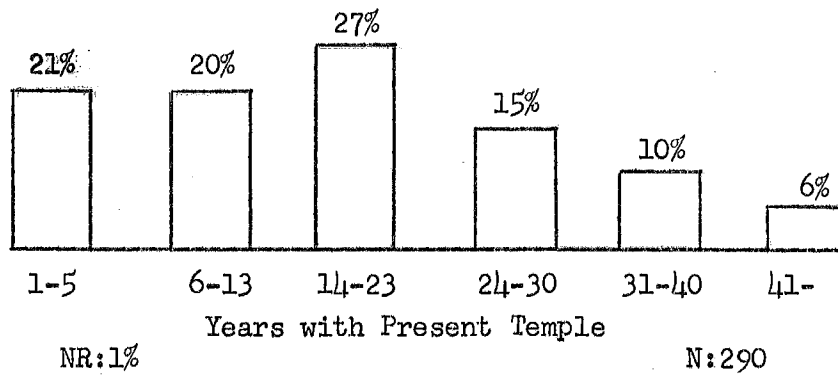


Figure 2

Sample by Years Affiliated With Present Temple

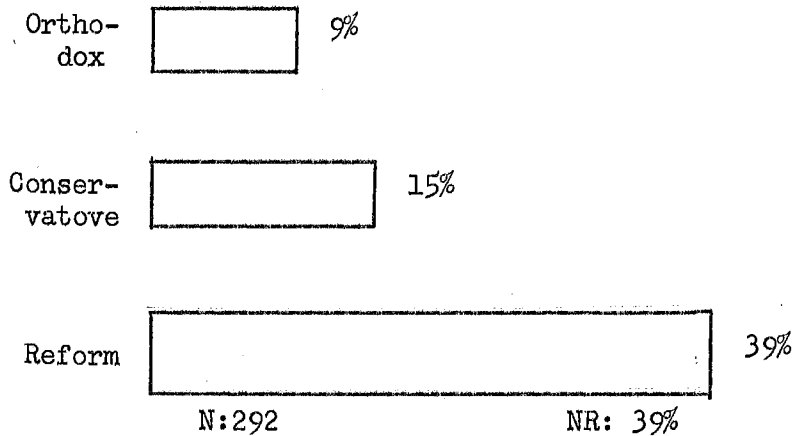


Figure 3

Sample by Previous Membership

4. Families

Respondents to our questionnaire came from households which were slightly larger than the American Jewish average. Eighty-three per cent of our sample was married and the average household had slightly more than 2 children. According to our sample the household of the average St. Louis Reform Jew consists of 4.0 persons. According to the National Jewish Population Study the average size of an American Jewish household was 3.1 persons in 1973.

Sample by Number of Children	Number of Children		N: 292
	None	11%	
	One	13%	
	Two	37%	
	Three	32%	
	Four	5%	
	Five	2%	
	Six	1%	

Table 2

Nine per cent said they had been divorced, though over half of these had since remarried. Fourteen per cent had been widowed. Only 9 respondents or 4% of the sample had never married. The largest number of responses (55%) came from people married between 6 and 30 years. Only 25% had been married longer while just 6% were married less than 6 years. Once again, one might anticipate that a large number of congregants would belong to a temple at the time when their children can take advantage of the life-cycle ceremonies, religious

school, and youth activities.

Number of Years Married

1-5	6%	N:249
6-10	8%	
11-20	19%	
21-30	28%	
31-40	15%	
41-50	7%	
over 50	3%	

Table 3
Sample by Years Married

5. Income

Rather than request that congregants specify an approximate annual income, they were asked to estimate whether their income was greater than, less than, or the same as other St. Louis Reform Jews. Most respondents (53%) said that their income was the same as others. Twenty-one per cent estimated that they made less while 19% said that their income was greater than their fellow congregants.

6. The Intermarried

St. Louis Jews who are affiliated with Reform congregations have little problem finding a rabbi who will officiate at their children's intermarriage.¹² Some American rabbis deal with the problem of inter-faith marriage by refusing to perform one under any conditions. Others

deal with it by encouraging the conversion of the non-Jewish partner prior to the marriage ceremony. St. Louis Reform rabbis, for the most part, deal with such situations by agreeing to officiate. Many of these rabbis will only perform the ceremony if certain criteria are fulfilled or certain circumstances exist. For example, one rabbi requires a promise that the children be given a Jewish religious education. Others, however, will officiate in virtually all cases.

Were this a systematic study of the entire St. Louis Jewish Community, we might expect to find a larger number of couples who are intermarried than in cities where intermarriages are not as openly performed by rabbis. However, only 8% of our respondents who were married said that, at the time of their marriage, either they or their spouse were not Jewish. Nine per cent of those Jews in America who are now married, according to the National Jewish Population Study, are intermarried.¹³ No certain conclusion can be drawn from the similarity of our figure with that of Massarik and Chenkin. Their study included unaffiliated and affiliated Jews from the entire Jewish community. In addition, their definition of intermarriage stipulated that one spouse was non-Jewish at the time when the couple first met. Some portion of their respondents, according to this definition, probably converted prior to the ceremony. Our study limits interfaith marriage to cases in which one spouse was non-Jewish at the time of the marriage ritual itself.

It is very possible that a much larger number of intermarried couples were excluded from our questionnaire because they were not members of temples. Since the dramatic rise of the intermarriage rate took place between 1966 and 1972,¹⁴ many of these people would very like-

ly be between the ages of 25 and 30. Only 6% of our sample actually came from this age group. Taking this into consideration, our 8% figure might be interpreted to indicate a very high number of interfaith married Jews in St. Louis. It should be kept in mind that all intermarried couples who were non-affiliated were excluded from our sampling domain.

IV. INTERFAITH MARRIAGE ATTITUDES

Historically, even Reform Jewish communities have, to a varying degree, attached a strong stigma to incidents of religiously exogamous marriage among its members. This stigma applies as much to the parents of the Jewish partner as to the intermarried couple. Somehow, these parents have "failed" in training their child as a Jew. In the eyes of many, Jews who intermarry have not been properly educated by their families, and therefore cannot understand the significance of Jewish life. Parents bear the responsibility for this lack of understanding and commitment.¹⁵ The Jewish community has customarily taken the attitude that, if the family had been more observant, their children would not face the inevitable problems of such a marriage. However, whatever the causes and effects of intermarriage, the problem confronts the American Jewish community with more vigor and breadth today than ever before.

One conclusion of the most recent data concerning interfaith marriage¹⁶ is that our projections of the rate of intermarriage have greatly underestimated the incidence of such marriages.¹⁷ Jews who were party to interfaith weddings never constituted more than 7% of all Jews who wedded during any period prior to 1960. Between 1961 and 1965 this figure more than doubled to 17% and jumped again to almost 32% between 1966 and 1972. Because inmarriages involve two Jews while intermarriages involve only one Jewish partner, intermarriages now constitute about half of all Jewish marriages.

Intermarriage has become nearly as common as inmarriage and can no

longer be viewed as a form of rebellion or conscious effort to assimilate.¹⁸ Once, intermarriage was seen as an overt act of rebellion against family and community. Today, however, "The Jew who intermarries does so because he wishes to marry rather than intermarry."¹⁹ It is no longer socially inconsistent to be Jewish and to marry someone who is not. Furthermore, the connection between intermarriage and assimilation is not so clear as it once was. We live in a time in which contact between Jews and non-Jews is frequent and unavoidable. In the late 1960's, Sklare reported a growing resignation among "Lakeville" residents to the inevitability of intermarriage. "They feel that intermarriage is the law of life, that it cannot be resisted, that it may occur at any time." Similarly, one congregant who responded to our own study commented that he had no choice but to anticipate the possibility that his son might well marry a gentile. "After all," explained the father, "we sent him to a college with mostly gentiles."

A second implication of the National Jewish Population Study is that the very stigma, once a strong deterrent to religiously exogamous marriage among Jews, may be considerably less potent. The reason is that the difference between the inmarried and intermarried is less perceptible today. There is a much smaller behavioral and attitudinal difference between the inmarried and intermarried. The child who intermarried has not been banished from the family. He has, in fact, been able to maintain "both his family and Jewish ties because the ties required are minimal, and because he is not in fact so different from the rest of the family."²⁰ This similarity displayed itself on the National Jewish Population Study in the small differences between the inmarried and intermarried in their Jewish identity and plans for their children's

religious education.²¹ With this diminution in the distinctions between the inmarried and intermarried, how long will the traditional stigmas be maintained?

The comparisons offered by Massarik and Chenkin are suggestive rather than conclusive. However, the study indicated that 98% of the children of intermarriages, in which the wife was Jewish, were being raised as Jews. The percentage drops to 63% in cases where the husband is Jewish. Ultimately, however, the difference is small. While 70% of the intermarried couples said that they intended to give their children a Jewish education, 85% of the inmarried did so.

The Jewish community may be learning to live with intermarriage. But this does not imply, as we shall see, that Reform Jews in St. Louis look upon such marriages with favor. The comment of one respondent, made in an interview conducted by the researcher some weeks after the questionnaire was distributed, was very revealing.

Q: You indicated that you felt that intermarriage contributes to assimilation. Would you prefer that interfaith marriages were illegal?

A: Of course not. It's my daughter's right to choose whoever she wants. Only . . . that doesn't mean I think it's good. It's her life, but I would think it's a mistake. After all, we've always belonged to a temple and my son now lives in Israel. But I can't lock my daughter up.

This congregant, like most St. Louis Reform Jews, is not in favor of interfaith marriages and believes that such a match would not be in his daughter's interest. He is, however, resigned to the possibility.

Another congregant commented in regard to two sons who are presently living with non-Jewish girls. "It's how we raised them. We were never especially religious. We taught our sons that everyone was the same. Why shouldn't they decide to marry anyone they want?" This con-

gregant indicated on her questionnaire that she preferred that her child choose a Jewish spouse. It is evident, nonetheless, that she considers interfaith marriage to be a real possibility. She also indicated that interfaith marriage contributed to assimilation. Whatever the realities of intermarriage may be, St. Louis Reform Jews do not consider it to promise well for Judaism or for their children.

1. Preference That Children Inmarry

Attitudes among American Jews may have become more resigned to the possibility of interfaith marriage. However, there is no question that almost every Jewish parent prefers that his child marry another Jew. Ninety-three per cent of our sample preferred that their child choose a Jewish spouse. Three per cent indicated that they did not have a preference.

2. Does Intermarriage Contribute to Assimilation?

In a paper delivered at the Biennial Convention of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations in October of 1969, Rabbi Joseph Klein observed,

If the rate of intermarriage continues unabated and young Jews continue to display the kind of indifference to Judaism that has brought on the crisis, it may well be that we are witnessing the beginning of the end for Jewish life in America. It takes only a single generation of indifferent Jews to obliterate what a hundred generations over a period of more than 3,000 years have fought to preserve.²²

One of Rabbi Klein's beliefs, it would appear, is that marriages between Jews and non-Jews could lead to assimilation and thereby to the destruction of Judaism in America. This is certainly the attitude of many rabbis and laymen. And most St. Louis Reform Jews whom we surveyed (61%) agreed

that interfaith marriage leads to assimilation. Only 30% did not believe intermarriage to be assimilatory.

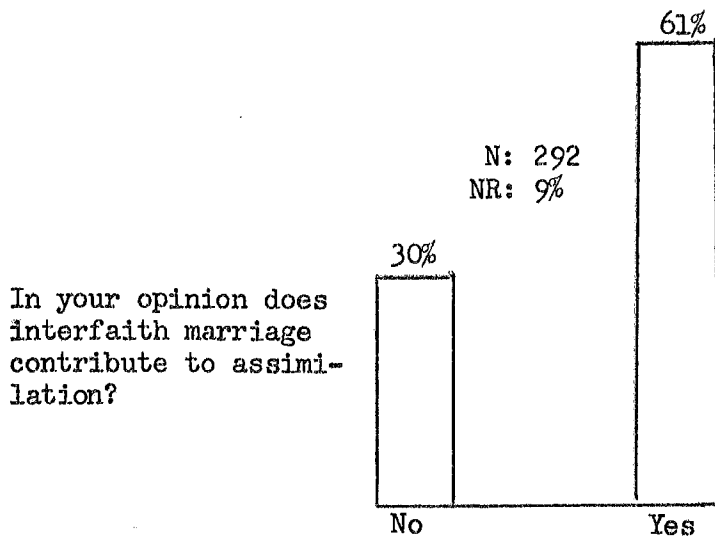


Figure 4

Congregants were also asked how affirmatively Jewish they guessed the children of the intermarried to be when compared with those of the inmarried. While 56% thought that they would be less affirmatively Jewish, 29% guessed that they would be just as affirmatively Jewish as the children of the inmarried. Only 6% said that the children of the intermarried would be more affirmatively Jewish than those of the inmarried.

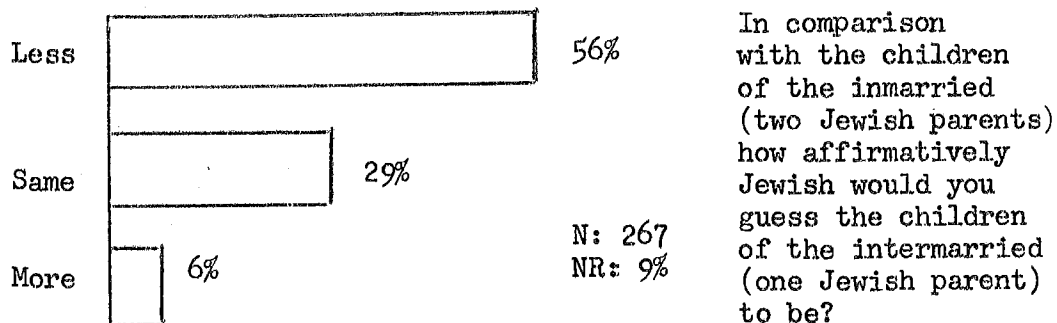


Figure 5

3. Should Reform Rabbis Officiate at Interfaith Marriages?

At least on the face of it, it is perplexing that our respondents, by and large, neither want their children to intermarry nor believe that such marriages are beneficial to Judaism, yet agree that rabbis should officiate at such marriages. Congregants were asked if they agreed that "Reform rabbis should refrain from officiating at marriages in which the non-Jewish partner has not converted to Judaism." Seventy-two per cent disagreed that rabbis should refrain and over a third of these strongly disagreed. Only 25% of respondents agreed that rabbis should not officiate while about a third of these indicated strong agreement.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
9%	16%	46%	26%

Table 4

Do you agree that Reform rabbis should refrain from officiating at marriages in which the non-Jewish partner has not converted?

How could the overwhelming majority of St. Louis congregants feel that interfaith marriage is assimilatory and undesirable for their own children and yet desire that their rabbis perform such marriage rituals? One answer is that these congregants do not believe that the rabbi solves the problem or prevents such marriages by refusing to officiate. Interviews with congregants revealed that, like their fellow Reform Jews in Lakeville, they see intermarriages as unavoidable. In their eyes, the rabbi only serves to irritate an already exasperating situation by refusing to officiate. One congregant asked, "Why must a rabbi turn his back on children and their families just when they need him most?"

Furthermore, St. Louis Reform Jews may believe that the rabbi has a

helping rather than a preventing role to play. His officiation might encourage the couple's continued identification with Judaism. Many indicated that because a rabbi officiated at the wedding ceremony, there would exist a greater likelihood that their child would continue to be identified as Jewish and that the children of that marriage would be raised as Jews. For them, the central consideration is that the couple sought out a rabbi to begin with. "How can we expect them to remain Jewish if our rabbi won't marry them?" The rabbi's central role is to help his congregants through what may be a crisis period. He can do little to prevent such a match. This topic is dealt with in greater depth in Chapter VII.

4. Interfaith Marriage and Divorce

"There are enough problems in marriage. Marrying outside of the faith is like starting out with two strikes against you." This "two strikes against you" theory is perhaps the most popular method of denouncing intermarriage. While a higher divorce rate has frequently been reported among the intermarried, this difference has become less clear with the rising number of divorces in so many sectors of our society. One rabbi-therapist reported,

[There is] no evidence to show that mixed couples have a harder time achieving marital success. When Jewish-Gentile couples have difficulties they are the same kind of difficulties all couples have, and the mixture almost never seems to be either the issue or a factor in another issue; indeed, often their marriage is going better than those of siblings who married among their own.²³

Our St. Louis congregants were undecided on this issue. Slightly more of them (49%) did not believe divorce to be more likely among the intermarried. Forty-five per cent guessed that it was more probable.

5. Does Age Make a Difference?

Attitudes Toward Interfaith Marriage by Age

By and large, those congregants who would presumably be expected to have children of marriageable age were most likely to believe that interfaith marriage contributes to assimilation. Seventy-seven per cent of those between the ages of 41 and 60 agreed that intermarriage is assimilatory. This was true for only 58% of older respondents and 62% of younger ones.

Age			
25-30	62%	38%	N:16 (100%)
31-40	61%	39%	N:57
41-50	77%	23%	N:62
51-60	77%	23%	N:56
61-70	60%	40%	N:48
71 up	54%	46%	N:24

Yes No

Table 5

In your opinion does interfaith marriage contribute to assimilation?
Sample by Age.

Individuals between 41 and 60 were no more likely to view divorce as a greater possibility among intermarried couples than were other respondents. Congregants between the ages of 61 and 70 were somewhat more likely to ascribe to the "two-strikes theory," claiming that the intermarried are more prone to divorce. Fifty-six per cent of this group believed that greater possibility for divorce and interfaith marriage were positively related. No substantial deviation was shown, however, for those congregants likely to have marriageable children.

Virtually everyone (93%) in our sample preferred that their children marry Jews. No difference was found in respect to age.

About two thirds (62%) of our respondents thought that the children of the intermarried would be less affirmatively Jewish than those of the inmarried. Difference according to age group was relatively insignificant. Of those in the middle age bracket, 62% thought that children from interfaith homes would be less affirmatively Jewish. Sixty-eight per cent of the 25-40 year olds agreed with this estimation while only 58% of those aged 61 and over so agreed.

While it might be expected that congregants between the ages of 41 and 60 would be more desirous that rabbis perform interfaith marriages, almost no difference between age groups could be detected in this regard. Only older congregants were somewhat more likely to oppose rabbinical officiation. Even members of this group, however, by and large, approved of such officiation. Thirty-five per cent of older congregants believed that rabbis should refrain from officiating.

Should rabbis refrain from officiating at intermarriages?

25-30	19%	6%	38%	37%	N:16 (100%)
31-40	7%	17%	48%	28%	N:60
41-50	11%	17%	48%	24%	N:66
51-60	10%	13%	47%	30%	N:60
61-70	7%	18%	46%	29%	N:55
71 up	8%	27%	54%	11%	N:26

Age Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Table 6

Rabbinical Officiation at Interfaith Marriages
Sample by Age

6. Does Sex Make a Difference?

Attitudes Toward Interfaith Marriage by Gender

Women are generally considered more likely candidates for open expression of religious identification.²⁴ Yet, we found in St. Louis only an insignificant difference between men and women in their respective attitudes toward various traditional observance. St. Louis Reform women, to the same extent as their male counterparts, tended to see intermarriage as contributing to assimilation. Sixty-nine per cent of the males who responded saw interfaith marriage as assimilatory while 67% of females did so.

Nor was any great difference found between men and women with respect to their predictions about the children of the intermarried. Sixty-four per cent of the women and 60% of the men believed that the children of interfaith married parents were likely to be less affirmatively Jewish than those of the inmarried. Twenty-nine per cent of the females said that they would be as affirmatively Jewish as did 34% of the males. Seven per cent of women respondents and 6% of men respondents predicted that they would be more affirmatively Jewish than those of two Jewish parents.

As was previously noted, virtually everyone preferred that their child marry a Jew. This sentiment was true for 97% of the males and 95% of the females.

Some difference was found according to gender in the degree of success which respondents predicted for parties to an interfaith marriage. Men were 10% more likely to believe that intermarriage leads to divorce than were women. Fifty-two per cent of the males answering thought that divorce was more likely among the intermarried. This was

true for only 42% of the females. Males were slightly more desirous that their rabbis officiate at interfaith marriages. Seventy-eight per cent of male respondents thought that rabbis should perform such weddings while 71% of females so agreed.

In general, no difference could be discerned according to gender with respect to attitudes toward intermarriage.

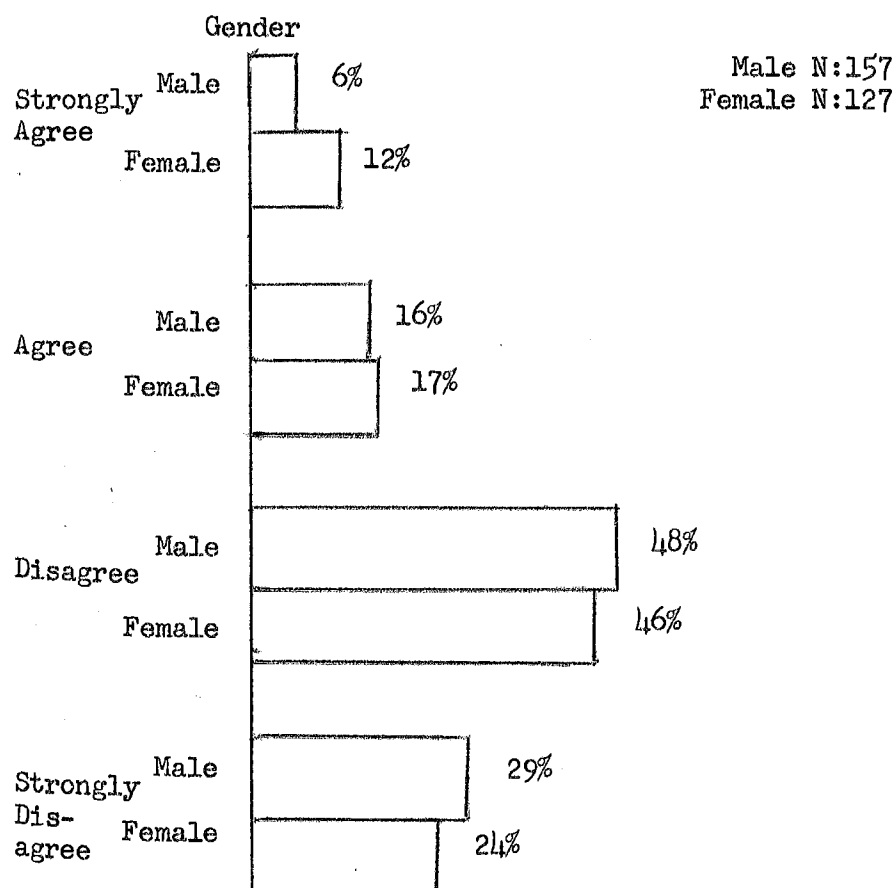


Figure 6

Rabbinical Officiation at Interfaith Weddings:
Sample by Gender

7. Does Background Make a Difference?

Attitudes Toward Interfaith Marriage by Previous Affiliation

We observe a tendency among those who had previously been members of Orthodox or Conservative congregations to be more traditional in some areas of Jewish observance.²⁵ Are they different than others in their opinions about intermarriage? After all, Orthodox and Conservative Judaism are certainly more halachicly oriented than is Reform Judaism. Interfaith marriages are proscribed by halacha.²⁶ It is interesting to observe how these formerly Orthodox and Conservative congregants responded to questions about interfaith marriage.

Those previously affiliated with Conservative synagogues were somewhat more likely to view intermarriage as assimilatory. Seventy-six per cent of this group said that intermarriage contributes to assimilation. However, of those who had belonged to Orthodox synagogues, only 62% agreed that intermarriage contributes to assimilation. This figure for previous Orthodox affiliates leads us to interpret the higher figure for the previously Conservative group with caution. Four per cent more lifelong Reform affiliates (66% in all) said that intermarriage leads to assimilation than did those previously of Orthodox membership. Coming from a more traditional synagogue, therefore, does not necessarily mean that one is more likely to be convinced of the assimilatory nature of interfaith marriages.

Only slightly more congregants of previous Orthodox membership tended to think that the children of interfaith marriages would be less affirmatively Jewish than did those of non-Orthodox backgrounds. Sixty-seven per cent of the former Orthodox held this opinion. Sixty-one per cent of former Conservative and 61% of lifelong Reform congre-

gants agreed. Once again the difference is inconclusive.

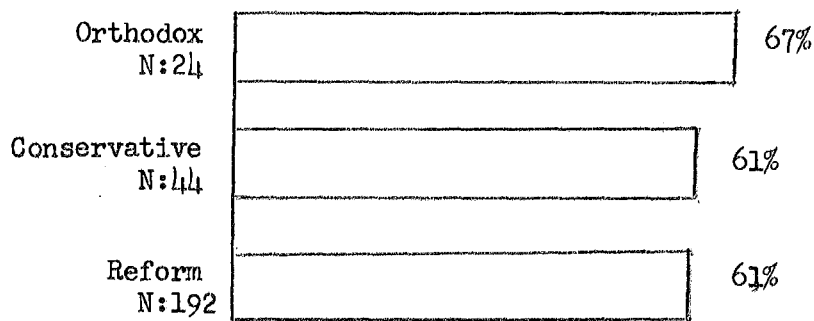


Figure 7

By previous affiliation, percentages predicting that children of the intermarried would be less affirmatively Jewish than those of the inmarried.

Lifelong Reform affiliates were less likely to believe that interfaith marriages are more prone to divorce. Only 48% of this group regarded divorce as a greater possibility for the intermarried. Among respondents who had previously been members of Orthodox congregations, 75% said divorce was a greater likelihood. This was the case for 58% of former members of Conservative congregations.

Once again, no significant difference could be seen in desire that children inmarry. Virtually everyone, regardless of previous affiliation, desired that their children marry Jews.

We turn now to the issue of rabbinical officiation at interfaith marriage rituals. Those St. Louis Reform congregants formerly affiliated with Orthodox or Conservative congregations were slightly more likely to agree that Reform rabbis should refrain from such officiation. Among the entire sample, 72% agreed with rabbinical officiation. For onetime Conservative affiliates, however, this figure drops to 69% and drops again to 52% for former Orthodox members. Seventy-nine per cent

of lifelong Reform congregants disagreed that their rabbis should refrain from performing interfaith weddings.

Previous Affili- ation	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
Orthodox	20%	28%	36%	16%	N:25
Conservative	14%	16%	47%	23%	N:43
Reform	7%	14%	49%	30%	N:219

Table 7

Do you agree that Reform rabbis should refrain from officiating at marriages in which the non-Jewish partner has not converted to Judaism? Sample by previous membership.

The attitudes of congregants formerly affiliated with Orthodox or Conservative congregations toward rabbinical officiation at interfaith marriages may reveal something to us about how they view intermarriage and the rabbi's role in general. Previous exposure to the halachic stance of Orthodox or of Conservative Judaism may have instilled the point of view that rabbis should never officiate at interfaith --non-halachic--weddings. Those who take this point of view often find an extra-halachic justification for it in the "two-strike theory." As one formerly Conservative woman remarked in reference to intermarriage, "Oil and water just don't mix." This might account for the prevalent view among formerly Orthodox and Conservative congregants that divorce is more likely among the intermarried. The rabbi's role, under the circumstances, becomes one of preventer rather than helper. Many lifelong Reform Jews felt that rabbis should perform intermarriages, as one respondent explained, "because it can only hurt to turn them away." The greater ambivalence among those of Orthodox and Conservative backgrounds might stem from the view that the rabbi must prevent

such marriages at all costs. To perform one would be anathema.

Ultimately, though our previously Orthodox and Conservative congregants did differ somewhat with respect to intermarriage attitudes, their similarities with fellow congregants far outweighed their differences. Just because those with more traditional backgrounds tend to be somewhat more observant does not mean, according to our data, that they are consequently any more strongly opposed to interfaith marriage than are other Reform Jews. Perhaps the very fact that their views on interfaith marriage closely resemble those of lifelong Reform congregants was an important consideration by former Conservative and Orthodox affiliates in joining Reform temples.

8. Does Income Make a Difference?

Attitudes Toward Interfaith Marriage by Income

What was the case in comparing formerly Orthodox and Conservative congregants with lifelong Reform affiliates in their respective attitudes toward interfaith marriage is similarly the case when those of varying incomes are compared. No significant differences were found in desire that children inmarry or speculations about the extent to which children of interfaith marriages identify with Judaism. Opinions concerning the assimilatory nature of intermarriages, the future success of interfaith marriages, and desire that a rabbi officiate at such rituals did appear to be related to income level.

Those who reported that their income level was less than most St. Louis Reform Jews were most likely (62%) to believe that divorce is more likely among the intermarried. This opinion held sway among only 46% of those who said that their income was the same as other con-

gregants and 40% of those who guessed that their incomes were greater.

Like congregants who have only been affiliated with Reform temples, those in the upper income brackets were most likely (80%) to desire that a rabbi officiate at interfaith weddings. Among those who believed their income to be the same as other congregants, 75% expressed this opinion. The figure drops to 66% for those whose income was less than most others.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
Greater Income	4%	16%	51%	29%	N:55 (100%)
Same Income	9%	15%	47%	28%	N:150
Smaller Income	16%	19%	41%	25%	N:64

Table 8

Do you agree that Reform rabbis should refrain from officiating at marriages in which the non-Jewish partner has not converted to Judaism? Sample by how respondents perceived their incomes relative to other St. Louis Reform Jews.

It is noteworthy that respondents who believed that their incomes were higher than other Reform congregants tended to classify themselves in the lower half of our observance index and were less favorable to such traditional institutions as Hebrew liturgy and cantors.²⁷ The difference in the attitude of these congregants toward interfaith marriage and that of congregants in lower income brackets was not, however, tremendous.

9. The Intermarried Look at Intermarriage

Those respondents to our questionnaire who were themselves intermarried held not a few attitudes toward interfaith marriage which were

dissimilar to those of other congregants. For example, a greater percentage of those respondents who were intermarried saw interfaith marriage as contributing to assimilation than did other congregants. Seventy-five per cent of the intermarried held this opinion while 67% of the inmarried did so. While the difference is only 8%, it is somewhat surprising that the intermarried were more inclined to view interfaith marriage as assimilatory. Why would the intermarried reject the notion of interfaith marriages by labeling them assimilatory? One wonders if assimilation is not a positive value for these congregants. A second possibility is that the actual experience of these congregants tends to confirm the assimilatory nature of interfaith marriage.

A greater percentage of the intermarried tended to believe that children of interfaith households would be as or more affirmatively Jewish than those of the inmarried. Only 50% of the intermarried predicted that their own children would be less affirmatively Jewish than those with two Jewish parents. This was true of 64% of inmarried respondents.

A great difference was found between the inmarried and intermarried in regard to the success they predicted for interfaith marriages in general. Seventy-nine per cent of the intermarried felt that divorce was more likely in a religiously heterogeneous home. Only 51% of the inmarried held this opinion.

It is also interesting that 30% of the intermarried did not prefer that their children choose a Jewish mate. Virtually all other respondents (96%) preferred that their children marry Jews.

Finally, the intermarried were somewhat more likely to prefer that rabbis be willing to perform interfaith marriages. While 73% of the in-

married desired that rabbis officiate at intermarriages, 86% of the intermarried so agreed.

V. TRADITIONAL BEHAVIOR AND ATTITUDES

Historically, the American Reform Movement in Judaism has exhibited much in the way of negative reaction, especially on the part of its leaders, to many traditional Jewish strictures and prohibitions. The early reformers, for example, took a dim view of prescribed ritual garb, the role of the chazzan or cantor, and particularism in general. Further, they did not hesitate to introduce previously prohibited instrumental music into the "divine service" nor to serve foods proscribed by Jewish dietary laws, even upon the dinner table of the first ordination class from the Reform rabbinical seminary in 1883. The Jewish nationalist movement, indeed the very notion of a Jewish state was altogether anathema to many, if not most, Reform founding fathers. For these men, it was America's destiny to set the stage upon which a new messianic era would be conceived. They expected "neither a return to Palestine . . . nor the restoration of any law concerning the Jewish State."²⁸

Yet, the Reform Movement neither remained static nor developed in a vacuum. New restrictions upon immigration revealed that America was not the goldina medina they had once fashioned it. Just a few years later the mass murder of millions of Jews in Nazi Europe showed the world to be a much less friendly, universalistic place than the earlier Reformers had anticipated. With this revelation came a renewed interest in the particularism once despised by most early Reform spokesmen. Spurred on by a vital State of Israel, Jewish particular identification has been further strengthened in recent years. The Arab threat to Israel

and a new emphasis upon ethnicity in America have left few bastions of classical Reform untouched by this neo-particularistic emphasis. Today not a few Reform temples and synagogues, once ardently universalistic, have begun to reexamine the particularism of traditional Jewish practice. One goal of this study was to determine just how "observant," in both practice and attitude, the Reform community of St. Louis is becoming.

One of the most difficult tasks for the researcher was to find a functional definition for "traditionalism" in the context of Reform Judaism. Because the notion of "traditionalism" is itself a vague one, the research was designed to delineate a few behaviors and attitudes which seemed to represent a departure on the part of Reform congregants from the anti-traditionalistic position of classical Reform to a position more receptive to particularistic observance. A series of twelve multiple choice questions were offered to our sample of St. Louis Reform congregants. The determination of which attitudes to consider was made in conjunction with rabbis and Jewish congregants in the St. Louis area, with the aid of the pilot study conducted at Rockdale Temple, and with Dr. Norman Mirsky of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati, Ohio.

1. Index of Traditional Jewish Observance

The initial question posed which dealt with observance asked congregants to rate themselves on an index of "traditional Jewish observance." In the Rockdale Temple pilot study²⁹ members were asked to choose from either "Classical Reform," "Mainstream Reform," or "Traditional" in specifying their individual perceptions of the extent to which they observed Jewish traditional practices. It was found that 80% of the 39

members who responded to that question chose "Mainstream Reform." These distinctions were apparently unclear and, of course, told us little more than the extent to which Rockdale members see themselves as similar in orientation to other Reform Jews. Rather than simply eliminating that classification, leaving respondents the stark option of "Classical Reform" or "Traditional," a scale of one (1) to six (6) was presented to congregants in St. Louis.

On a scale of one (1) to six (6) how would you rate yourself in terms of traditional Jewish observance?

- 6 (most observant)
- 5
- 4
- 3
- 2
- 1 (least observant)

This Observance Index can, of course, only be interpreted to measure congregants' views of themselves as observing Jews, rather than the actual extent of their observance in practice. One might, with justification, anticipate that most of those answering the questionnaire would evaluate themselves as either one (1) or two (2) on this scale. Lenn's "Particularism-Universalism Index" of Reform congregants showed that while 52% of Reform congregants considered themselves to be "strongly universalistic" only 10% claimed to be "strongly particularistic."³⁰ Traditional observance is doubtlessly one expression of particularistic orientation. Judging from the Lenn report we should expect a strong concentration of answers at the "least observant" extreme of our scale. This should be

especially true in a city like St. Louis where Reform is numerically and institutionally so strong. Our data, however, revealed the St. Louis Reform Jew to be, at least in his own self-image, moderately observant. Table 9 shows that while 31% of those responding on the index chose either options one (1) or two (2), 59% opted for choices three (3) or four (4) seeing themselves as moderately traditional.

Observance Index			N:286 NR:2%
Most Observant	6	1%	
	5	6%	
	4	19%	
	3	40%	
	2	20%	
Least Observant	1	11%	

Table 9

Observance Index Distribution

While this study does not pretend to conclude that Reform Jews in St. Louis have become markedly observant, it is also apparent that the opposite is not the case either. A substantial majority of Reform Jews in St. Louis see themselves as neither foreign to nor immoderate in their approach to traditional Jewish observance.

In order to obtain a better idea of just who the more observant and less observant groups included and to test our traditional Observance Index as a measure of actual traditional practice let us turn to a few selected characteristics of the sample cross tabulated against the Observance Index.

1.1 Observance Index by Gender

Female congregants, in general, tended to view themselves as slightly more observant than did their male counterparts. The difference between men and women in this matter, however, was surprisingly small. Throughout our study, very little difference could be detected between men and women.

Male	13%	22%	40%	19%	6%	0%	N:158
Female	9%	20%	40%	21%	7%	2%	N:126
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
	Least Observant					Most Observant	

Table 10

Observance Index by Sex

Whereas 75% of the male respondents classified themselves as less observant (chose answers one (1), two (2), or three (3) on the Observance Index), 67% of the females did so. Thirty-one per cent of the females opted for the more observant classifications while only 25% of the males chose to do so.

A greater difference between the sexes in traditional observance might have been expected. What was formerly the case of the laity of many Christian groups in America has become true of many American non-Orthodox Jews as well. Females are more likely to openly express their religious belief than are males. Any number of psychological and social psychological explanations are available for this phenomenon. Women face certain crises in their lives because of child-bearing and may, therefore, be more religiously inclined.³¹ Females with feminine per-

sonalities show significant differences from males with male personalities on the Allport-Vernon-Lindzey scale. In addition, women rank higher on esthetic and religious values using the same scale.³² Other explanations attempt to trace extensive religiosity among women to rigid training in moral and ethical behavior relative to that of men.³³ Further, the family role of women may be more consistent with the values and mores taught by religious institutions than the independent bread-winning role of the man.³⁴

Lenn reports a more substantial difference between men and women in the American Reform Jewish community than our data indicates exists among the Reform Jews of St. Louis. Women were more likely (20%) to express their religiosity, according to Lenn's data.³⁵ While in our own sample women did tend to see themselves as slightly more observant of Jewish tradition than did men, the difference was not substantial. This could be caused by the nature of our question. We asked congregants to rate themselves. Even the more traditional may have been reluctant to express their observance by marking the most traditional answers. If many women are among this group, it would account for the less dramatic distinction between men and women which our data shows. In other words, it may well be that while women are more open and affirmative in their Jewishness, they do not, in this case, tend to view themselves as such to the same extent.

This less substantial differentiation between men and women might well be the result of greater emphasis in the St. Louis Reform Jewish community upon traditionalism. Traditional Judaism is a male centered religion. This move toward tradition might be expressed in the greater willingness of males to bear a large share of the "Jewish responsibility."

Similarly, no significant difference was found between men and women in such areas as lighting Shabbat candles, service attendance, desire for greater Jewish observance, or in attitudes toward cantors, tallaisim, and yarmulkahs. Our data shows, in almost all areas, as strong traditionalism on the part of Reform Jewish males as females.

1.2 Observance Index by Age

Just a few years ago, Lenn reported that oldest congregants are the most concerned and strongly identified of American Reform Jews. However, the younger among St. Louis congregants appear to be the most likely to identify themselves with traditional observance according to our own findings. Younger respondents (age 25-50) tended to choose three (3) and four (4) on our scale of one (1) to six (6) with greater frequency than did older ones. In addition, they chose options one (1) and two (2), the least traditional choices, with much less frequency than any other age group.

Age				
25-30	25%	69%	6%	N:17 (100%)
31-40	28%	64%	8%	N:61
41-50	28%	66%	6%	N:67
51-60	40%	54%	6%	N:60
61-70	32%	59%	9%	N:53
71 up	41%	50%	9%	N:26
1 or 2 Least Observant		3 or 4	5 or 6 Most Observant	

Table 11

Observance Index by Age

No pattern seems apparent among age groups in tendency to opt for the most traditional responses. However, the greater willingness on the part of the younger congregants (25-50) to choose from the moderately observant categories is apparent. Greater interest in things religious on the part of the young is a phenomenon easily observed in our now more religion conscious society. The appeal of modern Orthodox and Hasidic groups on college campuses has claimed great success in recent years. While the more rationalistic approach of Reform Judaism has not made the headway on campuses which has characterized such movements as Chabad, Campus Crusade for Christ, and even some Eastern religious groups, the more experimental tone of the period may have influenced the younger members of Reform congregations. Even apart from its religious content, ethnicity is viewed in a much more positive light among younger congregants. Ethnic traits may be highly prized by recent college graduates as a kind of cultural key to social identity. With so much emphasis upon ethnicity in American society, a greater willingness among those just beginning a career or family to view themselves as moderately traditional is not unreasonable.

1.3 Observance Index by Previous Affiliation

Among congregants who indicated that they had belonged to either an Orthodox or Conservative synagogue prior to joining their present temple, there was a greater tendency to view themselves as more traditional. Whereas only 29% of all those answering the questionnaire chose one of the more traditional answers as representing their degree of observance, 32% and 34% of those who indicated previous membership in Orthodox or Conservative synagogues respectively, opted for these answers. It is

possible to cite any number of possible reasons for this tendency, many of which are obvious. This self-view among previously more traditional congregants is probably accentuated by the relatively weaker emphasis on traditional ceremony in St. Louis Reform temples than in the Orthodox and Conservative synagogues from which these individuals came. It is natural that more of these congregants would see themselves as "more observant" than their peers who had never belonged to Orthodox or Conservative congregations. Lenn reports similar results. However, since the difference between these groups in our study was only 5%, we see more in the way of a consensus than a discrepancy.

Most Observant 6	4%	0%	1%
5	8%	16%	5%
4	20%	18%	20%
3	40%	46%	37%
2	16%	11%	25%
Least Observant 1	12%	9%	12%
Orthodox N 25		Conservative N 44	Reform N 223

Table 12

Observance Index by Previous Affiliation

1.4 Observance Index by Income

Previous research indicates that a negative correlation may exist between religious orthodoxy and income. Highest orthodoxy among Mormons was observed in those with incomes of less than \$8,000 per year. Lowest

orthodoxy occurred among those in the highest income brackets.³⁶ A 1964 study reports that "Generally the degree of ethnicity and group identification seems to be inversely related to socioeconomic status among college-level Jewish teenagers As social mobility brings the Jewish teenager into increasing contact with the dominant American middle class teenage culture, ethnicity diminishes."³⁷

Among mature Jews as well, it is commonly assumed that socioeconomic status is a key variable affecting religious observance and degree of ethnic identification. A recent study of the St. Paul, Minnesota Jewish community revealed that the achieving of advanced degrees, and consequent higher income expectations among young Jewish men reduced their distinctive Jewish self-conception.³⁸

St. Louis congregants were asked to compare themselves to most other St. Louis Reform Jews in income. The categories "Greater," "Less," and "Same" were offered. While there seemed to be no significant difference between those responding "Same" and "Less" on the Observance Index, those who answered "Greater" did exhibit a pattern. In general these respondents tended to classify themselves in the lower half of the Observance Index more often than did others.

Greater	12%	23%	46%	14%	4%	0%	N:56
Same or Less	11%	21%	38%	21%	7%	2%	N:215
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
	Least					Most	
	Observant					Observant	

Table 13

Observance Index by Income

This inverse relationship between income and traditional observance is confirmed in Lenn's "Religiosity Index."³⁹

1.5 Does the Observance Index Measure Actual Traditional Practices?

Our data indicates that much of what has held true previously in studies of religiosity and ethnic identification also seems to be represented to some extent in our own Observance Index. Females tend to see themselves as slightly more observant than males; the new religiosity among the younger elements of society exhibited itself on our scale; those coming from Orthodox and Conservative backgrounds tend to see themselves as more observant; the rich tend to be less traditional than others.

In order to check the extent to which our Observance Index measured the actual practice of traditional customs, cross tabulations were run between two questions of actual behavior.

To the question, "In your home, how often are Shabbat candles lit?", 33% answered "Frequently," 15% "Special Occasions," 20% "Sometimes" and 31% responded "Never." Not surprisingly, when these results were broken down on our Observance Index, a positive correlation could be seen between the extent to which respondents lit Shabbat candles and also saw themselves as observing Jews. Forty-nine per cent of those who said they lit Shabbat candles "Frequently" chose to rate themselves in the upper half of the Observance Index, and the percentage of respondents who chose those classifications dropped with the extent to which they chose to light Shabbat candles.

Most Observant 6	2%	2%	0%	0%
5	16%	2%	3%	1%
4	31%	21%	17%	11%
3	38%	49%	46%	32%
2	10%	19%	24%	32%
Least Observant 1	3%	7%	10%	23%
<div> <div>Frequently N:95</div> <div>Special Occasions N:43</div> <div>Sometimes N:59</div> <div>Never N:90</div> </div>				

Table 14

Observance Index by Frequency of Shabbat Candle Lighting

Of those saying they lit Shabbat candles on "Special Occasions," only 25% chose the higher observance categories while only 20% and 12% of those who indicated "Sometimes" or "Never" respectively chose the more observant categories. This data tends to confirm the validity of the Observance Index for actual practice as well as self-view.

Further data showed that those males who tended to see themselves as more traditional were significantly more likely to have been Bar Mitzvah. While other factors, such as previous exposure to traditional Judaism, were at work in establishing this trend, the trend itself is apparent. With the data on Shabbat candles, the direct relationship of Bar Mitzvah with traditional self-view tends to confirm the applicability of the Observance Index to actual practice.

Most 6 (No Males)
Observant

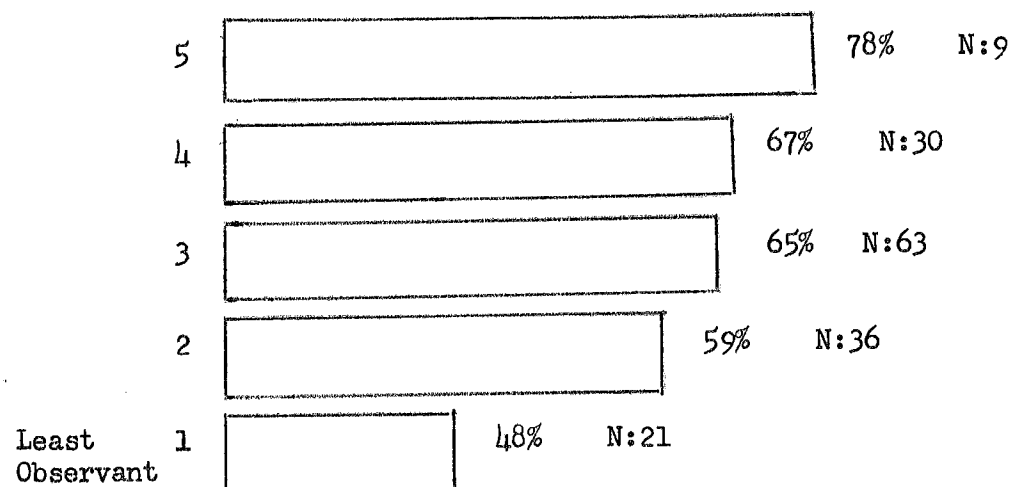


Figure 8

Number of Bar Mitzvahs in Each Observance Index Group

2. Traditional Ritual Garb

The difference between Conservative and Reform Judaism was once described in the following manner. A Conservative Jew confronts all of Judaism, discarding what is irrelevant or meaningless. A Reform Jew confronts all of Judaism, selecting what is relevant and meaningful. This differentiation is, to be sure, an oversimplification. However, Reform Judaism has, in some ways, become this smorgasbord religion. Whether a Reform Jew is seen as traditional or non-traditional depends on how many and which practices he chooses for himself from the domain of Jewish custom and law. Which practices do make a Reform Jew more traditional?

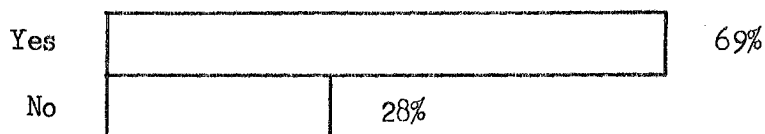
Just this question was posed to members of Rockdale Temple in our

pilot study. More respondents mentioned traditional ritual garb (tallis or yarmulkah) than any other form of observance save that of lighting Shabbat candles. One senior rabbi in St. Louis went so far as to suggest that positive attitudes toward ritual garb and cantorial music were the virtual hallmarks of more traditional St. Louis Reform Jews.

Until recent years, the yarmulkah and tallis were virtually unknown in the St. Louis Reform community. As in many Jewish communities, these garments were seen as the veritable token seals of Orthodoxy. Suddenly, a few years ago, the senior rabbi of St. Louis's largest Reform temple began to don a neatly folded tallis during Friday night services. Soon his assistant too began to wear a tallis. Today four St. Louis Reform rabbis observe this practice. Is this trend an expression of traditionalism solely on the part of these rabbis? Or is it only the tip of the iceberg? Has there developed a more open attitude toward traditional ritual garb among Reform congregants in St. Louis as well as among their rabbis?

As part of our questionnaire, we chose to ask whether respondents would feel comfortable in a congregation in which many congregants choose to wear 1) a tallis; 2) a yarmulkah. The results were surprising. Sixty-nine per cent said they would feel comfortable with tallaisim while 75% felt positively about yarmulkahs. This trend held true regardless of differences in age, sex, or income. If these garments are, in fact, the very banners of traditional Jewish observance, then the attitudes on the part of our congregants toward that observance is most positive.

Would you feel comfortable in a temple in which many congregants chose to wear a tallis? (N:284)



Would you feel comfortable in a temple in which many congregants chose to wear a yarmulkah? (N:288)

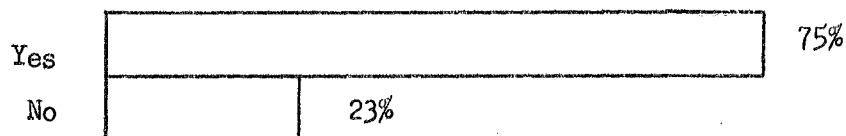


Figure 9

Attitudes Toward Jewish Ritual Garb

2.1 Traditional Ritual Garb by Service Attendance

Those who attend services at least once per month are somewhat more likely to feel comfortable in a congregation in which many male congregants don a yarmulkah or a tallis. Seventy-five per cent held a positive attitude toward tallaisim and 81% were comfortable with yarmulkahs. Among those who attended services less frequently, only 68% and 75% were comfortable with tallaisim and yarmulkahs respectively.

2.2 Traditional Ritual Garb by Previous Affiliation

Those who reported having been members of Conservative or Orthodox congregations prior to affiliating with a St. Louis Reform temple were

more likely to view the tallis and yarmulkah in a positive light. While 76% of the respondents who were from Orthodox backgrounds (N: 25) and 84% of those from Conservative backgrounds (N: 44) said they were comfortable with tallaisim, only 64% of those from exclusively Reform backgrounds were comfortable with them. With regard to yarmulkahs, 80% of the previously Orthodox and 84% of the previously Conservative felt positively, while only 69% of those with Reform backgrounds (N: 223) were happy in a congregation in which many of the worshipers chose to wear a yarmulkah.

The 69 respondents who came from Orthodox and Conservative backgrounds were more likely to be at home with traditional ritual garb. However, even those with exclusively Reform backgrounds had a positive attitude toward these garments.

3. Attitudes Toward Cantors

When Israel Jacobson founded the first Reform synagogue in Prussia in the late eighteenth century, one of his first changes was the elimination of cantorial music. He considered chazzanut to be an oriental custom inappropriate in his "enlightened" age. Regardless of the correctness of Jacobson's view of traditional Jewish ritual chanting, Reform had generally viewed cantors, with tallaisim and yarmulkahs, as a symbol of Orthodoxy. With the approval given by Reform rabbis attending the Columbus Convention in the 1930's, cantors were afforded the official sanction of the movement itself. However, St. Louis was late in accepting cantorial music in its Reform temples. Not until the late 1960's was a cantor to be hired by the Reform Jewish community of St. Louis. Today there are two temples which employ cantors.

Do you prefer services which include the participation of a cantor?

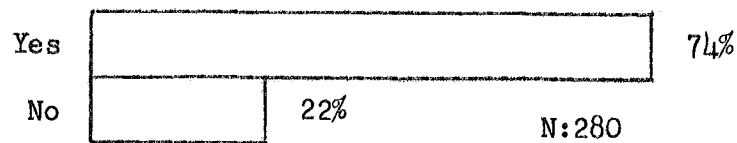


Figure 10

Sample by Preference for Cantors

With greater exposure to the chant, the Reform Jews of St. Louis see the participation of cantors in their services in a positive light. Overall, 74% of our sample indicated that they preferred services which included cantorial music. This held true regardless of age, sex, or previous membership. This was somewhat of a surprise. Only two summers ago (1973) the yearly summer joint services involving most of the Reform synagogues in St. Louis was disbanded partially because, when it came the turn of one temple to sponsor the service, many congregants objected to the cantor who took part. Our data would seem to indicate that either there has been a rapid change of opinion or that the objections of 1973 came from a vocal minority. The cantor now seems to have a welcome place in St. Louis Reform temples.

3.1 Attitudes Toward Cantors by Income

While neither age nor sex made any considerable difference in determining preference for cantorial music in the prayer service, cross tabulation with income level did prove interesting. Those who saw themselves as having incomes greater than their fellow Reform congregants

were 11% less likely to approve of the participation of cantors than were others.

	Greater	Same	Less	Respondents who said their incomes were greater/same/ less than other Reform congregants
Preferred Cantors	67%	78%	79%	
Did not Prefer Cantors	33%	22%	21%	
	N:53	N:146	N:62	

Table 15

Attitude Toward Cantors by Income

We previously observed a negative correlation between traditional attitudes and income.⁴⁰ The cantor is generally seen as a functionary of more traditional Judaism. Many wealthier Reform Jews express their antipathy toward traditionalism by rejecting the idea of cantorial music in the worship service. Of the three Reform congregations in St. Louis with over 800 members, the only one which does not employ a cantor is also the one best known for the prosperity of its congregants. Because the issue of "cantors" is an active one among Jews in St. Louis, this antipathy is more visible here than in other areas of traditional observance.

4. Shabbat Candles

Since the destruction of the Temple by the Romans in 70 c.e., the Jew has regarded his home as a kind of Temple substitute or sanctuary. It was the dinner table which replaced the altar while the meal itself

supplanted the sacrifices of old. With this emphasis upon home life, the family became the central focus of Judaism. The home, for the traditional Jew, has been as much a province for ritual observance as has the synagogue. Perhaps no observance so epitomizes Judaism in the home as that of welcoming the Sabbath day with candles and blessing.

More than any other ritual practice, Rockdale members mentioned lighting Shabbat candles as an indication of greater traditionalism. It is of no small import, therefore, for 68% of our St. Louis sample to

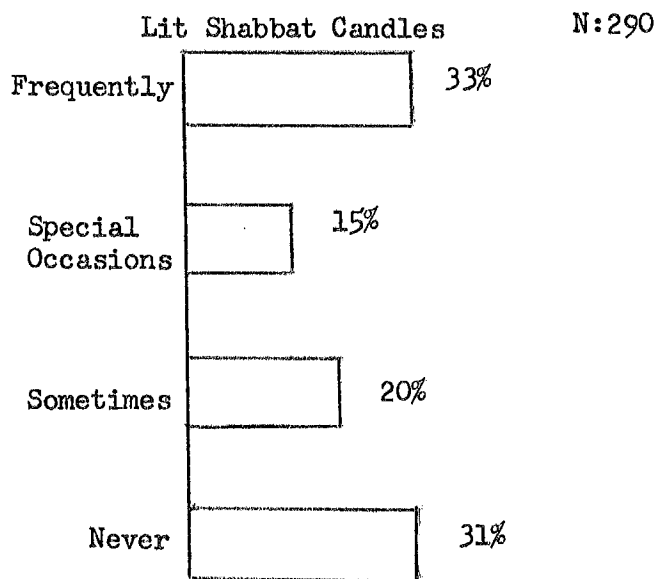


Figure 11

Sample by Shabbat Candle Lighting

report that Shabbat candles were lit in their homes. Almost half of these (one third of the entire sample) lit them frequently.

In his study of Reform Judaism in America⁴¹ Leonard Fein reports that 50% of the temple members whom he surveyed "lit the Sabbath candles." Respondents to our St. Louis survey were 18% more likely to do so than

were Fein's congregants.

4.1 Shabbat Candles by Age

Those congregants under 50 years of age tended to light Shabbat candles somewhat more frequently than did older congregants. While 42% of those under 50 years old⁴² lit candles "frequently," only 25% of those older than 50 did so. Conversely, 40% of these older respondents "never" lit Shabbat candles while only 22% of the younger congregants abstained from this observance.

	Frequently	Special Occasions	Sometimes	Never	
Under 50	42%	11%	25%	22%	N:289
50 and older	25%	20%	15%	40%	

Table 16

Shabbat Candles by Age

We also observed the greater willingness on the part of younger congregants to view themselves as moderately observant on the Observance Index.⁴³ While the Index is only a measure of self perception, lighting Shabbat candles is a significant expression of traditional Jewish home life. To a great extent, it is younger congregants who are responsible for the neo-traditional trend among St. Louis Reform Jews.

4.2 Shabbat Candles by Previous Affiliation

Those who reported having previously been affiliated with Orthodox or Conservative synagogues were more observant with respect to lighting Shabbat candles than were those from exclusively Reform backgrounds. Forty per cent of those formerly of Orthodox affiliation (N: 25) and 50% of those formerly of Conservative affiliation lit Shabbat candles "frequently." Only 26% of those with lifelong Reform affiliation (N: 223) did so.

Lit Shabbat Candles

	Frequently	Special Occasions	Sometimes	Never	
Orthodox	40%	20%	12%	28%	N:25
Conservative	50%	20%	14%	16%	N:44
Reform	26%	15%	19%	40%	N:223

Table 17

Shabbat Candles by Previous Membership

5. Bar/Bat Mitzvah

Only 38% of the respondents to our questionnaire had been Bar or Bat Mitzvah. However, the ceremony of Bat Mitzvah is a relatively new innovation among Jewish life cycle events. Not until recently have girls been allowed to take part in this "rite of passage." Therefore a great part (66%) of those respondents who were not Bar or Bat Mitzvah were women. Among men, 63% had been Bar Mitzvah while only 13% of wo-

men respondents were Bat Mitzvah.

Were Bar/ Bat Mitzvah	Female 9%	Male 91%	38%	N:290
Were Not Bar/Bat Mitzvah	Female 66%	Male 34%	60%	

Figure 12

Bar/Bat Mitzvah by Gender

5.1 Bar Mitzvah by Hebrew Liturgy

Among male congregants who had not been Bar Mitzvah, 33% indicated that they preferred services "in which many of the prayers were read in Hebrew," while 67% said they did not. Those males who had been Bar Mitzvah tended, on the other hand, to be much more amiable toward Hebrew as a part of the religious service. Of these respondents, 43% said they preferred "many of the prayers in Hebrew" while 57% did not. Looking at the overall results for both men and women, the results are equally striking.

Do you prefer services in which many of the
prayers are read in Hebrew?

Bar/Bat Mitzvah	<input type="text"/>	48%	N:106
Not Bar/Bat Mitzvah	<input type="text"/>	35%	N:170

Figure 13

Bar/Bat Mitzvah by Hebrew Preference

5.2 Bar Mitzvah by Traditional Ritual Garb

How significant is it that Bar Mitzvahs were more likely to feel comfortable with traditional ritual garb than were those who were not Bar Mitzvah? As part of the Rockdale Temple pilot study, members were asked what customs, in their opinion, made some Reform Jews more traditional than others. Over 28% of those responding mentioned some form of ritual garb (tallis or yarmulkah) as a sign of greater traditionalism. For the classically oriented Reform Jew, these vestments are a sure token of traditionalism, indeed of Orthodoxy. Ever since Isaac Mayer Wise praised the "sublime elements of universal religion,"⁴⁴ doffed his tallis and donned formal tails in its place, traditional garb has been at least one hallmark of particularism among Reform Jews.

Among those males who were Bar Mitzvah, 77% said they felt comfortable in a temple in which many congregants chose to wear a tallis, while only 43% of those who were not Bar Mitzvah responded in the af-

firmative to this question. Regarding yarmulkahs, the results were similar. While 82% of those who had been Bar Mitzvah said they felt comfortable, only 59% of those who were not Bar Mitzvah made that claim.

Do you feel comfortable in a temple in which many congregants choose to wear a tallis? a yarmulkah?

	Tallis Yes	N:154	Tallis No	Yarmulkah Yes	N:156	Yarmulkah No
Bar Mitzvah	77%		23%	82%		18%
Not Bar Mitzvah	43%		57%	59%		41%

Table 18

Bar Mitzvah by Preference for Ritual Garb

5.3 Bar Mitzvah by Attitude Toward Cantors

However much Reform Jews in St. Louis have come to accept cantors in their services, those who were Bar Mitzvah are even more receptive to cantorial music at Friday night services. Of 95 males who were Bar Mitzvah, 83% said they preferred hearing a cantor in the worship service. Only 71% of those who were not Bar Mitzvah welcomed the participation of a cantor.

Do you prefer services which include the participation of a cantor?

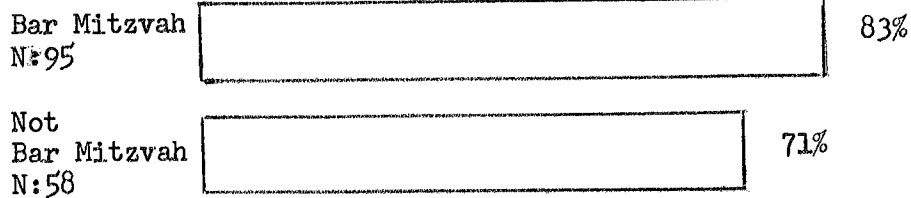


Figure 14

Bar Mitzvah by Preference for Cantors

5.4 Bar Mitzvahs Look at Yahrtzeit Candles

To the question, "Do you (or would you) light a yahrtzeit candle for a deceased relative?" those who had been Bar Mitzvah were more likely to respond in the affirmative than were other respondents. While only 58% of those who had not had the Bar Mitzvah ceremony would or do light yahrtzeit candles, 84% of those who had served as Bar Mitzvah responded positively.

Do you (or would you) light a yahrtzeit candle for a deceased relative?

	Yes	No	
Bar Mitzvah	84%	16%	N:96
Not Bar Mitzvah	58%	42%	N:59

Table 19

Bar Mitzvah by Attitude toward Yahrtzeit Candles

5.5 Bar Mitzvahs and Previous Membership:

A Note of Caution

It has been observed that individuals who were previously affiliated with Orthodox or Conservative congregations are more likely, in many instances, to hold a more positive attitude toward traditional Jewish observance. Almost a third (33%) of those males who were Bar Mitzvah came from Orthodox or Conservative backgrounds. Therefore, some caution must be advised in interpreting the more traditional attitudes of those who have been Bar Mitzvah. These attitudes may, to some extent, be a function of the traditional backgrounds of these individuals. They are not necessarily a result of the Bar Mitzvah ceremony itself.

6. Hebrew Prayers

Among the most obvious distinctions between worship services in

a Reform temple and in other synagogues is the number of prayers which are recited in the vernacular. If America was to become the "Goldina Medina," certainly the language of America was an appropriate vehicle with which to address the Almighty. During most of Jewish history, however, the primary vehicle for that address was Hebrew.

Knowing how to daven held a very important key to traditional Jewish observance. Even within the Reform temples of today many prayers continue to be recited or chanted in Hebrew. In many St. Louis Reform temples the amount of Hebrew in the worship service has proliferated in the last few years.

Though this may well be the liturgical trend in St. Louis, congregants do not seem to favor it. Fifty-eight per cent of our respondents did not prefer services in which many of the prayers were read in Hebrew. Only 38% favored such services. This was the general rule regardless of age.

6.1 Hebrew Prayer by Gender

A small difference was discovered between men and women in their preference for Hebrew in the worship service. Male respondents were 5% more likely to approve of "many prayers in Hebrew." While 43% of male respondents liked Hebrew liturgy, only 38% of female respondents held this positive attitude. In most matters of traditional observance very little difference exists between men and women.⁴⁵

6.2 Hebrew Prayer by Income

A small difference could be seen among those who considered themselves more prosperous than their fellow congregants in regard to Hebrew

liturgy. Sixty-three per cent of these respondents did not favor "many Hebrew prayers." This was true of only 59% of those who saw themselves in the same income category as other St. Louis Reform Jews. Of those who said their income was less than others, only 57% held a negative attitude toward "many Hebrew prayers" in the worship service. The difference is, however, inconclusive.

7. Support for Israel

Perhaps no singular menace since the Holocaust has so dramatically affected the level of Jewish identification among American Jews as has the Arab threat to the State of Israel since the Six Day War of 1967. Repeated warnings that Israel would be pushed into the sea brought scores of young American Jewish volunteers to the aid of that beleaguered little nation. In addition, the aid offered on the part of the American Jewish community went far beyond traditional philanthropic purposes. "The objective was to indicate solidarity with Israel as well as to help provide the financial means to defend the state against annihilation."⁴⁶ A great number of checks during the crisis came from American Jews who had never given money to Israel before, as well as from people who had previously given only modest amounts.⁴⁷ A significant portion of the financial assistance offered to Israel came from marginally identified American Jews. Marshall Sklare cites the case of a group of "Jewish Unitarians" who wished to show their solidarity with the State of Israel by sending money.⁴⁸

The effects of the 1967 threat to the State of Israel upon the American Jewish community have long survived the war's end. American

immigration to Israel increased significantly after the 1967 hostilities⁴⁹ and extensive economic aid continues even today through such agencies as the Israel Emergency Fund and the United Jewish Appeal.

More important for this study is the effect which American Jewry's more outspoken commitment to the State of Israel has had upon Jewish identification in this country.⁵⁰ Fein reports that 82% of adult respondents in his 1972 study of American Reform Jewry⁵¹ felt that to be a good Jew, "it is either essential or desirable that one support Israel." Sklare and Greenblum, on the other hand, report only a 68% positive response to the same question in their Lakeville studies⁵² published immediately prior to the Six Day War.

In response to the question "With respect to the State of Israel, how supportive should American Jews be?" 92% of responding St. Louis congregants felt that support should be either the same or somewhat more than at present. Only 5% were for somewhat less support for Israel.

As an important new inroad to Jewish identification in America, patronage of the State of Israel is an important criterion for the new traditionalism among St. Louis Reform Jews. We turn now to a few characteristics of the strongest Israel advocates among St. Louis Reform congregants. Who are they and how do they behave in other realms of Jewish observance?

Support for Israel should be: N:283

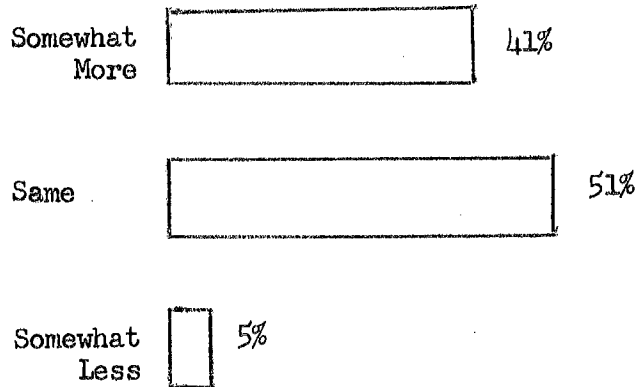


Figure 15

Sample by Support for Israel

7.1 Support for Israel by Age and Sex

Our data revealed no significant difference between men and women in regard to their support for Israel. We did find, however, that younger congregants (ages 25-40) were more likely to favor stronger support than other respondents. While 47% of these congregants said that American Jews should be somewhat more supportive with respect to the State of Israel, only 41% of all congregants responding concurred.

Most respondents (51%) said that support should remain the same. This was especially true of the 41-60 year old age bracket. Fifty-five per cent of these congregants indicated that they desired no change in the level of support while only 41% reported that they felt support should be increased. The fact that the great bulk of financial support

for Israel comes from individuals of this age bracket is probably a major reason for their conservatism in this matter and should not be interpreted as a lack of support on their part for the State of Israel itself. If we view support for Israel as a function of traditional observance however, the more liberal point of view on the part of younger congregants makes sense. In general, younger respondents were more willing to chose higher ratings on our Observance Index than were their older counterparts.⁵³ This would also account for the more conservative point of view of older congregants.

With respect to the State of Israel,
how supportive should American Jews be?

<u>Age</u>	More	Same	Less
25-40 (N:74)	47%	47%	6%
41-60 (N:124)	41%	55%	4%
61 up (N:81)	43%	52%	5%

Table 20

Support for Israel by Age

7.2 Support for Israel by Income

By and large, those who claimed that their incomes were smaller than the incomes of most other St. Louis Reform Jews tended to desire increased support for the State of Israel in greater numbers than other congregants responding to the questionnaire. While 41% of all respond-

dents indicated that American Jews should support Israel more than they do presently, 52% of those who claimed that their incomes were below those of their fellow congregants did so.

With respect to the State of Israel, how supportive should American Jews be?

	More	Same	Less	
Income Greater Than Other Reform Jews	46%	48%	5%	N:56
Income Same As Other Reform Jews	40%	56%	4%	N:147
Income Less Than Other Reform Jews	52%	43%	5%	N:63

Table 21

Support for Israel by Income

The most conservative group in this regard was made up of those who saw their income as the same as other St. Louis Reform Jews. Only 40% of these individuals felt that American Jewry's support of Israel was insufficient.

Since our data points to an inverse relationship between traditional Jewish observance and income,⁵⁴ those at the lower end of the economic ladder would be expected to desire more support for Israel than would others. This support, as has been pointed out, is an important key to Jewish identification and is seen as a significant part of being a good Jew.

7.3 Support for Israel by Service Attendance

Sklare and Greenblum, in their Lakeville studies, found that attendance at religious services was associated with pre-Israel support.⁵⁵ While 48% of the most frequent attenders in Lakeville favored the highest category of support for Israel (raising money, influencing United States policy, and additional action), only 21% of non-attenders did so.

What was the case in the Lakeville of 1967 seems now to be true of St. Louis Reform Jews whom we studied. Fifty-four per cent of the most frequent service attenders in St. Louis felt that American Jews should be somewhat more supportive of Israel, while only 40% of those who said that they attended only on special occasions agreed. Our data, however, did not display the direct relationship between service attendance and Israel support which Sklare and Greenblum found in 1967.⁵⁵

Attended Services:	With respect to the State of Israel, how supportive should American Jews be?			
	More	Same	Less	
Frequently	54%	46%	0%	N:24
Bi-Monthly	50%	50%	0%	N:22
Monthly	35%	61%	4%	N:26
8 times per year	47%	51%	2%	N:85
Special Occasions	40%	52%	8%	N:124

Table 22

Support for Israel by Service Attendance

We found very little difference (only 3%), for example, between those who attended services eight times per year and those who went twice per month. This may be representative of a basic change in the American

Jewish community since the Six Day War. Reform Jewry's support for Israel is no longer limited to those active in temples. Once, one heard pleas to help Israel primarily in synagogue, and then only if one's rabbi was predisposed to support Israel himself. Today, Israel's needs are publicized far beyond the sanctuary walls. Even the most secular of Jews find it difficult to escape the year round publicity of the Jewish National Fund and the United Jewish Appeal. The six-o'clock news bears nightly witness to Israel's tragedies and triumphs. Supporting Israel has become, for many, a unique manner of Jewish identification apart from temple membership. As a consequence, this support is found as strongly among frequent service attenders as among those who, while they may belong to a temple, attend only Bar Mitzvahs and High Holiday services.

7.4 Support for Israel by Shabbat Candles

As well as the wider support on the part of the American Jewish community which Israel has enjoyed since the 1967 war, those Reform Jews who practice various forms of Jewish ceremonial observance in their homes tend to be even more pro-Israel than others. This seemed to be the case even prior to the war. The Lakeville studies, conducted before the 1967 hostilities, reported that,

"... home observance is . . . strongly associated with pro Israel support. While only 10 per cent of the non-observant favor our highest category of support, 60 per cent of the more observant group do. Furthermore, those who neglect home observance evince even less support than those who abstain from attendance at services.⁵⁷

The situation in the 1975 St. Louis Reform Community reflects little change from the Lakeville of eight years ago. Home observance seems to be highly correlated with support for Israel. While 55% of

respondents who said they light Shabbat candles frequently, agreed that American Jews should be somewhat more supportive of Israel, only 30% of those who never light Shabbat candles so agreed. Unlike our cross tabulation of extent of service attendance with Israel support, the breakdown of extent to which Shabbat candles were lit in the home by Israel support revealed a constant positive association between these two phenomena. This strong association of home observance and support for Israel is further enlightening when compared to service attendance as a function of Israel support. While 40% of those who only attended services on special occasions desired increased support for Israel, only 30% of those who never lit Shabbat candles did so.

With respect to the State of Israel, how
supportive should American Jews be?

Lit Shabbat Candles:	More	Same	Less	
Frequently	55%	44%	1%	N:91
Special Occasions	55%	41%	4%	N:44
Sometimes	36%	63%	1%	N:59
Never	30%	60%	10%	N:88

Table 23

Support for Israel by Shabbat Candles

This information further justifies our view of support for Israel as a function of traditional behavior. Prior to 1967, those who observed Jewish ceremonies in the home were more likely to support Israel. The same is true of today's St. Louis Reform Jews. However, with the proliferation of aid to Israel on the part of American Jews after 1967

has come a neo-traditionalism which finds at least one of its many expressions in that very aid. For American Jews, to support Israel is, at the very least, a manner of Jewish identification traditionally associated with the more observant.

7.5 Support for Israel by Desire for Observance

A little more than 44% of our sample indicated that they would like to be more observant than they presently are. Within this group we found a greater support for Israel than among those who did not desire more observance in their lives. Fifty-five per cent of those who indicated a desire for greater observance than they presently experienced also said that American Jews should be more supportive of Israel, while only 33% of all others desired more pro-Israel support. Only 1% of our sample indicated that they desired to be less observant than they were.

With respect to the State of Israel, how
supportive should American Jews be?

	More	Same	Less	
Desire Greater Observance	55%	42%	2%	N:125
Do Not Desire Greater Observance	33%	60%	7%	N:162

Table 24

Support for Israel by Desire for Observance

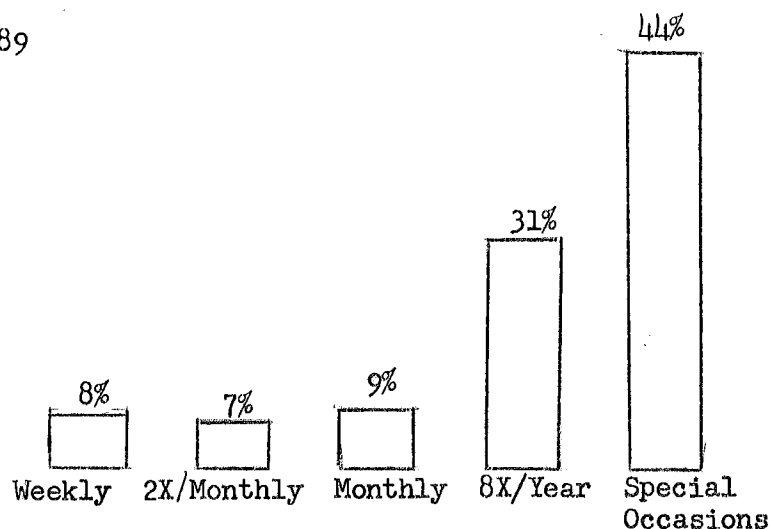
It seems that the more one desires Jewish observance and looks favorably upon tradition, the more likely one is to feel strongly about supporting Israel. Indeed, support for Israel has become a stricture of the neo-traditional movement within St. Louis Reform congregations.

8. Service Attendance

Attending services may be the most public form of religious expression in which American Jews are engaged. It is also one in which they do not engage frequently. Perhaps the best known reproof heard from the Reform pulpit is that which chastizes those congregants who do not choose to attend worship services. So often, a rabbi's success or failure is measured by the magnitude of his Friday night assembly. However sparse this assembly may be, it is, with the possible exception of religious school, the primary convocation wherein congregants interact.

The extent of this interaction is about the same in St. Louis as in other Reform communities. Both our study and the Fein report⁵⁸ found that 24% of Reform Jews sampled attended services more than every few months. This trend was relatively constant regardless of age, previous membership, length of membership, income, or gender. It is noteworthy that only one respondent to our pilot study of Rockdale Temple mentioned "service attendance" as a sign of traditionalism.

N:289



Estimate of Service Attendance

Figure 16

Sample by Service Attendance

9. Yahrtzeit Candles

It is well known that most religions give adherents an explanation of the universe as well as of seemingly inconsistent problems and events in man's experience.⁵⁹ Not every person will encounter every crisis which life affords, but no one escapes the enigma of death. The problem of death poses the most difficult and serious crisis which religion is expected to resolve. It is especially problematic for the practicing Jew when he confronts the death of a close family member who may well have played an important role in conveying religious instruction in mourning practices. Since parents are the primary transmitters of religious beliefs and practices to their children, it is of no small ac-

count to a surviving child that the custom of lighting a yahrtzeit candle on the anniversary of the parents' death be observed. This

Do you (or would you) light a yahrtzeit candle for a deceased relative?

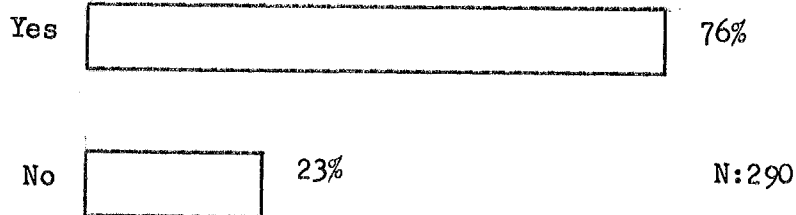


Figure 17

Sample by Willingness to Light a Yahrzeit Candle

practice is extremely widespread as our data shows. A full 76% of our sample claimed to practice the custom.

9.1 Lighting a Yahrtzeit Candle by Age

Those most willing to observe the custom of lighting a yahrtzeit or memorial candle for a deceased relative were the youngest of our respondents. Eighty-eight per cent of those 30 years old or younger and 82% of all those under 40 years were willing to observe this custom. The most reluctant were the very old. Only 52% of all those 71 years or older would light a memorial candle. The closer a respondent was to death, the less likely he was to ritually commemorate the death of his own parents and close relatives.

9.2 Lighting a Yahrtzeit Candle by Gender

Women were slightly, but not significantly more likely to light a yahrtzeit candle. Seventy-eight per cent of women respondents would observe the custom while 74% of men respondents would do so.

9.3 Lighting a Yahrtzeit Candle by Income

Of those who saw themselves in a higher income bracket, only 67% were willing to light memorial candles. Willingness to observe this custom, like many others, seems to have an inverse relationship to wealth. Seventy-six per cent of those who said their incomes were the same as other congregants would light a yahrtzeit candle, while 83% of those whose incomes were less than others would do so.

Do you (or would you) light a yahrtzeit candle for a deceased relative?

	Yes	No	
Income Greater Than Other Reform Jews	67%	33%	N:55
Income Same As Other Reform Jews	76%	24%	N:151
Income Less Than Other Reform Jews	83%	17%	N:64

Table 25

Lighting Yahrtzeit Candles by Income

10. Desire for Observance

In order to understand more clearly the attitude of St. Louis Reform congregants toward traditional Jewish observance, we asked whether, in their own observance, these congregants would like to be more, the same, or less observant than at present. Forty-four per cent of our respondents would like to be more observant while 54% were satisfied with their current extent of observance. Only 1% said they would like to be less observant than at present.

In your own observance, would you like to be more, same, or less observant than you are? N:290

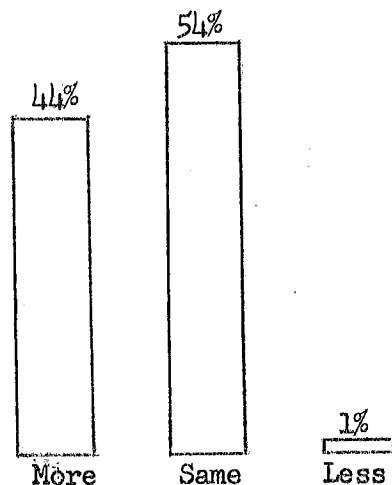


Figure 18

Sample by Desire for Observance

No significant correlation could be seen when "desire for observance" was cross tabulated with age, gender, length of temple membership, or previous affiliation. Those who said that they would like to be

more observant do tend to be more supportive of the State of Israel.⁶⁰

10.1 Desire for Observance by Income

Those who perceived their income to be smaller than other St. Louis Reform Jews were more likely to desire greater observance of Jewish tradition in their lives than they presently experienced. Over half of these respondents (52%) said they would like to be more observant. Among wealthier congregants, only 39% desired greater traditional observance. Forty-three per cent of those who perceived their incomes to be the same as fellow congregants desired more observance.

How do you compare your income to that of most other St. Louis Reform Jews?

	More	Same	Less
People Who Desire Greater Observance	39%	43%	52%
People Who Do Not Desire Greater Observance	61%	57%	48%
	N:56	N:152	N:64

Table 26

Desire for Observance by Income

10.2 Desire for Observance by Service Attendance

Those who expressed a greater desire for observance attended services less frequently than did those who were satisfied with their present level of Jewish observance. Thirteen per cent of those who were satisfied attended services weekly and 32% at least monthly. Only 4% of those who desired more observance attended services weekly and only 19% at least once per month.

		Attend Services				
		Weekly	2 X/Monthly	Monthly	8X/Yearly	Special Occasions
Desired	Greater Observance	4%	9%	6%	32%	48%
						N:127
Same		13%	7%	11%	28%	39%
						N:158
Less		0%	0%	0%	25%	75%
						N:4

Table 27

Desire for Observance by Service Attendance

VI. TRADITIONAL OBSERVANCE AND INTERMARRIAGE ATTITUDES:

IS THERE A RELATIONSHIP?

The third objective of this study was to determine whether an identifiable relationship exists between St. Louis Reform congregants' viewpoints toward traditional observance and their attitudes toward various aspects of interfaith marriage. Are St. Louis Reform Jews who are more traditional in both Jewish practice and outlook actually more opposed to interfaith marriage than their less observant fellow congregants? To begin with, respondents to our sample certainly believe that this is the case. Given the opportunity to predict the answer to the question "Is there a relationship?" these congregants would have guessed, almost without exception, that a direct relationship exists between Jewish traditionalism and opposition to interfaith marriage. Ninety-three per cent of our sample said that "people who are more traditional are more opposed to interfaith marriage." Only 4% actually disagreed with this estimation. Ninety-two per cent of the Rockdale Temple pilot sample responded in the same way. St. Louis respondents were also asked if they believed that "people who are more traditional are more opposed to their rabbis' officiating at interfaith marriages than those less observant of Jewish laws and customs." Eighty-nine per cent responded positively to this question. Unquestionably, the belief in a strong correlation between traditional observance and intermarriage attitudes is widespread.

A combination of historical circumstances moves us to question

this stereotype. The first concerns the era of the middle and late 1960's. This period was doubtlessly a crucial one in the development of present-day attitudes and practices among American Jews. Foremost among the events of that time was the June, 1967 Israeli-Arab conflict. As we have observed, the threat of the destruction of Israel had a dramatic effect upon the level of Jewish identification in our own country. Tremendous sums of money were donated to the beleaguered state on behalf of the American Jewish community. A large amount of this assistance came from individuals only marginally identified with Judaism.⁶¹ This extensive aid continues even today. Since the 1967 war, support for the State of Israel has become widespread and must be considered an important key to "being a good Jew."⁶²

Israel's dramatic victory in the war gave American Jews a new rallying point around which to base a neo-particularistic approach to Jewish identification. Perhaps, more than any one factor, increased support for and identification with the State of Israel has highlighted Jewish identification as a positive value.

A second factor contributing to this more extensive identification by American Jews was a growing popularity of ethnicity which began to develop in America during the 60's. Ethnocentricity among black Americans eventually spread to other groups. Mexican Americans and Italian Americans began to announce their ethnic identity as a sign that they viewed their own heritage as a boon rather than a stigma. Jews, too, saw their Jewishness as a new port-of-entry to social acceptance. Being Jewish was "in." An interesting sign of these new values was that Jews, once active in the struggle for racial equality, were no longer welcome allies of the new "Black Power" advocates. Jewish causes, such

as Israel and Soviet Jewry, now began to occupy the attention of the Jewish community. Prior to 1967, the programming of the National Federation of Temple Youth, the youth auxiliary of Reform Judaism in America, strongly emphasized civil, domestic causes such as race and interfaith relations. The late 60's witnessed a shift in programming interests to more particularistic subjects such as Jews in Arab lands, Soviet Jewry, and the Jewish aged. This trend in NFTY typifies the changing concerns of the Jewish community at large.

These circumstances, the rise of concern for Israel on a broad scale and a greater emphasis upon ethnicity, gave birth to a Jewish community far more willing to identify strongly with traditional Jewish values. Whether identification with these values was religious or cultural in motivation is open to some question. Nevertheless, traditional Judaism, even within the aegis of the Reform movement, was growing in strength.

According to the belief that greater traditionalism among Jews means greater opposition to interfaith marriage, we could expect a drop in the intermarriage rate to occur shortly after 1967. However, quite the opposite has been the case. Rate of intermarriage jumped to almost 32% of Jews married in that period. As we have noted, this represents more than five times the rate during the period 1956-1960.⁶³ This data might lend some doubt to the verity of the popular belief that opposition to interfaith marriage is an element of traditionalism in Jewish observance. This opposition is not evident in the way our contemporary, more strongly identified Jews choose their marriage partners.

Does St. Louis bear witness to a lack of relationship between these

two phenomena? As we have reported, Reform Jews in St. Louis, for the most part, see themselves as moderately traditional. They favor such traditional practices as ritual garb, cantorial music and yahrtzeit observance by a ratio of three to one. A majority attend services eight times per year or more. Sixty-eight per cent light Shabbat candles in their homes and about half of these do so frequently. Finally, 44% of these Reform Jews would like to be more traditional than they presently are. It is evident that identification with and practice of Jewish traditional observances is widespread among St. Louis Reform Jews. What kind of attitude toward intermarriage should we expect from such a community?

We began this research, to some extent, because of the sanction provided to intermarriage by the St. Louis Reform community through their rabbis. As we have noted, virtually all rabbis in St. Louis perform interfaith marriages. Does this indicate that the St. Louis Reform community approves of interfaith marriage? From the face of this situation one might readily conclude that they do. Overwhelmingly, however, Jews in St. Louis (93%) desire that their children take Jewish mates. Most of them (61%) believe that intermarriage is a contributing factor in assimilation. Likewise, 62% of those who responded to our question about the children of the intermarried indicated that such children would be less affirmatively Jewish than those of the inmarried.⁶⁴

Further, correlations of responses to questions concerning interfaith marriage and attitudes toward tradition yielded no significant relationship between traditional observance and attitudes toward interfaith marriage. For example, individuals who rated themselves as more observant on our Observance Index, were no more or less likely to believe

that intermarriage leads to assimilation than were those who rated themselves as less observant.⁶⁵ This similarity between the more and less observant in attitude toward intermarriage held true throughout our survey.

Two conclusions are evident. First, St. Louis Reform Jews, in the age groups from which the majority of our sample comes, are not favorable toward intermarriage. Second, this attitude prevailed regardless of the extent of a person's traditional behavior or attitudes. Almost no St. Louis Reform Jew in our study wants his child to intermarry or is unconcerned about the possibility. Most believe that interfaith marriages do not promise well for the future of Judaism. These were the opinions displayed in our sample. They obtained regardless of the extent of individual commitment to traditional observance. People who are more traditional, at least among St. Louis Reform Jews, are no more likely to oppose interfaith marriage than are their less traditional fellow congregants.

VII. BUT I WANT MY RABBI TO MARRY THEM.

RABBINICAL OFFICIATION AT INTERFAITH CEREMONIES

Though we have touched upon it previously, one question remains unanswered. How could the majority of St. Louis congregants feel that intermarriage is assimilatory and undesirable for their own children, yet agree that rabbis should sanction such marriages by officiating at interfaith weddings? Let us examine a variety of possibilities which might explain this apparent inconsistency.

First, it is possible that some kind of unconscious misrepresentation is involved in the way congregants responded. Perhaps they do not really desire that their children inmarry, yet are reluctant to admit this in a questionnaire. After all, congregants were aware that the research was being conducted by a rabbinical student.⁶⁶ This could conceivably exaggerate the responsibility which a congregant feels to claim that he desires that his children marry other Jews. The rabbi is a representative of Jewish tradition as the Jew understands it. This understanding is acquired, for the most part, from a congregant's own parents. To some, this researcher, as a future rabbi, might well represent the stricture of their own parents which deems intermarriage unequivocally wrong. This possibility seems highly unlikely, however, in view of the virtually unanimous sentiment among respondents (93%) that their children should marry Jews.

Let us suppose, on the other hand, that these congregants do not, in fact, desire that rabbis perform interfaith marriages. This conten-

tion, too, must be discounted. First, 72% of our sample disagreed that rabbis should refrain from officiating. This figure brings us to doubt that much ambivalence is at work in their responses. Second, virtually all the rabbis in St. Louis do perform intermarriages. It is unlikely that they would do so without extensive support from their congregants.

We must conclude, then, that those who responded to our questionnaire have been quite honest in representing their opinions to us. As we shall see, this honesty seemed to be confirmed by the interviews conducted by this researcher some weeks after the questionnaires were returned. In addition, opinions concerning the nature of intermarriage as assimilatory, desire that children inmarry, and desire that rabbis officiate remained true regardless of other factors. For example, the opinions of the old and the young, those who see themselves as rich and who see themselves as not-so-rich, the more and less observant were not significantly different concerning these issues. While some variance could be detected, general disagreement between groups could not be concluded.

In view of our respondents' candor, we must attempt to resolve the problem in question according to the face value of our responses. St. Louis congregants do not favor intermarriages but do desire that their rabbis perform interfaith marriage ceremonies.

Let us turn to the interviews conducted with respondents in order to gain a fuller understanding of their feelings. Combining the empirical with the phenomenological elements of this study will prove to be most helpful.⁶⁷

Why do congregants want their children to marry Jews? Here are a few of the reactions which our respondents gave in interviews.

1. Mr. L

I don't think they would be happy. But more than anything, our relatives are very much against it. They would make life miserable for Edie, [my wife].

2. Mrs. S

If everyone intermarried the Jews would die out. Rabbi M didn't do those weddings when he was here and that's why they got rid of him. I'm really not sure. After what happened in Germany, I think we need to be careful If they marry Christians, they won't want to be Jewish anymore. Their children will grow up thinking they're Christians.

3. Mrs. P

[My granddaughter] married a goy, but he converted before the wedding. I didn't approve, but, of course, they didn't listen to me. I don't think it will last.

4. Mrs. T

Both my sons are now living with Christian girls. Five years ago we wouldn't have said anything, but since we started the congregation, we've done so many things that are Jewish I guess [Bobby and Dan] just can't share [our interest in the congregation] if they marry the girls. Since we're so active that's disappointing.

5. Mr. K

The reason is that nobody cares what's happening to us. It's as bad as Germany. Jews are just going to be like goyim. How can they stay Jewish [if they intermarry]?

6. Mr. N

[My daughter's choice of husband] doesn't matter to me. Everybody thinks it's a sin to marry a Christian. Her grandfather would disown her.

Throughout these interviews, three reasons were most often mentioned for wanting children to inmarry. First, some people thought that intermarriages would not succeed. As we have observed, about half (45%) of

our respondents indicated that divorce was more likely among the intermarried. Second, many congregants referred to the stigma assigned to the intermarried by the Jewish community. They most often mentioned this stigma through some reference to the opinion of a relative. "Her grandfather would disown her." Finally, 9 out of the 25 congregants contacted for interviews mentioned fear that intermarried Jews would not continue to "be Jewish," retain contact with temples or the community, or raise their children as Jews.

Let us turn now to some of the reasons given by congregants for favoring rabbinical officiation at interfaith weddings. We recall that this sentiment was shared by 72% of our respondents.

1. Mrs. K

If they decide to get married in a temple, at least there is hope. Why must a rabbi turn his back on children and their families just when they need him most? They are just going to go to a Catholic priest or city hall.

2. Mr. R

I don't think the rabbi can stop a marriage. Once they fall in love it's too late If he marries them, there's a chance the kids will be Jewish. I feel very strongly about this.

3. Mr. W

Even if the kids don't want the Jewish ceremony [the rabbi] should do it for the family. That's why we hire a rabbi. What gives him the right to say if they should get married. Is he going to stop it? Of course not. So, if he turns them down, what does he prove anyhow?

4. Mrs. S

Rabbi R. was wonderful. He didn't make [Randell, my son] out to be some criminal for getting married.

5. Mr. K

Even the Catholics go along with [intermarriage] if they raise the kids Catholic. If we don't get them into a synagogue they'll go to the church.

6. Mrs. N

Because there is a better chance. If they get married at Temple maybe the children might go to Sunday school. If not, what would make them Jewish? We'll loose them.

What is most significant about the reactions of these respondents is their concern with the consequences of being married by a rabbi in a temple. First, these Reform Jews see a form of acceptance in the rabbi's consenting to officiate. It is important that he does not treat them as "a criminal." By performing the wedding the rabbi reduces, even extinguishes the stigma of intermarriage. As we noted, this stigma represents one of the most basic reservations which these congregants have about interfaith marriage.

In addition, those who were interviewed, almost without exception, mentioned the increased likelihood that the Jewish partner would remain Jewish if the rabbi consented to perform the ceremony.

They seemed to feel that the rabbi proves nothing by "turning them down." His role, in their eyes, should be to save the intermarried Jew and his offspring for Judaism.

If we take cognizance of the attitude among St. Louis Reform Jews that the possibility of intermarriage is unavoidable, we discover a cogent explanation for their acceptance of rabbinical officiation at interfaith weddings. Over and over again, congregants indicated that the problem of intermarriage is out of their own control. Moreover, they fear its consequences. Not one congregant, however, mentioned that it was within the power of the rabbi or even a part of his role to attempt to prevent the marriage. In their eyes the rabbi serves two functions on the occasion of an intermarriage: 1.) To reduce the stigma attached to the marriage; 2) To help establish or maintain the commit-

ment of the interfaith couple to Judaism. They believe that he cannot accomplish either goal by refusing to officiate at interfaith weddings.

If this analysis is correct, then there is no inconsistency in the opinions of most St. Louis Reform congregants that interfaith marriage is bad, yet that rabbis should sanction them through officiation at interfaith ceremonies.

VIII. SUMMARY

The numerical dominance of Reform congregants among affiliated St. Louis Jews, the willingness on the part of St. Louis Reform rabbis to perform interfaith marriages, and the growing popularity of traditional Jewish observance among these congregants led us to ask three questions in this study. First, what attitudes do Reform temple members in this community hold toward interfaith marriage? Second, to what extent do these congregants actually observe certain traditional Jewish rituals? Third, is there an identifiable relationship between attitudes toward traditional Jewish rituals and points of view toward intermarriage? A sample of the affiliated St. Louis Reform community returned a questionnaire which gives us the following picture of their attitudes.

The fact that nearly all rabbis in St. Louis will officiate at a marriage ceremony between a Jew and a non-Jew who has not converted is not an indication that their congregants favor such marriages. A large majority (68%) believe that intermarriages contribute to assimilation. Most (56%) would guess that the children of the intermarried will be less affirmatively Jewish than those of the inmarried, though less than half (45%) agreed with the common defense that divorce is more likely among the intermarried. Finally, and most significantly, almost every respondent to our questionnaire (93%) prefers that his or her child choose a Jewish spouse. By and large, however, these congregants support their rabbis' actions in performing interfaith weddings.

Seventy-two per cent feel that rabbis should not refrain from officiating at such a wedding. Over a third of these feel strongly about the matter. These results were unrelated to such factors as income, age, sex, duration of temple membership, and previous affiliation.

Interviews with congregants selected at random yielded the following rationale for this apparent anomaly. The Reform Jews whom we surveyed do not believe that either they or their rabbis can prevent the possibility that the young will marry out of Judaism. The fear the consequences of such marriages, yet perceive their occurrence to be outside of their own control. St. Louis congregants whom we interviewed felt that a rabbi should serve two functions on the occasion of an intermarriage. First, he should attempt to reduce the social and familial stigma attached to the marriage. Second, he should strive to establish or maintain the Jewish identity of the interfaith couple. They do not believe that he can accomplish either of these tasks if he refuses to officiate.

It is not the task of this study to determine whether these viewpoints on the part of St. Louis congregants constitute a basis upon which to rest the case in favor of rabbis officiating at intermarriages. Certainly, there are many other considerations to be weighed in a rabbi's decision in this matter. One conclusion, however, is clear. If the opinions of our respondents represent those of the greater St. Louis Reform community, rabbis there have a clear mandate to continue making interfaith marriage under rabbinical officiation an option for their congregants.

Has this more liberal, non-halachic position on rabbinical officiation at interfaith weddings discouraged St. Louis congregants from

observing various rituals associated with traditional Judaism? Our data indicates that the answer is no. Most St. Louis Reform Jews whom we surveyed (66%) see themselves as moderately or very observant of Jewish tradition. About three fourths of them maintain positive attitudes toward such traditional Jewish practices as wearing a tallis or yarmulkah, cantorial music, and yahrtzeit observance. A majority (56%) attend services at least eight times annually. Only 5% felt that our support for Israel was too extensive. Home ritual is not lacking among respondents to our questionnaire. Sixty-eight per cent light candles to welcome the Shabbat and about half of these do so frequently. Furthermore, a substantial number of these congregants (44%) would like to be more observant of Jewish tradition than they presently are. Only 1% would like to be less observant. Positive attitudes toward and actual practice of Jewish rituals are widespread among St. Louis Reform congregants.

One exception to this trend exists. Those who saw themselves as having a higher income than other St. Louis Reform Jews tended to be somewhat less positive toward traditional observance than other respondents. Though previous social research with regard to differences inherent among denominations and sects gave some attention to the apparent negative correlation between income and religious "orthodoxy" among non-Jewish groups, little information is available about this phenomenon among Jews. Our questionnaire did not ask for a precise estimation of income. Rather, each questionnaire recipient was requested to compare his or her income to that of most other St. Louis Reform Jews. Those who said that their incomes were greater, were less likely to be favorable toward some traditional Jewish practices. This was the case

with respect to the desirability of having more prayers in Hebrew, supporting Israel, stating a willingness to observe yahrtzeits, and desire for increased observance of other aspects of Jewish tradition. Those congregants who perceived themselves as wealthier were also more likely to rate themselves in the less observant half of our Observance Index than were other congregants. Furthermore, these congregants were less likely to see interfaith marriage as assimilatory. However, they expressed reluctance to see their children marry non-Jews as did other respondents (93%).

The common assumption that socio-economic status is a key variable in determining degree of observance seems to be a reality among our respondents. Those who associate themselves with wealth seem to maintain a more negative attitude toward traditional Jewish rituals.

Was there an identifiable relationship between St. Louis Reform congregants' viewpoints toward traditional observance and their attitudes toward interfaith marriage? Our respondents certainly believed (93%) that those who are more traditional are more likely to oppose interfaith marriage. But they were not correct. Cross tabulations of attitudes toward interfaith marriage indicated that this belief did not in fact hold true, at least among our respondents. St. Louis Reform Jews, in the age groups from which our sample comes (see p. 9), are not favorable toward intermarriage. This attitude prevailed regardless of the extent of a person's traditional behavior or attitudes. Respondents who were less traditional were just as likely to oppose interfaith marriage as their more traditional fellow congregants. In brief, it is legitimate, I infer, to say that St. Louis Reform Jews feel themselves to be no less concerned about Jewish survival than

other Jews. Nor are they more favorably inclined toward seeing their children married to non-Jews. However, they seem to see the rabbi who officiates at intermarriages as a possible deterrent to further erosion of Jewish solidarity. These congregants showed themselves to be aware and sensitive to social issues of Jewish concern. They can neither be labeled unrealistic nor deluded in their beliefs. St. Louis Reform Jews are committed to Jewish continuity, indeed to the ultimate survival of Jewish community and Jewish heritage.

IX. APPENDIX I

THE QUESTIONNAIRE AND RELATED MATERIAL

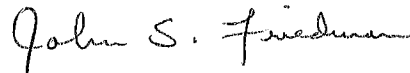
John S. Friedman
c/o Hebrew Union College
3101 Clifton Ave.
Cincinnati, Ohio 45220

Dear St. Louis Temple Member,

I am a senior student at the Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati, Ohio. As a part of my Rabbinic dissertation, I have undertaken to survey a few members of the Greater St. Louis Reform-Jewish Community to find out how modern, American-Jews feel about some important issues confronting us today. My dissertation deals specifically with attitudes toward tradition and interfaith marriage. I have consulted with Dr. Norman Mirsky as well as with leaders of the St. Louis-Jewish Community in preparing this questionnaire. I'm sure you will give these questions a great deal of thought because they are, as you will see, vital in determining just what we think about our beliefs and practices as Reform Jews.

A pre-posted, addressed envelope is enclosed for your convenience. Strict anonymity will be maintained. It would be a great help to me if you would complete the questionnaire and return it to me as soon as possible. Thank you very much for your kind cooperation. A very healthy and prosperous New Year to you and yours,

Very sincerely,



John S. Friedman

JSF/jm

1. Are you Jewish?

(1) ☐ yes
(2) ☐ no

2. How many years have you belonged to your present temple?

(1) ☐ 1-5
(2) ☐ 6-13
(3) ☐ 14-23
(4) ☐ 24-30
(5) ☐ 31-40
(6) ☐ 41-50
(7) ☐ 51-60
(8) ☐ 61-70
(9) ☐ over 70

3. If you belonged to another temple or synagogue before you joined present temple was it:

(1) ☐ Orthodox?
(2) ☐ Conservative?
(3) ☐ Reform?
(4) ☐ Other?

4. What is your age?

(1) ☐ 18-24
(2) ☐ 25-30
(3) ☐ 31-40
(4) ☐ 41-50
(5) ☐ 51-60
(6) ☐ 61-70
(7) ☐ 71 over

5. Sex?

(1) ☐ Male
(2) ☐ Female

6. Personal Status:

1 ☐ Divorced and Remarried?

Present Spouse Jewish? (1) ☐ yes
(2) ☐ no

Most recent former spouse Jewish? (3) ☐ yes
(4) ☐ no

2 ☐ Divorced?

Most recent former spouse Jewish? (5) ☐ yes
(6) ☐ no

3 ☐ Widowed and Remarried?

Present spouse Jewish? (7) ☐ yes
(8) ☐ no

Former spouse Jewish? (9) ☐ yes
(10) ☐ no

3 ☐ Widowed?

Former spouse Jewish? (11) ☐ yes
(12) ☐ no

5 ___ Married?

Spouse Jewish?

(13) ___ yes

(14) ___ no

6 ___ Single?

7. How many children do you have?

(1) ___ none

(2) ___ one

(3) ___ two

(4) ___ three

8. If you are or were married, were either you or your spouse non-Jewish at the time of your marriage?

Present

Marriage (1) ___ yes
(2) ___ no

Former

Marriage (1) ___ yes
(2) ___ no

9. How long have you been married to your present spouse?

(1) ___ 1-5 years

(2) ___ 6-10

(3) ___ 11-20

(4) ___ 21-30

(5) ___ 31-40

(6) ___ 41-50

(7) ___ over 50

10. How do you compare your income to that of most other St. Louis Reform Jews?

(1) ___ Greater

(2) ___ Same

(3) ___ Less

11. In socio-economic standing, would you guess that most St. Louis Reform Jews are:

(1) ___ Upper

(2) ___ Lower Upper

(3) ___ Upper Middle

(4) ___ Middle

12. On a scale of one (1) to six (6) how would you rate yourself in terms of traditional Jewish observance?

___ 6 (most observant)

___ 5

___ 4

___ 3

___ 2

___ 1 (least observant)

13. Would you feel comfortable in a temple in which many congregants chose to wear:

A Tallis? (Prayer Shawl)

(1) ___ yes

(2) ___ no

A Yarmulkah? (Skull Cap)

(1) ___ yes

(2) ___ no

14. Do you prefer services which include the participation of a Cantor?
(1) ☐ yes
(2) ☐ no
15. In your home, how often are Shabbat candles lit?
(1) ☐ Frequently
(2) ☐ Special Occasions
(3) ☐ Sometimes
(4) ☐ Never
16. Were you Bar or Bat Mitzvah?
(1) ☐ yes
(2) ☐ no
17. Do you prefer services in which many of the prayers are read in Hebrew?
(1) ☐ yes
(2) ☐ no
18. With respect to the State of Israel, how supportive should American Jews be?
(1) ☐ somewhat more
(2) ☐ same
(3) ☐ somewhat less
19. Which estimate comes closest to the extent of your attendance at services?
(1) ☐ weekly
(2) ☐ twice monthly
(3) ☐ monthly
(4) ☐ 8 times per year
(5) ☐ special occasions only (High Holidays, Bar/Bat Mitzvah, etc.)
20. Do you (or would you) light a yahrtzeit candle for a deceased relative?
(1) ☐ yes
(2) ☐ no
21. In comparison to your parents, how traditional do you see yourself?
(1) ☐ more
(2) ☐ same
(3) ☐ less
22. In your own observance, would you like to be more, same or less observant than you are?
(1) ☐ more
(2) ☐ same
(3) ☐ less
23. Do you agree that Reform Rabbis should refrain from officiating at marriages in which the non-Jewish partner has not converted to Judaism?
(1) ☐ Strongly agree
(2) ☐ Agree
(3) ☐ Disagree
(4) ☐ Strongly disagree

24. Would you prefer that your child choose a Jewish spouse?
(1) ☐ yes
(2) ☐ no
25. In your opinion, does interfaith marriage contribute to assimilation?
(1) ☐ yes
(2) ☐ no
26. In comparison with the children of the inmarried (two Jewish parents), how affirmatively Jewish would you guess the children of the intermarried (one Jewish and one non-Jewish parent) to be?
(1) ☐ More affirmatively Jewish
(2) ☐ As affirmatively Jewish
(3) ☐ Less affirmatively Jewish
27. In your opinion, is divorce more likely among the intermarried?
(1) ☐ yes
(2) ☐ no
28. Do you think that people who are more traditional are more opposed to interfaith marriage?
(1) ☐ yes
(2) ☐ no
29. Do you think that people who are more traditional are more opposed to their Rabbis' officiating at interfaith marriages than those less observant of Jewish laws and customs?
(1) ☐ yes
(2) ☐ no
30. Would you be willing to be interviewed? If yes, please fill in name, address and phone no.
(1) ☐ yes
(2) ☐ no

MEMORANDUM

January 5, 1975

3 Shevat 5736

Date

From Midwest Council, UAHC, St. Louis, MOTo Rabbi John Friedman, HUC

Copy for information of _____

Subject _____

In answer to your telephone inquiry, the following figures indicate member families.

REFORM

B'nai El	325
Emanuel	250
Genesis	64
Israel	1,534
Kol Am	42
Shaare Emeth	1,133
United Hebrew	1,925

CONSERVATIVE

B'nai Amoona	1,050
B'rith Sholom-Kneseth Israel	575
Shaare Zedek	720

ORTHODOX

8 congregations totaling 1,700 or 1,800 members.

One congregation, with both Conservative and Orthorodox members, numbers 140.

X. APPENDIX II

ROCKDALE TEMPLE PILOT STUDY

John S. Friedman
Hebrew Union College
3101 Clifton Ave.
Cincinnati, Ohio 45220

Dear Rockdale Member,

As a part of my Rabbinic dissertation, I have undertaken to survey a few members of Rockdale Temple to find out how modern, American Jews feel about some important issues confronting us today. My dissertation deals specifically with our attitudes toward tradition and interfaith marriage. I have consulted with both Dr. Norman Mirsky, Professor of Jewish Sociology at the Hebrew Union College and with Rabbi Hahn in preparing this questionnaire. I'm sure you will give these questions a great deal of thought because they are, as you will see, vital in determining just what we think about our beliefs and practices as Reform Jews.

It is important for me to define some of the terms in the questionnaire. Though they are terms which we all possess in our "Jewish vocabularies," the scientific nature of this study makes their meaning rather crucial to this whole enterprise. An understanding of these is especially important for the completion of questions 14, 15, 18, 19, and 30.

Traditional - One would be called "traditional" if he/she felt positively about wearing a tallit or a yarmulka in services; about the importance of Hebrew in the service and Hebrew knowledge among the congregation; and about identification with all Jews rather than only those of the Reform Movement. A traditionalist would feel negatively about a service in which all the prayers were read in English and would probably refrain from frequent violation of Jewish food taboos.

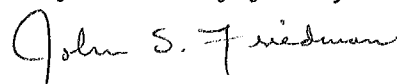
Mainstream Reform - One would be called "mainstream Reform" if he/she felt positively about the State of Israel; felt that rabbis and congregants should be free to wear whatever Jewish religious garb they please; and identified with the Jews as a people while maintaining a genuine concern for the ideals for which Reform has stood (for example, freedom of individual expression, willingness to confront value issues without feeling bound by Jewish law).

Classical Reform - One would be called "classical Reform" if he/she felt that Judaism were only a religion implying no ethnic commitment; completely rejected Judaism as a legal system; felt singular national allegiance to the land in which he/she lived thus ruling out any commitment to the State of Israel; would be offended by Jewish traditional garb in the temple.

Of course some of these definitions overlap. While you may find yourself agreeing with items in more than one of the above categories, please choose (questions 14 and 15) the category that best approximates your total outlook. If you are married, there will be two copies of

this questionnaire enclosed, one for each spouse. Strict anonymity will be maintained. On completion of this study, results sheets may be obtained from Rabbi Hahn. Thank you very much for your kind cooperation.

Very sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John S. Friedman". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

John S. Friedman

Rockdale Temple Questionnaire

1. How long have you been associated with Rockdale? _____ years
2. Did you belong to another synagogue before you
joined Rockdale? _____ yes
_____ no
3. Was it _____ Reform, _____ Conservative, _____ Orthodox, _____ other?
4. What is your age? _____ 21-30, _____ 31-40, _____ 41-50, _____ 51-60
_____ 61-70, _____ 71-over
5. What sex are you? _____ male, _____ female
6. Personal Status.
_____ Divorced and remarried?
_____ Present spouse Jewish? _____ yes
_____ no
_____ Divorced?
_____ Most recent former spouse Jewish? _____ yes
_____ no
_____ Married?
_____ Present spouse Jewish? _____ yes
_____ no
_____ Widowed?
_____ Former spouse Jewish _____ yes
_____ no
_____ Single?
7. Number of Children. _____
8. If you are or were married, were either you or
your spouse non-Jewish at the time of your marriage?
Present Marriage _____ yes _____ no
Former Marriage _____ yes _____ no
9. How long have you been married to your present spouse? _____ years
10. What is the extent of your education? _____ No High School,
_____ Some High School, _____ High School Graduate, _____ Some College,
_____ College Graduate, _____ Graduate or Professional School.
11. What factor influenced you most in your decision to join Rockdale?
12. Do you think that your income is greater or less than that of
other members? _____ greater, _____ less, _____ same.
13. Are most members of Rockdale Temple _____ Middle, _____ Upper Middle,
_____ Lower Upper, or Upper Class?

14. As a Reform Jew, do you consider yourself Classical,
 Mainstream Reform, or More Traditional?
15. Is there a trend at Rockdale to be Classical,
 Mainstream Reform, or More Traditional?
16. Is there a trend at Rockdale to be more or less supportive
of the State of Israel than in the Past?
 More Less
17. Are you in agreement with this trend? yes no
18. In your own observance, would you like to be more, or same,
or less traditional than you are?
19. Are you more, same, less observant of Jewish
rituals, laws, and customs than were your parents?
20. What customs, in your opinion, make some Reform Jews more
traditional than others? (list two or three)
21. Are you, or would you be, in favor of having all or part of
the Hebrew portion of the Union Prayer Book service
chanted or sung at Rockdale?
 None Part All
22. Would you prefer more or less Hebrew in the service?
 More Less
23. Have you attended an adult education seminar at the temple
in the last year? yes no
24. How do you feel about the statement:
"Reform rabbis should be discouraged from performing
interfaith marriages."
 Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly disagree
25. Would you prefer that your child choose a Jewish spouse?
 yes no no opinion
26. In your opinion, does interfaith marriage lead to assimilation?
 yes no
27. Would you guess that the children of interfaith marriages are
 more, or less affirmatively Jewish?
28. Are you and your present spouse both Jewish? yes no
29. Does interfaith marriage, in your opinion, increase the
possibility for divorce? yes no

30. Do you think that people who are more traditional are more opposed to interfaith marriage? ____yes ____no
31. Do you think that people who are more traditional are more opposed to their Rabbi's officiating at interfaith marriages than those less observant of Jewish laws and customs? ____yes ____no

Rockdale Temple Pilot Study Results* (N:39)

1. How long have you been associated with Rockdale?

1-10 years:	10%
11-20	: 18%
21-30	: 28%
31-40	: 13%
41-50	: 10%
51-60	: 10%
60 up	: 10%

2. Did you belong to another synagogue before you joined Rockdale?

Yes: 36%
No: 64%

3. Was it Reform, Conservative, Orthodox, Other? (N:14)

Reform	: 71%
Conservative:	14%
Orthodox	: 7%
Other	: 7%

4. What is your age?

21-30:	0%
31-40:	23%
41-50:	15%
51-60:	31%
61-70:	15%
71 up:	15%

5. What sex are you?

Male : 17
Female: 22

6. Personal Status.

Divorced: Most recent former spouse Jewish: 5% (None remarried)
Most recent former spouse non-Jewish: 3%
Married : Present spouse Jewish: 67%
Present spouse non-Jewish: 3%
Widowed : Former spouse Jewish: 13%
Single : 10%

* Maximum 1% error due to rounding

7. Number of Children

One : 10%
Two : 49%
Three: 15%
Four : 8%
None : 18%

8. If you are or were married, were either you or your spouse non-Jewish at the time of your marriage?

Present Marriage Yes: 13%, No: 54%
Former Marriage Yes: 3%, No: 13% No response: 17%

9. How long have you been married to your present spouse?

Longest: 43 years
Shortest: 1 year
Median: 24 years
Mean: 23.28 years

10. Extent of education?

No High School: 0%
Some High School: 0%
High School Graduate: 8%
Some College: 28%
College Graduate: 49%
Graduate or Professional School: 15%

11. What factor influenced you most in your decision to join Rockdale?

Rabbi Hahn: 31%
The Rabbi : 13%
Family Long-time Members: 15%
Religious Education: 3%
No response: 37%

12. Do you think that your income is greater or less than that of other members?

Greater: 18%
Same: 28%
Less: 36%
No Response: 18%

13. Are most members of Rockdale Temple Middle, Upper Middle, Lower Upper, or Upper Class?

Middle : 8%
Upper Middle: 79%
Lower Upper : 10%
Upper : 0%
No Response : 3%

14. As a Reform Jew, do you consider yourself Classical, Mainstream, Reform, or More Traditional?

Classical : 15%
Mainstream Reform: 72%
More Traditional : 8%

15. Is there a trend at Rockdale to be Classical? Mainstream Reform? More Traditional?

Classical : 8% No Response: 10%
Mainstream Reform: 72%
More Traditional : 10%

16. Is there a trend at Rockdale to be or less supportive of the State of Israel than in the past?

More: 95%
Less: 5%

17. Are you in agreement with this trend?

Yes: 81%
No: 8%
No Response: 8%

18. In your own observance, would you like to more, the same, or less traditional than you are?

More: 21%
Same: 72%
Less: 5%
No Response: 3%

19. Are you more, the same, or less observant of Jewish rituals, laws, and customs than were your parents?

More: 28%
Same: 28%
Less: 36%
No Response: 8%

20. What customs, in your opinion, make some Reform Jews more traditional than others? (List two or three)

Shabbat Observance: 36%
Passover Sedar: 10%
Service Attendance: 3%
Holiday Observance: 13%
Singing in Services: 3%
Home Customs: 3%
Minor Holiday Observance: 3%
Kashruth: 18%

Jewish Ritual Garb (tallis or yarmulkah): 28%
Hebrew Knowledge: 15%
Having been Bar Mitzvah: 3%
Orthodox Background: 3%

21. Are you, or would you be, in favor of having all or part of the Hebrew portion of the Union Prayer Book service chanted or sung at Rockdale?

None: 48%
Part: 51%
All : 0%

22. Would you prefer more or less Hebrew in the service?

More: 15%
Same: 21%
Less: 48%
No Response: 15%

23. Have you attended an adult education seminar at the temple in the last year?

Yes: 8%
No: 92%

24. How do you feel about the statement:

"Reform rabbis should be discouraged from performing interfaith marriages."

Strongly agree: 3%
Agree: 10%
Disagree: 51%
Strongly Disagree: 36%

25. Would you prefer that your child choose a Jewish spouse?

Yes: 69%
No: 3%
No Response: 5%
No Opinion (written in): 18%

26. In your opinion, does interfaith marriage lead to assimilation?

Yes: 62%
No: 33%
No Response: 5%

27. Would you guess that the children of interfaith marriages are more or less affirmatively Jewish?

More: 8%
Less: 72%
No Response: 21%

28. Are you and your present spouse both Jewish?

Yes: 67%

No: 8%

No Response: 26%

29. Does interfaith marriage, in your opinion, increase the possibility for divorce?

Yes: 54%

No: 41%

No Response: 5%

30. Do you think that people who are more traditional are more opposed to interfaith marriage?

Yes: 92%

No: 5%

No Response: 3%

31. Do you think that people who are more traditional are more opposed to their rabbis' officiating at interfaith marriages than those less observant of Jewish laws and customs?

Yes: 92%

No: 3%

No Response: 5%

NOTES

NOTES

¹Rufus Lears, The Jews in American History (New York: Ktav, 1972), p. 148.

²Frederick Jackson Turner, The Frontier in American History (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1920), pp. 22-23.

³Milton Gordon, Assimilation in American Life (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), pp. 117-118.

⁴George Rogers Taylor, The Turner Thesis Concerning the Role of the Frontier in American History (Boston: D. C. Heath and Co., 1949).

⁵See Appendix I.

⁶Will Maslow, The Structure and Functioning of the American Jewish Community (New York: American Jewish Congress, 1974), pp. 24-25.

⁷Theodore I. Lenn, Ph.D. and Associates, Rabbi and Synagogue in Reform Judaism (New York: Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1972), p. 128.

⁸One new congregation, Temple Kol Am, does not as yet enjoy the services of a full time rabbi. The congregation relies upon a bi-monthly student rabbi from the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati for rabbinical services. Since he cannot officiate at weddings, the congregation asks the Hillel rabbi from a local college to serve in this capacity. This rabbi will perform interfaith weddings.

⁹We received no response from individuals under the age of 25. Therefore, statistics cited under this heading from NJPS are percentages of Jews over 25 years old. See Fred Massarik and Alvin Chenkin, "The United States National Jewish Population Study: A First Report," American Jewish Yearbook (New York: American Jewish Committee, 1973), p. 270.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 271.

¹¹Almost no Jews presently live in the City of St. Louis proper. See Maslow, p. 10.

¹²The terms "Intermarriage" and "Interfaith Marriage" will be used interchangeably in this study to mean any marriage in which one partner was non-Jewish at the time of the marriage.

¹³Massarik and Chenkin, p. 292.

¹⁴Massarik and Chenkin, pp. 292-295.

- ¹⁵Edwin H. Friedman, "Myths of Mixed Marriages," The Jewish Spectator, (Nov., 1972), pp. 25-26.
- ¹⁶Massarik and Chenkin, p. 295.
- ¹⁷George Johnson, "Comparing the Inmarried and Intermarried: Implications of the National Jewish Population Study," Analysis (New York: Synagogue Council of America, 1973), p. 1.
- ¹⁸Bernard Lazerwitz, "Intermarriage and Conversion: A Guide for Future Research," Jewish Journal of Sociology 8 (June, 1971), p. 60.
- ¹⁹Johnson, p. 3.
- ²⁰Johnson, p. 3.
- ²¹Johnson, p. 5.
- ²²"A Sampler on Reform Rabbis' Attitudes Toward Mixed Marriage," pamphlet distributed by the Central Conference of American Rabbis (1972), p. 23.
- ²³Friedman, p. 8.
- ²⁴See section following, "Observance Index by Gender," p. 37.
- ²⁵See pp. 42, 49, and 59 following.
- ²⁶Shulchan Aruch: Even Ha-ezer 11:16.
- ²⁷See pp. 43, 51, 60, 65, 73, and 75 following.
- ²⁸"Pittsburgh Platform," Article 5 cited in Gunther Plaut, The Growth of Reform Judaism (New York: World Union for Progressive Judaism, Ltd., 1965), p. 34.
- ²⁹See Appendix II.
- ³⁰Lenn, p. 241.
- ³¹David O. Moberg, The Church as a Social Institution (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1962), p. 398.
- ³²S. V. Didato and T. M. Kennedy, "Masculinity-Femininity and Personal Values," Psychological Reports, 2 (1956), p. 231.
- ³³Moberg, p. 399.
- ³⁴Joseph H. Fichter, Social Relations in the Urban Parish (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1954), pp. 91-93.
- ³⁵Lenn, p. 256. Lenn's index rates congregants in such areas as "Jewish Concern," "Being Ethical," "Jewish Identification," and "Belief in God."

³⁶Glenn M. Vernon, "Background Factors Related to Church Orthodoxy," Social Forces, 34 (March, 1956), pp. 252-254.

³⁷Francis Ianni, A.J., "Minority Group Status and Adolescent Culture," in The American Adolescent, eds. David Gottlieb and C. E. Ramsey (Homewood, Ill.: Dorsey, 1964), p. 234.

³⁸Arnold Martin Dashefsky, Social Interaction and Jewish Self-Conception: A Two Generation Analysis in the St. Paul Community (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms, 1969), p. 177.

³⁹Lenn, p. 267.

⁴⁰See p. 43 above. Also see Vernon, pp. 252-254.

⁴¹Leonard J. Fein, Robert Chin, Jack Dauber, Bernard Reisman, and Herzl Spiro, Reform is a Verb (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1972), p. 27.

⁴²The mean age of our sample was 50 years.

⁴³See pp. 40-41 above.

⁴⁴Isaac Mayer Wise writing in the American Israelite, 3 January, 1868, p. 4.

⁴⁵See pp. 37-39 above.

⁴⁶Marshall Sklare, America's Jews (New York: Random House, 1971), p. 216.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 216.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 217.

⁴⁹Ibid., pp. 216-221.

⁵⁰Ibid., pp. 218-221.

⁵¹Fein, et al, p. 37.

⁵²Marshall Sklare and Joseph Greenblum, Jewish Identity on the Urban Frontier (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1967), p. 322.

⁵³See Table 11, p. 40 above.

⁵⁴See p. 43 above.

⁵⁵Sklare and Greenblum, pp. 231-232.

⁵⁶Sklare and Greenblum, p. 232.

⁵⁷Sklare and Greenblum, p. 232.

⁵⁸Fein, et al, p. 31.

⁵⁹Moberg, p. 163.

⁶⁰See p. 70 above.

⁶¹Sklare, p. 217.

⁶²Fein, et al, p. 37.

⁶³Massarik and Chenkin, p. 295.

⁶⁴This figure is corrected for a 9% non-response rate and represents 56% of the entire sample.

⁶⁵Seventy-one per cent of the more observant and 68% of the less observant agreed that intermarriage contributes to assimilation.

⁶⁶A cover letter was enclosed with each questionnaire. See Appendix I.

⁶⁷Jack Tyrus Hanford, "A Synoptic Approach: Resolving Problems in Empirical and Phenomenological Approaches to the Psychology of Religion," Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, 14, No. 3 (Sept., 1975) p. 315.

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